

## Male international students' experiences with their professors at a higher education institution in Saudi Arabia: A qualitative study

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to explore the experiences of male international students with their lecturers at a Saudi higher education institution, to understand the dimensions of the academic relationship between the two groups, and the extent to which this relationship impacts international students' academic adjustment. The study adopted a qualitative methodology and used interviews to collect data from participants. Thirty-five international students studying at a public university in Saudi Arabia participated in the study. After analyzing the interview results and organizing the data, we divided it into six themes. The results revealed positive overall impressions, as students felt valued and respected, and no cases of discrimination or racism were recorded. The study demonstrated that the instruction methods used were diverse and sensitive to individual differences, relying on technological means to facilitate understanding of the content, especially for students who are not fluent in Arabic. Students also showed a clear tendency to choose professors who are flexible in their assessment and interaction. Despite this progress, the study revealed a lack of consideration for individual differences in assessment, as some students with language difficulties were not given extra time on exams. The results also revealed a high level of academic support outside of class, with professors effectively using their office hours to guide and assist students. Finally, students expressed satisfaction with the level of fairness in treatment and assessment, confirming that they did not feel any discrimination compared to their local colleagues. Concurrently, these results indicate that the educational environment provided to these students is inclusive, supportive, and fair.

**Keywords:** academic quality, higher education, university professors, international students, total quality.

## تجارب الطلاب الدوليين الذكور مع أساتذتهم في مؤسسة التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية: دراسة نوعية

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**المستخلص:** هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف تجارب الطلاب الدوليين الذكور مع أساتذتهم في إحدى مؤسسات التعليم العالي السعودية، لفهم أبعاد العلاقة الأكademية بين المجموعتين، ومدى تأثير هذه العلاقة على تكيف الطلاب الدوليين أكاديمياً. اعتمدت الدراسة منهجية نوعية واستخدمت المقابلات لجمع البيانات من المشاركين. شارك في الدراسة خمسة وثلاثون طالباً دولياً يدرسون في جامعة حكومية في المملكة العربية السعودية. بعد تحليل نتائج المقابلات وتنظيم البيانات، قمنا بتقسيمها إلى ستة محاور. كشفت النتائج عن انطباعات إيجابية بشكل عام، حيث شعر الطلاب بالتقدير والاحترام، ولم تُسجل أي حالات تمييز أو عنصرية. أظهرت الدراسة أن أساليب التدريس المستخدمة كانت متنوعة وحساسة للفروق الفردية، مع الاعتماد على الوسائل التكنولوجية لتسهيل فهم المحتوى، خاصة بالنسبة للطلاب الذين لا يتقنون اللغة العربية. أظهر الطلاب أيضاً ميلاً واضحاً لاختيار الأساتذة الذين يتسمون بالمرنة في التقييم والتفاعل. على الرغم من هذا التقدم، كشفت الدراسة عن نقص في مراعاة الفروق الفردية في التقييم، حيث لم يُمنع بعض الطلاب الذين لديهم صعوبات لغوية وقائماً إضافياً في الاختبارات. كما كشفت النتائج عن مستوى عالٍ من الدعم الأكاديمي خارج الصف، حيث استخدم الأساتذة ساعاتهم المكتوبة بفعالية للتوجيه ومساعدة الطلاب. وأخيراً، عبر الطلاب عن رضاهم بمستوى العدالة في المعاملة والتقييم، مؤكدين أنهم لم يشعروا بأي تمييز مقارنة بزملائهم المحليين. مع ذلك، تشير هذه النتائج إلى أن البيئة التعليمية المقدمة لمُؤلاء الطلاب بيئة شاملة وداعمة وعادلة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الجودة الأكademية، التعليم العالي، أساتذة الجامعات، الطلاب الدوليون، الجودة الشاملة.

## 1. Introduction.

In light of the intense competition among universities at the local, regional, and international levels, effective college administrations concentrate on developing their educational environments and providing distinguished university services that meet student expectations and contribute to the preparation of highly qualified graduates. Consideration for the quality of student services is no longer a secondary or luxury subject, but rather a necessity. Improving the quality of university services—whether academic, administrative, or support—has become one of the key indicators upon which higher education institutions rely to enhance their competitiveness and achieve customer satisfaction, primarily students. This aligns with the philosophy of total quality. The contemporary view of the university student has transformed the student's role from a recipient of knowledge to an essential partner in the educational process, with his voice playing a crucial role in evaluating university performance and determining priorities for improvement and development (Albeshir, 2022; Al-Ghamdi, 2017; Al-Zahrani, 2018; Al-Qarawi, 2021; Abed, 2017).

One of the most important elements of university service that has received increasing attention in recent years is the quality of faculty performance. Faculty members are viewed as the cornerstone of the educational process and a decisive factor in improving learning outcomes, building a stimulating learning environment, and enhancing students' cognitive and skill capabilities. Therefore, the quality of a faculty member is not limited to their academic competence or research capabilities, but extends to their teaching practices, the extent of their interaction with and the respect they show for students, their assessment and feedback methods, and their commitment to professional and ethical standards. Evaluating the quality of faculty members from the students' perspective is an important approach to understanding the academic reality, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and proposing ways to improve based on the learner's experience. The importance of this evaluation lies in its reflection of students' genuine impressions of the educational process and its impact on their academic achievement and overall satisfaction with their university experience (Al-Qarawi, 2021; Al-Babtain, 2007; 2018). The importance of listening to students' opinions and Gaining insight into their views regarding their professors is increasingly crucial, especially for international students. A large number of studies have indicated that international students face greater challenges than local students, especially if they do not speak the official language of the host country. **These challenges include academic difficulties, which professors can help alleviate by facilitating smoother educational experiences for international students** (Albeshir et al., 2025; Alsahafi, N., & Shin, 2016; Arkoudis et al., 2019; Lefdahl, 2015; Smith & Khawaja, 2011).

### 1.2. Study Problem:

Saudi universities have welcomed international students since the late twentieth century and continue to do so today. The Kingdom's Vision 2030 for higher education aims to enhance Saudi Arabia's position as a global scientific and cultural center, including attracting more international students and making Saudi higher education institutions a regional and global hub for students (Ministry of Education, 2025). Therefore, it is essential to ensure that Saudi universities offer a stimulating and engaging learning environment for all students, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, such as international students. However, this expansion in international admissions is not necessarily accompanied by sufficient awareness of the individual and cultural differences that may impact the international student's experience in the classroom, specifically in their relationships and interactions with faculty members. The quality of faculty members is one of the most significant factors in shaping the university experience for students. Their academic qualifications, teaching methods, and ability to communicate and interact with students play a pivotal role in achieving effective educational outcomes. For international students, this relationship may be influenced by several specific factors, such as language difficulties, diverse learning styles, faculty acceptance of cultural differences, and the unique needs of this group (Albeshir et al., 2025; Alsahafi, N., & Shin, 2016; Arkoudis et al., 2019; Lefdahl, 2015; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Despite the significance of these issues, the Arab academic literature—particularly within the Saudi context—remains limited in studies that explore international students' perceptions of faculty members at Saudi universities, provide in-depth analyses of their experiences, and examine their attitudes toward the quality of the educational process they receive. Therefore, the problem of this study derives from its aim to reveal international students' perceptions of the quality of faculty performance at a Saudi university, and to determine their level of satisfaction with academic interaction, teaching methods, and the support provided to them, while also identifying the challenges that may influence their evaluation of this educational experience.

**1.3. Study Question:**

What are the perceptions and experiences of international male students regarding their professors' interactions within the Saudi university environment? How do these perceptions impact their academic adjustment, sense of fairness, and support within the educational institution?

**1.4. Study Objectives:**

1. To identify international students' overall impressions of their professors in terms of respect, support, and cultural openness.
2. To analyze the teaching methods employed by faculty members and determine how well they align with the needs of international students, considering their linguistic and cultural diversity.
3. To evaluate the degree of flexibility shown by professors in assessments and academic interactions, and how this flexibility affects international students' satisfaction and educational experience.
4. To assess the extent to which individual differences among students are acknowledged, particularly in light of the linguistic challenges and cognitive variations that international students may encounter.
5. To explore the types of academic and psychological support offered outside the classroom and their role in facilitating international students' integration into the university environment.
6. To analyze the perceived level of fairness and equity in assessments and academic treatment as viewed by international students, and to explain how this perception influences their confidence in the educational institution.

**2. Literature Review**

Al-Babtain (2018) conducted a study aimed at investigating the availability of ethical competencies among faculty members from the perspective of students of the College of Education at King Saud University. The researcher employed a descriptive analytical approach and developed a questionnaire to collect the information. The questionnaire consisted of 50 statements covering five dimensions of ethical competencies: humility, cooperation, justice, honesty, and truthfulness. Three hundred ninety-one participants participated in the study. The study found that professors possess high ethical competencies in all dimensions, with an average score of 3.42 out of 4. The honesty dimension ranked first with an average score of 3.49 out of 4, followed by honesty with an average score of 3.46 out of 4, justice with an average score of 3.41 out of 4, and cooperation with an average score of 3.37 out of 4. In fifth place came the cooperation dimension with an average score of 3.53 out of 4.

Nasiri and Flack (2019) conducted a study titled "Evaluating the Quality of a University Professor from Student Performance: A Perspective: Mohamed Kheder University of Biskra as a Model." The study aimed to investigate the availability of quality elements among university professors at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at this university in Algeria. The study relied on a descriptive and analytical approach. The researchers developed a questionnaire comprising 20 statements, divided into four dimensions, to measure the quality of university professors: control of the material, academic achievement, evaluation of the material content, and the professor's relationship with students. 287 participants participated in the study. The dimension of the relationship with professors included four statements: the professor adheres to office hours, the degree of accuracy in awarding grades, motivates students to review various references, and develops good attitudes, habits, and morals among students. The arithmetic mean was above average among the students, and the study found that the quality elements in university professors were above average.

Kamel (2019) conducted a study aiming to examine the availability of quality standards for university professors from the perspective of students at Cairo University in the Arab Republic of Egypt. The study employed a descriptive analytical approach and developed a questionnaire comprising 40 statements, divided into five dimensions: teaching objectives, lecture planning and implementation, the professor's relationship with students, methods of evaluating students by the professor, and the professor's relationship with the community. The study sample consisted of 100 students from the Faculties of Science and Archaeology at Cairo University. In the dimension of professors' relationships with students, which consists of 12 statements, the study found that 82% of the study sample indicated that professors treat them with respect. However, only 28% of the participants believed that their professors take students' differences into account well, while 50% believed that their professors do not participate in various activities with them. The study found that 33% of professors consistently create a fun atmosphere in their lectures. The study also found that 47% of students care

about their reactions during the lecture. In general, the study results indicate that the five dimensions suggest the quality standards of university professors are acceptable, but not as ambitious as expected.

Al-Shawawra (2020) conducted a study aimed at identifying the level of services provided by the Islamic University of Madinah from the students' perspective. The researcher used a descriptive-analytical approach and developed a questionnaire to collect information. Eight hundred sixteen students from various disciplines and colleges at the university participated in the study. One of the most notable results of the study was that student satisfaction with the quality of teaching and library services was high. In contrast, student satisfaction with student evaluation and academic advising services was moderate. The study found statistically significant differences in academic level variables, with undergraduate students' average evaluations of the teaching process being higher than those of graduate students. There were also statistically significant differences regarding the quality of library services between undergraduate and graduate students, as graduate students, especially those in the doctoral stage, benefit extensively from the services provided by the university library and its facilities compared to other academic levels.

Samir (2021) conducted a study aimed at evaluating the teaching performance of university professors from the students' perspective, in light of education quality assurance standards, at an Algerian university. The researcher employed a descriptive-analytical approach and utilized a questionnaire as a tool for collecting information. The questionnaire consisted of 43 statements distributed into four axes: teaching planning, teaching implementation, student learning evaluation, communication processes, and personal characteristics. The study sample consisted of 317 participants from students studying in programs offered by the Department of Social Sciences. The study found that the level of teaching performance of university professors in light of education quality assurance standards from the perspective of students in the Department of Social Sciences was average. The study's results also revealed no statistically significant differences in the average ratings of students in the Department of Social Sciences when evaluating the teaching performance of university professors, attributable to the variables of gender, department, and educational level.

Al-Ali (2022) conducted a study on the quality of educational services at the Faculty of Education in Quneitra from the perspective of its faculty members. The researcher used a descriptive-analytical approach and a questionnaire to measure the quality of educational services. The research sample consisted of 13 faculty members from the Faculty of Education at Damascus University. The researcher found that, from the faculty members' perspective, the quality of educational services at the Faculty of Education in Quneitra was moderate. The study found no statistically significant differences in the average degree of educational services at the Faculty of Education with respect to the study variables of gender, academic rank, and work experience. The study results indicated that the highest levels of educational services were in the area of college administration, with a focus on the interests of both male and female students. However, the respondents' satisfaction level was low regarding classrooms and modern educational tools. The researcher recommended improving the quality of the physical components of educational services, providing educational equipment and tools, and furnishing faculty members with offices suitable for their job duties and meetings with students.

Albeshir (2023) conducted a study to evaluate the quality of university services at King Saud University from the perspective of international students in the College of Education. The researcher employed a descriptive-analytical approach as the methodology for the study, utilizing a questionnaire as a tool for collecting information. The questionnaire consisted of five dimensions: the quality of services prior to arrival in the Kingdom, the quality of university facilities, the quality of international student administration services, the quality of the educational environment and facilities, and the quality of academic services. The questionnaire contained 41 statements. The study sample consisted of 93 male international students from the College of Education, representing various levels and academic specializations. The most significant findings of the study include a high level of international student satisfaction with university services prior to arrival in the Kingdom. The results also indicated a very high level of international student satisfaction with the quality of public facilities, as well as a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the International Students Administration. The study's results also indicate a high level of international student satisfaction with the quality of the educational environment and facilities, as well as with academic services. The study found that international students are generally satisfied with the university services at King Saud University.

## **2.1. Benefiting from Previous Studies:**

This current study expands on the topic of educational quality in higher education institutions, providing a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of this field compared to previous studies. In constructing this cognitive framework, the researcher relied

on a review of several studies that addressed the quality of educational services and the standards that distinguished faculty members in Arab higher education institutions should possess. This allowed him to develop a clear vision of the foundations that govern the quality of academic performance. Unlike previous studies, which often focused on assessing educational quality from a general perspective or the perspective of local students, this study is unique in highlighting international students' direct experiences with their professors, relying on a qualitative methodology as a research approach that allows for a deeper understanding of personal experiences and expertise. This research approach aims to fill a knowledge gap in the Arabic literature on higher education quality and to enrich local knowledge in Saudi Arabia about international students' conditions by providing authentic findings based on field data. This can contribute to improving educational policies and academic practices, and enhancing the university environment to be more inclusive and accommodating of cultural diversity.

### 3. Methodology.

#### 3.1. Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of 35 male international students—26 from African countries, four from Europe, and five from Asia—12 of whom were undergraduate students. At the same time, the majority were graduate students at a public university in Saudi Arabia. Participants' ages ranged from 25 to 38, and all received full scholarships from the Saudi government. With participants' consent, the principal investigator conducted semi-structured interviews, primarily via Zoom, with a few in-person interviews in 2023 and 2024. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, and peer review was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative data. A qualitative approach was chosen for its suitability in gaining deeper insights, employing a phenomenological methodology to understand human experiences without generalizing results (Al-Rashidi, 2018). Data analysis followed Bingham's (2023) five-stage methodology: organizing interview data, developing initial codes, attaining a preliminary understanding, interpreting the data to identify key patterns, and explaining the results within the context of the studied phenomenon.

According to Bingham (2023), the researcher conducted the data analysis using the five-stage methodology developed by Bingham (2023). The researcher personally executed each step as follows:

- A. The researcher collected all data obtained from field interviews and systematically organized them to facilitate subsequent analysis.
- B. The researcher derived initial codes that reflect the main ideas and concepts that emerged from the raw data.
- C. The researcher sought to form a preliminary conception of the data by reviewing the initial codes and linking them to the context of the study.
- D. The researcher engaged in an in-depth analysis of the data to uncover key patterns and themes that reflect the essence of the phenomenon under study.
- E. The researcher worked to formulate a comprehensive interpretation of the results and link them to the general context of the phenomenon under study, achieving a deeper understanding of its dimensions and implications

### 4. Results.

Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed six major themes that collectively illustrate the experiences of international students with their professors. These themes reflect multiple dimensions of the academic relationship and its impact on student engagement, satisfaction, and integration. The identified themes are as follows:

1. General Positive Impressions.
2. Teaching Approaches.
3. Flexibility.
4. Individual Differences among Learners.
5. Support.
6. Fairness.

#### **4.1. General Positive Impressions**

The results of the qualitative study revealed positive impressions among international students regarding their professors' interactions with them. None of the participants reported experiencing any form of discrimination or racist behavior by faculty members, whether in the classroom or during individual meetings during office hours. Most participants agreed that their professors treated them with a high degree of respect and professionalism, and even demonstrated remarkable empathy for the challenges international students face in adapting academically and culturally. According to the participants' statements, academic relationships between professors and international students were characterized by inclusion and support, particularly when language difficulties or cultural differences affected academic performance. Several participants described specific situations in which professors made accommodations, such as extending deadlines, re-explaining concepts in simplified ways, or providing additional reading resources. This demonstrates pedagogical awareness and a genuine willingness to accommodate the individual differences and special needs of this group of students. Some students also noted that professors show genuine interest in their educational and personal experiences, sometimes asking them about their countries and cultures, which fosters a sense of belonging and appreciation. These findings reflect a healthy academic climate free of exclusion and a foundation for a fair and stimulating educational experience. The image international students have of their professors in this context is generally positive, contrasting with the literature in other contexts, which suggests that international students are often mistreated or ignored. This reflects an inclusive educational environment that fosters students' ability to integrate and succeed academically.

#### **4.2. Teaching approaches**

The study results showed that the majority of international students expressed general satisfaction with the teaching methods used by faculty members, believing them to be well-aligned with the nature of the educational content and conducive to understanding and comprehension. Participants emphasized that the teaching methods used are diverse and take into account individual differences among students. Professors employ a combination of direct explanations, presentations, class discussions, and the use of modern educational technologies to facilitate learning. Many students noted that the educational methods used in classrooms are advanced and support the learning experience. They rely on interactive displays, digital materials, and e-learning systems, which enhance their engagement with the content and facilitate the learning process, especially for students whose first language is not Arabic or English. Participants also noted the quality of the physical environment in the classrooms, emphasizing that they are comfortable, well-equipped, and provide an atmosphere conducive to concentration and participation. One student noted, "The classrooms are clean, air-conditioned, and equipped with everything we need to learn effectively, and this is something we greatly appreciate." These impressions indicate that the educational environment is not limited to the quality of the curriculum alone, but also includes the competence of professors in conveying knowledge and the availability of a supportive educational infrastructure. This contributes to enhancing international student satisfaction and raising their level of academic integration within the educational institution.

#### **4.3. Flexible**

The study results revealed a noticeable trend among participants in favor of professors who are flexible in their academic approach, both in terms of grading and assignments. All participants expressed a tendency to choose professors known for their relative tolerance of students whenever they had the opportunity to choose departments or faculty members. This trend reflects a desire among international students to minimize the level of academic challenge they may face in a new educational and cultural environment, thereby striving for a smoother learning experience. One participant provided a personal example that embodies this trend: "I dropped the course because I saw him as being too strict, teaching in a style that was almost a monologue without engaging the student in the lesson, as if he was complicating the lesson... what I wanted to teach and tried to avoid." This statement highlights how a student's impression of a professor's strictness or rigid teaching style can lead to a decisive decision to drop a course, indicating the significant impact a professor's style has on a student's international experience. These findings underscore the importance of striking a balance between upholding academic standards and adopting flexible and inclusive practices that cater to the diverse needs of international students. Flexibility, when considered, can improve the quality of learning and raise levels of satisfaction and academic engagement among this group of students.

#### 4.4. Individual Differences among Learners

The study's results revealed that the majority of faculty members possess a good understanding of the individual differences principle among learners and attempt to incorporate it into their classroom teaching approaches. Most respondents stated that teachers consider the differences in academic ability and level of understanding of the content, taking into account the variations in cultural and cognitive backgrounds, and attempt to present the content in diverse ways. However, a few things became obvious, revealing a deficiency in making special accommodations for international students, especially in terms of testing. Two respondents were non-native Arabic students or students with low proficiency in the language of the exam who faced linguistic difficulties in understanding and formulating answers to the questions within the given time frame. While they appreciated professors' empathy in many cases, students observed that the test time was not adjusted to reflect these challenges as they had expected. As one of the participants put it: "The professors do know about our problems, but they do not give us additional time like they do to Arab students during the examinations; however, we need additional time to read and to comprehend because it is not our language. This finding highlights the importance of developing equitable and sensitive assessment processes that take into account the diverse circumstances of international students, including their varying language proficiency levels. Examinees suggested that they should be given extra time to promote a fair treatment and learning experience under more realistic conditions.

#### 4.5. Support

Several study participants' answers indicated that faculty members' support for international students extends not only to classroom settings, but also to individual office hours. This reflected a positive impression among participants of professors' genuine interest in helping students and providing academic and psychological guidance outside of formal lecture hours. Through office meetings, students found an opportunity to ask questions, discuss their academic difficulties, and receive direct guidance to help them improve their performance and understanding of courses. One participant described this experience by saying, "They usually respond and try to help you. They even say in lectures that they are available, that if you need anything, just contact me. There are also office hours, so if you need anything, you can go to them or contact them." This statement reflects a sense of reassurance among international students that their professors are available and willing to go the extra mile to facilitate the learning process, which helps reduce the sense of isolation or challenge that new students may experience in a different academic and cultural environment. He also emphasizes that office hours are an important channel for fostering positive relationships between professors and students, and reflect a supportive and inclusive learning environment that encourages academic integration and mutual trust.

#### 4.6. Fairness

The results of the qualitative study showed that international students view the level of fairness and equity with which their professors treat them positively, particularly in relation to assessments and tests. Nearly all participants confirmed that they did not feel any form of injustice or discrimination compared to their local colleagues. They indicated that their professors ensured all students were treated with the same academic standards, without bias, in the distribution of grades, marking of tests, and evaluation of class participation. Many participants expressed satisfaction with the level of fairness, with one saying, "I never felt I was treated differently because I am an international student. We are evaluated solely based on our performance." Many also felt that their course grades were satisfactory and appropriate for their efforts, which strengthened their confidence in the fairness of the education system. Notably, one participant, reported observing what he described as "grade inflation" within Saudi universities, where he believed some professors awarded students grades higher than they deserved. This was interpreted as possibly reflecting a considerate approach on the part of professors, particularly toward international students, or as a result of their efforts to motivate students and help them adapt to the new educational environment. Overall, these results reflect an educational environment that upholds the principles of justice and fairness and avoids discriminatory practices. This contributes to strengthening international students' trust in their professors and increasing their satisfaction with their educational experience.

### 5. Discussion of results:

The relationship between a university professor and an international student is a crucial factor in shaping a student's educational experience in a new academic environment, which may be culturally and linguistically different from their home

environment. Within the framework of the current study, the experiences of international students with their professors at a Saudi higher education institution were investigated. The aim was to determine the nature of these relationships, their suitability for students' specific needs, and their impact on their academic and cultural adaptation. After organizing, classifying, and analyzing the qualitative data collected from several international students, the results were categorized into a set of central themes that illustrate the features of this relationship, in terms of general impressions, teaching methods, flexibility in dealing with students, consideration of individual differences, support outside the classroom, and fairness in assessment. The results revealed a variety of experiences, but overall, they reflect a positive picture of the level of interaction between professors and international students.

### **5.1. General Positive Impressions**

The study results showed that international students' overall impressions of their professors were positive. All participants confirmed that they did not encounter any form of discrimination or racism, whether in the classroom or during individual meetings during office hours. Indeed, many expressed their deep appreciation for the professors' professionalism and their apparent empathy for the challenges faced by international students, particularly regarding integration into a new educational environment. Some participants recounted specific situations that reflected professors' commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment. These included some professors re-explaining complex concepts in simplified ways, extending assignment deadlines, or offering additional resources. Some professors also showed a clear interest in students' backgrounds, asking about their cultures and countries, which contributed to a sense of belonging and appreciation. These results confirm the existence of a healthy and inclusive academic climate that avoids exclusion and enhances trust in the educational institution. In general, these results are consistent with the studies of Al-Shawawra (2020) and Albeshir (2023).

### **5.2. Teaching Methods**

The majority of international students expressed satisfaction with the teaching methods used by professors, stressing that they were diverse, modern, and sensitive primarily to individual differences among students. Professors used a variety of methods, such as live lectures, presentations, and class discussions, along with the use of modern technologies such as electronic systems and interactive media. This helped students understand academic content more effectively, especially those who are not fluent in Arabic or English as their first languages. Participants also indicated that the physical environment of the classrooms was encouraging and comfortable, which contributed to improved concentration and motivation to participate. One student described the classrooms as clean, air-conditioned, and equipped with everything a student needs, expressing his gratitude for this organizational aspect. This interaction between the quality of method and the quality of space created a comprehensive learning environment that supports student learning and increases their academic engagement. The results are consistent with studies by Al-Shawawra (2020) and Albeshir (2023).

### **5.3. Flexibility**

The study revealed a clear tendency among international students to choose professors known for their flexibility in their academic approach, particularly in assessment and assignment submission. Participants indicated that they avoid professors who are strict or rigid in their teaching style, preferring those who demonstrate understanding of the circumstances a student may face in a new environment. One student stated that he withdrew from a course because the professor's one-sided teaching style, which did not consider student participation, made it difficult for him to understand and interact. This experience highlights how non-interactive or rigid teaching styles negatively impact an international student's decision to continue in a course. This finding highlights the importance of striking a balance between academic rigor and flexibility, considering students' diverse cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds. This result is consistent with the results and recommendations of the following studies (Al-Ali, 2022; Al-Babtain, 2018; Kamel, 2019; Nasiri & Flack, 2019)

### **5.4. Individual Differences among Learners**

The data indicated that a large number of professors are aware of the principle of individual differences and demonstrate a commitment to implementing it by diversifying instructional methods and presenting the material in a manner that suits students' varying abilities. However, this awareness was not sufficiently reflected in assessment policies. Some students reported difficulty completing

exams within the allotted time due to language barriers, as they were not provided with the extra time or accommodations they had expected. One student expressed his disappointment at not being given extra time, even though professors were aware of the extent of the language challenges he faced. This finding underscores the urgent need to revisit assessment mechanisms to be more equitable and take into account the special circumstances of international students, thus promoting fairness and equal opportunities. This finding is consistent with the findings and recommendations of the following studies (Al-Babtain, 2018; Albeshir, 2023).

### 5.5. Support

Several participants revealed that the support they received from professors was not limited to formal lectures, but extended to office hours, which provided an important source of guidance and assistance. This type of support provided students with the opportunity to ask questions, discuss academic challenges, and receive direct guidance to help them improve their performance. One participant emphasized that professors openly expressed their willingness to help and provided clear channels of communication, which created a sense of reassurance and genuine concern. This personal communication also contributed to reducing the sense of isolation that international students may experience and helped build a relationship of mutual trust with the professor. This finding is consistent with the findings and recommendations of Al-Babtain (2018).

### 5.6. Fairness

The study showed that the majority of international students believe that their professors treat them fairly and equally in evaluation and treatment, without discrimination based on nationality or cultural background. Most confirmed that they are evaluated solely based on their actual performance, which has strengthened their confidence in the academic system and enhanced their sense of belonging and satisfaction. One student commented on what he described as "grade inflation" in some courses, but he interpreted it as an attempt by professors to motivate students or relieve pressure. Regardless of the accuracy of this description, this observation highlights the differences in cultural perceptions of evaluation practices. However, it does not negate the general atmosphere of fairness and objectivity, which is an essential factor in enhancing international students' academic satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the studies of Al-Babtain (2018) and Albeshir (2023).

## 6. Study Recommendations

1. Based on the previous findings, the study proposes a set of recommendations that would enhance international students' experience with their professors and improve educational outcomes:
2. Universities should adopt institutional policies that foster an inclusive environment, taking into account the cultural and linguistic needs of international students, both in the classroom and during university activities.
3. Provide periodic training programs for professors on how to deal with international students, covering topics such as multicultural education, academic resilience, individual differences, and psychological and educational support.
4. Review assessment and testing policies to include appropriate adjustments for students facing language challenges, such as granting extra time or providing linguistically simplified tests without compromising academic content.
5. Encourage the use of interactive and integrated teaching methods that integrate modern technology, discussions, and practical activities that help students understand and participate, regardless of their backgrounds.
6. Promote a culture of office hours and encourage students to take advantage of them, while providing academic and psychological counseling services specifically for international students to enhance their adjustment and stability.
7. Encourage professors to adopt practices that promote cultural exchange with international students, such as asking questions about their cultures or engaging them in discussions that connect the course content to their cultural backgrounds.

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