

THE DIFFERENCE IN THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE
STUDENTS IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN SAUDI ARABIA

by

Leon McAuthur Lee II

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine and determine the difference in sense of community in female and male students in an international school in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The independent variable in this study was the biological sex (male and female), and the dependent variable was their sense of community score. This quantitative research used sense of community theory developed by McMillan and Chavis as the foundation of the study. The researcher used a casual-comparative design to analyze the effects of the variables in the study. The students completed a Sense of Community Index (SCI-2) survey to provide the data for this study. The survey was 24 questions and used a Likert scale for scoring the overall sense of community. One hundred sixty-seven students completed the survey and 110 student responses were randomly selected out of the sample size for data analysis. There were 55 female respondents and 55 male respondents. The results were analyzed using an independent t test and the overall sense of community was obtained, with emphasis on the biological sex difference. The results concluded that there was no statistical difference in the male and female students' sense of community and analysis failed to reject the null hypothesis. It is recommended that further studies are done in this area, in hopes that the findings would help in the development of training programs that focus on building sense of community. Such studies includes comparison of sense of community in students who have experienced the traditional school setting and the online setting, evaluating the direct influence teachers and/or parents have on students and their sense of community, as well as comparing a bigger sample of students in not only a private school, but public schools in Saudi Arabia.

Keywords: biological sex, sense of community, membership, international school, students' feelings, divisions

Copyright Page

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Dedication

This manuscript is dedicated to my loving wife, who was there with me through the long hours and sleepless nights. I would also like to dedicate this manuscript to my two wonderful daughters, Olivia Kate and Ella Grace. May this inspire you to not only dream bigger but to work harder to accomplish your dreams.

“The Lord stood by me and gave me strength.” – 2 Tim 4:17.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge every person who has played a role in this academic milestone. I would like to thank my parents for instilling in me the importance of education.

Secondly, I would like to thank all the educators who had a hand in shaping me into the person and educator I am today.

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List of Abbreviations

Sense of Community (SOC)

Sense of Community Index (SCI)

Psychological Sense of Community (PSC)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter will introduce the background related to the sense of community in an international school in a Middle Eastern country, as it relates to biological sex. Using McMillan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of Community Theory, the researcher seeks to determine if the Middle Eastern culture and religion and views on gender have an impact on the students' SOC within an international school in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In this chapter, the researcher will introduce the background related to the SOC in an international school in Jeddah, as it relates to biological sex while identifying the problem and significance of this study

Background

According to McMillan and Chavis, SOC includes four components: the perception of how people's needs are met within a community in which they participate or are included; the amount of influence had within a group; the feeling of membership within a group; and, emotional connection shared with other group members (Farahani & Lozanovska, 2014). Many studies have been conducted on SOC, and initially, scholars focused on geographical community and relationships (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). However, as research in this area expanded, the concept of "community" was redefined (McGowan & Partridge, 2014; Warner & Dixon, 2013). In recent years, SOC has been defined as the ability to acknowledge interdependence with other people and reciprocate the feelings to other people to feel like part of a group (Jason, Stevens, & Ram, 2015). This perspective involves a more in-depth focus on eliciting a sense of belonging to all members of a community. When people understand how they integrate into society, they can identify with a certain crowd and, consequently, begin to change their views on the world and how they choose to navigate through it (Jason, Stevens, & Ram, 2015). It has been suggested

that, inside a classroom, SOC is directly related to a variety of important outcomes for students, including academic achievement, lower levels of bullying, higher social skills, and overall well-being (Prati, Albanesi, & Cicognani, 2017).

Women have been marginalized in Middle Eastern cultures, particularly, in terms of access to educational courses pertaining to technical issues. According to the SOC concept, the only way women can thrive in education is through the support of community instead of alienation (Jason, Stevens, & Ram, 2015). In some Middle Eastern countries, where the social climate does not encourage women to pursue their education, the community support needed for females to thrive may be lacking.

Societies that are embedded in patriarchy have been reluctant to change when it comes to encouraging the education of women (Ndiaye, 2015). For the purpose of this study, gender is defined as one's biological sex at birth. Gender inequalities in the Middle East are connected to the culture and religion of the Arab society (Al-Bakr et al., 2017); specifically, the role of women in the Middle East has been influenced by Islamic beliefs (Al-Bakr et al., 2017). Women are expected to be at home tending to the children and keeping the house in order, while the men are out providing financially for the family. According to Hodges (2017), although women in the Middle East are used to the constraints put on them, such as what they can wear and the amount of education they can receive, they are beginning to progress forward in society. Females are now being educated in both public and private schools, they are assuming jobs that were once held only by males, and females are now able to drive legally. Studies have reported and discussed connections between employment, social opportunity, and education for women (Yusuf, 2015). Notably, having an entire family and community being involved in the education

of children is perceived to be a practice beneficial towards the educational endeavors of children (Shackelford & Maxwell, 2013).

According to Vygotsky's theory, there is significant value in the cognitive development of a child's interaction with the environment (Shabani, 2016). He also argued that a child's internal processes are awakened when the child can interact with the environment and his or her peers. When analyzing the sense of community with both males and females, the goal is to see if the school has in place a community where their students are able to interact freely, while feeling engaged and valued.

Additionally, Vygotsky emphasized the social dimension that involves the interaction of a child with the broader community (Shabani, 2016). Therefore, for a female to effectively compete at the same level as her male counterparts in the education framework, participation within the community is an essential part of her cognitive development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), effective human development occurs when a person is interacting with the human biopsychology (the brain, nervous system, and neurons influence feeling and behavior) and the immediate environment (Ashiabi & O'Neal, 2015). Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that the external environment plays a primary role in the development of a child. Both Vygotsky's and Bronfenbrenner's arguments intersect as they argued that a child's external environment plays a large role in ensuring his or her educational needs are met.

Increasing the support of women's education in patriarchal societies would involve the full participation of each stakeholder within the government and royalties in Saudi Arabia (Ndiaye, 2015). An example of such support could include schools creating activities that focus on building a strong SOC in the school. The involvement of the community in school activities helps in the development of social capital (Ndiaye, 2015). As a result, when an entire school

comes together as a community, it contributes positively toward the development of the child's cognitive process. However, that is not likely to happen in a majority of Middle Eastern countries, where women are still unable to progress in education due to the social and cultural beliefs (Kibaara, 2014).

While female enrollment in Middle Eastern schools is at an all-time high (Abalkhai, 2017; Khraif, R., Salam, A., Al-Mutairi, A., & Elsegaey, I., 2017; Hausmann et al., 2011), there are still limitations in place on females' education and public life (Al-Bakr et al., 2017). A feminist approach provides much-needed awareness to emancipate women from oppressive cultures (Bowman, 2016). Feminists argue that the patriarchy in the society has contributed to attitudes of privilege for one biological sex and neglect towards the other. Feminists argue that for women to prosper, they should be given the same opportunities as men. A sharp focus indicates that feminism advocates for the inclusion of women as essential components of the society (Kibaara, 2014). Saudi Arabia, however, has seen a significant change in the last few decades, with women beginning to assume more responsibility within the public working force (Thompson, 2015). Despite the apparent progression, Thompson (2015) still believes women are still under-represented. The issues related to gender (biological sex) of Saudi women have not been explored to its fullness. Gender issues in Saudi Arabia often included in the much wider research and finding of females in the Middle East (Tlaiss and Mendelson, 2014). In fact, the experiences Saudi women face are much different from other Middle Eastern countries and should be treated separately. The integration of feminism falls under the same category as a SOC in the branch of membership as illustrated by McMillan and Chavis (1986).

On the other hand, society has a serious role to play in increasing the SOC for women in education. It needs to eliminate the barriers that hinder women from gaining entry to education

institutions (Ndiaye, 2015). One of the most effective mechanisms is a consensus that indicates the collective responsibility of the community. Additionally, the government should be part of the initiative through the development of organizations that spread awareness for the support of women's education (Holman, Stuart-Fox, & Hauser, 2018). While education equality amongst males and females has not always been fair in Saudi Arabia, the schooling of females has been one of the country's most publicized achievements (Al-Rasheed, 2013). Though the schooling for females is made available, the correlation between the concept of feminism and education is still gendered. This can be seen through school segregation and physical activity classes.

Problem Statement

The disparity in social acceptance between the male and female sex in the Middle East is among the main factors that contribute to the low enrollment of women in education (Helmer, Schottdorf, Neef, & Battaglia, 2017). In developing countries, males are seen as more important and influential as compared to females (Al Alhareth, Al Dighrir & Al Alhareth, 2015). As a result, those societies provide more support for the advancement of men's education as compared to that of women. Women who enroll in institutions of higher education are always at higher risk of dropping out, due to a lack of confidence and a fear of failure (Tenaw, 2018). The cultural dynamic at large is different in the Middle East from Western countries. Researchers have concluded that Muslim countries have less gender (biological sex) equality than other countries, due to religion and culture (Ditchman, Keegan, Batchos, Haak, and Johnson, 2017).

However, if the society were more accepting, which also falls under the McMillan and Chavis' SOC model (1986), women in society would be able to effectively participate in education and benefit from it (Shackelford & Maxwell, 2013). Additionally, the number of women in undergraduate studies is higher than the number of men, mainly because such

countries are not affected by cultural beliefs as compared to the Middle Eastern countries (Quenzel & Hurrelmann, 2013). Moreover, the developed countries have active organizations, which encourage the empowerment of women (General Assembly, 2011). Middle Eastern countries, on the other hand, lack such a framework to mentor young women in reaching their potential in education (David, 2015).

In addition to the great effect SOC has on females in education, it also positively impacts student achievement when the overall SOC is high within schools. Faircloth and Hamm (2011) showed that students who have a strong SOC also have a higher level of achievement. These researchers concluded that the SOC plays an important role in students' academic success, which explains the importance of measuring the SOC within all school settings.

The studies mentioned above have shown the extent of what has previously been studied as it relates to the SOC and biological sex. In order to address the gap in the literature as it relates to biological sex and a SOC, more research needs to be done. Studies regarding the connections between a SOC and student achievement have been conducted (Faircloth & Hamm, 2011; Solomon et al., 2000). These studies have found that a strong sense of community, equates to a higher level of achievement and success in schools. The problem is that there is a lack of literature that discusses SOC from a gender (biological sex) perspective in an international school setting (Glass, 2018). Furthermore, there is a lack of research done specifically in a community where there is gender inequality, such as the Middle East. This study seeks to examine if the Middle Eastern culture and religion and views on gender have an impact on the students' SOC within an international school.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference in the SOC between male and female students in a K-12 international school in a Middle Eastern country. This research is a non-experimental quantitative study with the researcher using a causal-comparative design (Gall et al., 2007). Middle and high school aged students of who are either male or female (biological sex) will complete the Sense of Community Index 2 (SCI-2) to determine if there is a difference in their feeling of SOC within their school.

The independent variable for the study is biological sex (male and female), and the dependent variable is their Sense of Community (SOC) score as measured on a four-point Likert scale. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), the feeling of belonging is among the fundamental measurements of a SOC (Mannarini & Rochira, 2014). Sense of community, defined by McMillan (1976) as the member's feelings of belonging and that they matter to the community, and a feeling that all members needs will be met through their dedication to the community. The variables in this study, sense of community and biological sex will be investigated within a sample from a population of middle and high school students in a K-12 international school in Saudi Arabia. The international school's student population is majority Middle Eastern students, but there are other nationality represented in their student body as well.

The Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will add to the limited literature on sense of community and biological sex. According to Lim and Richardson (2016), international students face significant challenges when they join foreign institutions of higher learning thus creating the need to analyze how they adapt to new environments that might include differences in cultural beliefs. Gender issues have shaped the methods embraced in decision-making practices thus making it necessary

to have a study that will aid in addressing the pending issues that might be affecting the functionalities of international schools within the Middle Eastern countries (Al-Rasheed, 2013).

Cheng and Chau (2016) emphasized the importance of fulfilling the requirements of students with diversified needs in international learning settings. Pursuing this study will help in providing solutions to the problems that may arise when handling students in internationals within Saudi Arabia as it relates to gender (biological sex) and the sense of community.

Understanding the diversified conditions that face people in society is a critical component in research because it helps to develop useful recommendations to the readers as also observed by Markle (2015). According to Glass (2018), international students establish their multi-locality (the feeling of being at home in multiple places) through developing sets of relationships with others within their school community. Students who attend international schools are also aware that by attending international schools they are submerged into an atmosphere and environment that is diversified and may not represent their own community. Because of this, they tend to long for a sense of belonging. Glass (2018) also viewed that the concept of belonging could be explored from diverse perspectives that include relationships, locality and power. In light of Saudi Arabia having a reputation of gender in-equality, Glass's (2018) study aspires to show that international school has the ability to make all students feel a sense of community, regardless of gender (biological sex) and nationality. This study will examine international students' sense of belonging, but with a huge focus identifying if there is a difference between female and male students, especially Saudi students.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference in *sense of community* between middle and high school male and female students in an international school in Saudi Arabia?

Definitions

1. *Biological sex*: refers to one's biological status that is assigned at birth or during conception (APA, 2015).
2. *Gender*: "refers to the attitudes, feelings and behaviors that a given culture associates with a person's biological sex" (APA, 2015, p. 20).
3. *Influence*: the sense of mattering (making a difference to a group) (Farahani & Lozanovska, 2014).
4. *Membership*: the feeling that you belong to a person or a (Farahani & Lozanovska, 2014).
5. *Reinforcement of needs*: having needs met through resources obtained through membership (Farahani & Lozanovska, 2014).
6. *Sense of community (SOC)*: the perception of needs being met, influence of feeling within a group, membership within a group, and the emotional connection (Farahani & Lozanovska, 2014).
7. *Shared emotional connection*: sharing similar experiences, history, and time (Farahani & Lozanovska, 2014).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The aim of this literature review is to provide the background for the main discussion of SOC in international schools in Saudi Arabia and the effect of gender (biological sex) equality on that SOC. To this end, the researcher undertook several steps in. The first part of the literature review, the researcher explored the extant literature on the history of sense of community theory, gender theory and an articulation of the most pertinent postulates of this theory. When examining the sense of community theory, McMillan & Chavis (1986) described it as the relationships of human with no reference to any location (p. 3).

A quick review of internet and print sources shows that Saudi Arabia has a relatively large network of international schools as compared to several other countries in the world. Such schools are usually opened to cater to the needs of children from non-Arabic families living in Saudi Arabia, as well as to offer Western educational standards to children living in Saudi Arabia. In spite of the commonly held religious and moral beliefs, Saudi Arabia has sizeable communities of American, British, French, German, and other ethnic groups from the West. Indeed, the Saudi oil bonanza has drawn professionals from around the world for either permanent or temporary living. It is quite easy for children from Egyptian, Lebanese, and other Arab families to be accepted into Saudi educational schools; however, children of non-Arab parents cannot a regular Saudi school and may feel uncomfortable there. For a variety of reasons, wealthy Saudi parents send their offspring to international schools in Saudi Arabia because they believe such schools offer the most acceptable and beneficial academic programs and curricula for their children. Ultimately, this ethnic diversity in international schools of Saudi Arabia raises concerns about the SOC in such schools to because the wide diversity in religion

and cultures among the student and staff populations. Indeed, it seems only logical to surmise that Western and Arab students in such schools might struggle to develop a SOC because of their cultural differences, including but not limited to their divergent perceptions of gender and gender roles. According to the Study International Staff (2016), international schools pursue the goal of forging a SOC among their pupils and achieving this goal might be more easily expressed than actually reaching this goal. The preliminary findings allows the researcher to advance a tentative hypothesis that international schools in Saudi Arabia have a different SOC compared to more traditional Saudi schools. A traditional Saudi school allows the student to learn more about their religious values, have a greater knowledge of their own identities and their cultures, and practices with which each Saudi Arabian citizen should become more intimately acquainted.

Currently, there is a lack of research about SOC in international schools of Saudi Arabia. If one narrows the search to sources that are no older than five years, the search results are even more limited. For that reason, the study is even more pertinent because it can help to fill the gap in the literature. Using gender theory as the theoretical foundation of this research project appears most appropriate since gender inequality is prevalent in Saudi society. This study could, therefore, have a perceptible impact on SOC in schools, be they regular or international. Rove (2001) and Graff (2003) have found that generally females tend to feel more of an SOC than males. Next, the researcher examined the research on SOC and articulated the recent tendencies in the current chapter. A review of available literature on the role of gender in Saudi culture and education allowed him to discover the common threads of gender roles and education within the Arab culture. Finally, this chapter also contains the exploration of the history and purposes of international schools, along with the analysis of a sense of belonging within such schools.

Theoretical Framework

Sense of Community Theory

McMillan and Chavis (1986) first created the Sense of Community (SOC) theory three decades ago. In a 1986 treatise on the subject, they proposed that “a sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through commitment to be together” (p.4). Just as with other theoretical frameworks, the work of these men and others served as the starting point for the development of that same theory that came afterward. Over time, the theory has been molded, shaped, and refined (Nowell and Boyd, 2014). Mary Hyde and coauthor David Chavis were able to refine Chavis previous work on the SOC (2008). Chavis, one of the initial researchers of the topic, later collaborated with Hyde in a project in which an earlier expert on this theoretical framework was privileged to update his own prior work. (Hyde & Chavis, 2008).

Most of the later work on SOC either used McMillan’s and Chavis’ (1986) research as a starting point or otherwise contributed sometime later where revisions were made. For instance, Prati, Albanesi, and Cicognani (2018) looked at the confluence of the SOC and the aggressive behavior of students. They studied the association between these two factors because they sought to answer the question as to whether the magnitude of the SOC influenced the aggressive behavior, or lack thereof, of the juvenile participants of the study. Most assuredly, aggressive behavior in juveniles was something else that was pervasively studied in the literature (Prati, Albanesi, & Cicognani, 2018).

Another way in which the theoretical perspective of a SOC has been researched and studied is through comparison and contrast. Chadborn, Edwards, and Reysen (2018) looked at the differences that existed between a SOC and specifically, the attention and loyalty that tend to

be extended by science fiction fans. Researchers studied whether the local residents and neighbors of science fiction fans would receive a greater modicum of loyalty and respect than the fellow science fiction fans with whom they associated with. In a sense, one sort of community was being compared with another. However, one was a new and different community while the other closely resembled what was discussed in McMillan and Chavis's research. Chadborn and Reysen (2018) explored the idea that an SOC can take on different iterations and forms. Further, there is the question as to which local and traditional community tends to get more loyalty from its members.

The SOC and its relationship with scientific and societal shifts is another topic in this field, notably studied by Brennon, Person, & Person (2019). The question that these researchers posed was whether the values related to culture, identity, and community cohesion are the most vulnerable when it comes to climate change within the community (Blennow, Persson & Persson, 2019). The researchers asserted that these values have been minimized, disregarded and otherwise not properly discussed. Blennow, Persson, and Persson (2019) concluded that there is a strong correlation between them. Thus, they expressed that the correlation and/or causality between the two should be the primary focus of research. Also, it is advisable, in at least the general sense, to look at the cause and effect when it comes to a person's SOC. However, it should also be noted that culture and identity are further layers that are being added to the more singular dimension of a SOC. This issue is perhaps too complex and intricate to achieve definitive conclusions. However, it should be explored (Blennow, Persson, & Persson, 2019).

Another relevant issue that has been covered is how to expand and enhance the sense of an existing community. Joseph De Rivera and Caitlin Mahoney (2018) raised the question of how a global SOC can be made more significant by certain people and bodies such as non-

governmental organizations (NGOs) and others. Instead of studying the phenomenon as it exists, they evaluated the possibility of making it larger (De Rivera & Mahoney, 2018). Another timely topic in this field is online behavior among those who have an SOC. The internet and other modern technology have made it easier for people to connect with those individuals far away. How an SOC influences these interactions and people is something that has been pervasively studied by Phirangee. She looked at whether online interactions lessen a pre-existing SOC in a person or a group of people (Phirangee, 2016).

Gender Theory

The following will provide theoretical understandings of gender, which includes gender performativity, bifurcation of consciousness, the concept of women as other (outlined by Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*) and the notion that women should not be limited to the domestic sphere, which is not the sphere they would choose.

According to McElhinny (1998), gender research and theory began with studies at a time when the differences between boys and girls during play were not as readily apparent as one might have thought. What were deemed "core truths" (McElhinny, 1998, p. 171) about gender were used to justify difference between boys and girls. Bogatz (2009) contended that masculinities, while they seemed obvious, were not that readily apparent. Conformity and cultural norms play a big role in how masculinities expressed in the public sphere (Bogatz, 2009).

Gender performativity, a term coined by Judith Butler (1990), is perhaps one of the most popular theories. Salih (2006) cited comments by Butler: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, which is a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time" (p. 55). Eventually, gender performativity reaches levels of cultural entrenchment, in

which subjects are forced to act and respond in rigid ways. Jong & Hendricks (2018) said that Butler sought to establish a difference between sexes (biologically assigned) and gender, a social construct.

Aside from the differentiation of sex and gender is the gender theory of Simone Du Beauvoir, author of *The Second Sex* [put this in italics the way you had it] (2015), who proposed that women are frequently viewed as “other” to the dominant male. According to Smith et al. (n.d.), woman “is incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential” (Jong & Hednriks, 2018, p. 317). In this view women are perceived as secondary to men. Women understand gender as a “social system, built on the biological foundation of human sexual dimorphism, which allocated different roles, rights and responsibilities to male and female humans” (London, 2018, p. 1); others see gender as a “form of identity, located in and asserted by individuals rather than imposed on them from outside” (Beddoes, 2018, p. 1).

Mussett (n.d) further defined this notion, suggesting that woman has always been positioned as second class, in comparison to man, and that her role is defined by what she is *not*, which is man. In fact, woman needs to adopt the discourse of otherness merely to grasp for a definition of her (Mussett, n.d). Beauvoir’s (2015) opinions are considered existential. According to *Philosophy Now* (2019), when girls develop, they are plunged into increasingly complex gendered worlds and expected to behave according to social norms (*Philosophy Now*, 2019).

Betty Friedan (Chansky, 2008), another feminist, argued in her theory that women could be fulfilled by taking on roles that extended outside of the domestic sphere so that their lives or their positions in society could become more meaningful or more enhanced. Friedan’s

contention was that women suffered under the burden of domestic work. It has been suggested that Friedan gave impetus to the beginnings of modern feminism

Women who were stuck at home “were sleepwalking through a meaningless life they had really not chosen” (Yenor, 2016, p.1). Friedan’s (1963) book, *The Feminine Mystique*, suggests that women would not have chosen domestic work naturally, were she given an option, but in a patriarchal society, they are frequently not given this option from the beginning.

Friedan’s (Chansky, 2008) thoughts could be compared to Beauvoir’s, in that both women believed that women were positioned in society as inferior to men, which allowed men to have dominance. This theory also ties into notions of gender performativity. Masculinities and femininities are performed, which makes them rigid indicators and highly steeped in social norms (Parry, 2010). In this way, women’s ‘inferior’ roles in society are not because she chooses them but because she must perform this gender role to the highest degree to be accepted.

Another gender theory is *bifurcation consciousness*, which is the consciousness often experienced by women who cannot gain access to the abstract world of intellectual endeavor. According to Balazan (n.d), the bifurcation of consciousness occurs when women become acutely aware that they belong to two worlds—the one experienced immediately and the one that requires adaptation. This theory is that men are not required to adapt to women’s choices and opinions, while women are required to adapt to men’s (Balazan, n.d). Bifurcated consciousness is also described in the following way: “two modes of knowing and experiencing, and doing, one located in body and in the space it occupies and moves in, the other passing beyond it” (Adam and Sydnie, 2001, p. 214; Garner, 2p. 523). In a sense, there is the perception here that women cannot move beyond their practical realm.

These theories are all connected. Bifurcated consciousness relates to gender performativity because woman is always something hidden away from the domain of man, something inessential that only assists man. In other words, man is the predominant metaphysical being, whereas woman is secondary. From a bifurcated consciousness perspective, woman cannot exist simultaneously in the abstract and public sphere, and in the practical and private one. She must resign to existing in the domestic sphere.

It should be noted that very few intersections exist between intersections between gender theorists and scholars studying SOC. Few authors in the field have thus far used gender as a variable in their studies (Speer, Peterson, Armstead, & Allen, 2013; Rollero, Gattino, & Piccoli, 2013). The analysis of studies that do explore the relationship between gender and SOC reveals that many authors have no clear understanding of gender theory. That shortcoming notwithstanding, some postulates of gender theory have found their way into literature on the topic of SOC. Pretty's and McCarthy's (1991) study, for example, was based on the biologically essentialist view of gender, in as much as the authors' characterization of their male and female subjects' character traits were clearly indicative of the binary opposition of masculinity and femininity. Studies by Peterson and Hughey (2004) and Wiseman, Gonzales, and Salyer (2004), by contrast, rely on the social construction of gender to inform the analysis of SOC. Overall, however, the literature review did not reveal a single study that would meaningfully project the chief postulates of gender theory onto its analysis of SOC. After all, as Elliott and Lemert (2014) noted, individuals are "socialized into distinct gender patterns of behavior" (p. 286). By testing the hypothesis mentioned above, this research project can further enhance the applicability of gender theory, but it cannot advance the theory itself.

Related Literature

Sense of Community

History

SOC is a term used to denote the feelings of individuals about other people in a community as well as the community itself (Ross & Searle, 2018). Pretty, Bishop, Fisher, and Sonn (2006) stated that the current understanding of SOC has “evolved from a rich multidisciplinary ancestry situated in socio-political as well as theoretical domains” (p. 5). In his pioneering survey of the definitions of community, sociologist George Hillery (1955) understood that community could be seen as a place, value, or common purpose. More specifically, he established that community was characterized by the presence of a geographical area, social interaction, and social bonds among members. Other psychologists and sociologists researched and used Hillery’s (1955) survey to better understand the concept of SOC. A cascade of studies in the 1960s focused on what was portrayed as the demise of community as a strictly territorial unit and concept (Durkheim, 1964; Warren, 1963). Durkheim (1964), for example, reasoned that common interest was gradually superseding locality as the nucleus of community. These notions and ideas resonated with scholars in the 1970s as well. Gusfield (1975), for instance, distinguished between geographical and relational notions of community. While the geographical notion was self-explanatory, the relational notion, he maintained, was concerned with the “quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location” (Gusfield, 1975, p. 16).

In the ensuing decades, researchers made further efforts to deconstruct the constructiveness of SOC, paying attention to such elements as interdependence, collective consciousness, and mutual responsibility (Doolittle & MacDonald, 1978; McMillan & Chavis,

1986). Doolittle and MacDonald (1978) took the study of SOC to a new level, as they developed the so-called Sense of Community Scale to gauge the levels of SOC in different settings. It appears however, that none of the models of SOC gained more traction in scholarly quarters and proved to be more enduring than the one advanced by McMillan and Chavis (1986).

In their theory of SOC, McMillan and Chavis (1986) broke down this concept into four major elements: membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. In the context of these elements, membership refers to the sense of belonging as well as working in a neighborhood or place established by boundaries. These boundaries are useful in promoting emotional safety through the identification of the people living in the community. Influence is related to the strength of the people affecting the group and the effect of the group on the people. The third element relates the rewards members may receive or anticipate in a group to the fulfillment of their needs. These rewards can be linked to success, status, and other such related benefits. The fourth element is considered the most significant in as much as it relates to the shared emotional connection and becomes the basis for the development of a bond between the community members and the community itself (Ross & Searle, 2018).

Another point of the research focused on the benefits that a SOC could bring to the members of its social group. Sarason (1974), for one, believed that SOC was of paramount importance to the welfare of people within that community. In fact, Sarason introduced the concept in 1974; thereafter, SOC has been studied by several researchers and experts from the field of community and social psychology (Ross & Searle, 2018).

Ahlbrant and Cunningham (1979) reasoned that people sharing an SOC with other members of their neighborhood or other social group were more committed to that social group and more satisfied with their experiences in that social group, compared to individuals lacking

this SOC. Bachrach and Zautra (1985) concluded that a strong SOC translates into a stronger “sense of purpose and perceived control” when individuals are grappling with external threats (p. 127). From these findings one may draw the conclusion that a greater SOC can help a social group to overcome various threats.

A plethora of new studies on SOC emerged at the turn of the 21st century, as sociologists, psychologists, and researchers from other contiguous disciplines contributed to scholars that are forging the theory of SOC. Yet, few researchers have ventured to offer an iconoclastic vision of SOC or defy the classical theory of SOC advanced by Durkheim (1964), Gusfield (1975), Doolittle and MacDonald (1978), McMillan and Chavis (1986), and others. On the other hand, new studies sought to develop alternative approaches to measuring and assessing SOC. Likewise, several researchers sought to tackle the limitations of existing research. McMillan and Chavis (1996) described the lack of a “coherently articulated conceptual perspective focused on sense of community” (p. 3) in the studies produced before their own study. Again, however, as new studies reported largely consistent findings, no major changes occurred within the SOC theory at the time.

There seems to be some degree of academic consensus that higher levels of SOC in elementary, secondary, and high schools could contribute to better scholastic performance of students (Berger, 1997; Solomon et al., 1996). Yet, despite this consensus, very few researchers have studied the correlation between gender and SOC in educational contexts, particularly in international schools. The connections between students’ sense of belonging to gender and race, Rainey et al. (2018) concluded that white men were more likely to report some sense of community, while women of color were not likely to do so. Likewise, the authors identified four factors that could affect sense of belonging reported by all students, irrespective of their color

and gender: “interpersonal relationships, perceived competence, personal interest, and science identity” (p. 1). In another study, Hughes, Im, and Alle (2015) sought to explain how gender differences in sense of belonging to school affect academic achievement of students.

Recognizing that a greater sense of belonging is likely to lead to better academic achievement, the authors disproved Rainey et al.’s (2018) findings and suggested instead that girls of all ethnicities reported a higher sense of belonging than boys did. Overall, this limited and contested nature of findings justifies the need to conduct additional research on the topic.

21st Century Studies

Although most authors respect the beliefs of the original theory of SOC, some nonetheless continue to debate and redefine the concept. The research in this area has taken several different directions. Whereas some researchers merely replicate older studies in new contexts and with new samples, others seek to develop their own models of SOC. Pretty et al. (2006), for example, contended that an individual can be member of several communities at any one time. They further referred to this multifaceted nature of SOC to defend research of SOC in national, gender, political, and religious groups. Viewing SOC as an extra-individual construct, Pretty et al. (2006) explained its differences from individualism:

Sense of community is considered to transcend individualism and is distinctive from individual-level constructs, such as social support. Well-functioning communities are supportive, even though one may not have personal relationships with each individual member. Hence, sense of community can be an elusive cognition and affect, which is not necessarily based on experiencing individual-level transactions. (p.6)

While some researchers test the well-established hypotheses, others focus on those aspects of SOC that have historically received scarce scholarly attention. Acknowledging a lack

of empirical research that would examine the relationship between urban natural spaces and psychological SOC, Gomez, Baur, Hill, and Georgiev (2017) set out to address this limitation. Their findings indicate that urban natural spaces, regardless of use frequency, are positively correlated with higher SOC (Gomez et al., 2017). Boyd and Nowell (2013) applied the concept of SOC to the hitherto disregarded field of management. Their study sought to investigate the sense of community responsibility (SOC-R) in relations to Chavis and' McMillian's measures of SOC in the areas of engagement, fulfillment, and leadership in a collaborative setting. Researchers have also applied the concept of SOC to technology, such as social networking sites (Zhang, 2010). For instance, Mamonov, Koufaris, and Benbunan-Fich (2016) examined the role of the SOC in association with social networking sites that are the places of virtual communities, along with other technical infrastructures, such as knowledge repositories, blogs, and question-and-answer forums. The researchers noted that although some of the social networking sites experienced a good level of success, others failed or came close to failure. In order to understand the causes behind the success or failure of the sites, the researchers worked on an important factor of SOC. They surveyed over 500 Facebook users and found that the SOC had a strong link to the contribution and consumption of information. The researchers also found that the SOC was related to self-disclosure as a result of the private information the users might share with other people, so that trust could be developed and relationships could be strengthened. These links of the SOC strengthen its important role in the sustainability of social networking sites. The researchers also highlighted the importance of social interactions as well as the sense of place related to the social networking sites (i.e., system-related factors) in the development of the SOC in the users (Mamonov et al., 2016).

Yet other researchers have decomposed the concept of SOC into new variables. Zhang and Lin (2012), for example, proposed a two-factor structure of SOC, consisting of community belongingness and community affection. Nevertheless, the SOC is a rather complex concept that can be affected by several factors, including social interaction, walking behavior and walkability, neighborhood design, perceptions of safety, and several other demographic variables (Ross & Searle, 2018). Overall, research into SOC continues to thrive, both informing the well-established areas of study and gradually penetrating into hitherto unaffected disciplines.

Given the nature of current research on SOC, it would be counterproductive to outline all of its directions. It is more effective to focus on those aspects that are most useful to the topic of this research project. For example, because international schools in Saudi Arabia involve ethnic diversity, the correlation between ethnic diversity and the SOC is particularly interesting to explore. A number of consulted studies were similarly concerned with the SOC in ethnically diverse social groups and settings (Barbieri & Zani, 2015; Hombrados-Mendieta, Gomez-Jacinto, Dominguez-Fuentes, & Garcia-Leiva, 2013). Berryhill and Bee (2007), for example, conducted a study to understand if perceptions of race held by students in ethnically diverse learning environments had any bearing on these students' SOC. They argued that ultimately racial climate perceptions are indeed positively correlated with SOC for both white and black students (Berryhill & Bee, 2007). Wiseman, Gonzales, and Salyer (2004) revealed that European-American, Latin-American, and Asian-American students used different forms of campus interactions to ensure their SOC. Overall, studies have produced conflicting results concerning the associations between ethnic diversity and SOC. Gorny Thusand Torunczek-Ruiz (2014) argued that perceived diversity had a positive effect on SOC. This means that the

relationship between ethnic diversity and SOC depends to a great extent on a number of auxiliary dependent variables.

Multiple recent studies also attest to the existence of a strong relationship between sense of community and well-being of individuals within that community (Barbieri & Zani, 2015; Francis, Giles-Corti, Woord, & Knuiman, 2012; Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2013). Mahmoudi Farahani (2016) noted that an elevated SOC in neighborhoods and the improved patterns of neighboring, such as safety and security, could influence the mental well-being of individuals as well as their physical health. In a study conducted on individuals from Alabama and South Carolina, it was found that the different aspects of happiness, improved personal coping, and decreased level of worrying were significantly linked to the SOC. In other words, the study showed that the people with a stronger SOC showed less worry and more happiness and perceived themselves to be proficient at handling the different issues of their lives. This outcome indicates that the improvement in the SOC of the neighborhood (which is synonymous with the SOC) could also positively affect the well-being of individuals and their overall psychological health. Researchers have also found that individual health is strongly associated with feelings of membership, fulfillment of need, and shared emotional connections with neighbors (Farahani, 2016). According to Farrell, Aubry, and Coulombe (2004), social support obtained through social interaction that develops among neighbors can help in developing a better sense of well-being. On a further note, an improved sense of individual well-being may help in the development of the interest of the individuals in neighborhood activities (Farrell et al., 2004). It is important to point out that neighborhood relationships have a critical impact on certain groups of individuals, such as children, handicapped, and elderly people, who may spend a large amount of their time not only in their homes but also in the neighboring areas (Farahani, 2016). Guest

and Wierzbicki (1999) also underlined the importance of the neighborhood in the well-being of poor people.

In their research, Ross and Searle (2018) studied the associations between leisure time physical activity, the neighborhood environment, and the SOC. They found that leisure time physical activity has a positive association with the SOC while neighborhood environment is not only positively associated with the leisure time physical activity but also with the SOC. On the basis of these findings, the researchers proposed that the elements that can positively affect the SOC, such as leisure time physical activity and neighborhood environment, could be used in interventions related to the well-being of the individuals. Moreover, these elements can also help in prosocial behaviors, such as voting and helping other people (Ross & Searle, 2018). Farahani (2016) also investigated the impact of neighborhoods on the SOC. The author noted that the concept of neighborhood in the present era is different from the same concept in the past when strong relationships and close friendships were manifested more strongly. Today there are certain patterns of neighboring, such as helpfulness, friendly recognition, and proactive intervention. Therefore, the SOC is related to the patterns of neighboring found in the present era such as, for example, the neighborhood providing the sense of safety and security, thereby leading to the well-being of the individuals (Farahani, 2016).

Examining the link between SOC and the quality of such public spaces as schools and community centers, Francis et al. (2012), for example, determined that a stronger SOC contributed to the feelings of safety and security and motivated participation in community affairs. Importantly, several studies examined this relationship in the context of immigrant populations (Barbieri & Zani, 2015; Hombrados-Mendieta et al., 2013; Mannarini, Talo, Mezzi, & Procentese, 2018). Because international schools in Saudi Arabia are also geared to the needs

of non-Saudi children, the findings of such studies are particularly relevant to this research project. Relying on a sample of African immigrants in Spain, Hombrados-Mendieta et al. (2013) contended that the SOC could moderate the debilitating effects of migration and enhance the well-being of immigrants in other ways. In a similar study, Mannarini et al. (2018) explored the relationships between territorial and ethnic senses of community, on the one hand, and acculturation behaviors on the other, to find that both territorial and ethnic senses of community were positively associated with integration and negatively with marginalization. Ramos, Suarez, Leon, and Trinidad (2017) established that Hispanic immigrants in rural Nebraska with a greater SOC were more satisfied with their life, compared to those exhibiting a lower SOC.

Gender and SOC Studies

In the concluding remarks about the existing scholarship on SOC, it is vital to outline briefly the role of gender variables in these studies. Until now, the relationship between gender and SOC has received little scholarly attention. One of the earliest studies exploring the role of gender differences in the SOC was conducted by Pretty and McCarthy (1991). The researchers found that males and females working in the same corporation indeed derived their SOC from different sources:

Male managers' sense of community was predicted by their perceptions of peer cohesion and involvement, while female managers' sense of community was predicted by their perceptions of supervisor support, involvement, and work pressure. Male non-managers' sense of community was predicted by their perceptions of involvement and supervisor support, and female non-managers' sense of community was predicted by perceptions of involvement and peer cohesion. (p. 351)

The findings produced thus far are inconclusive and often contradictory. Using SOC as a measure of connectedness, Peterson and Hughey (2004), for example, opined that gender is also linked to social cohesion. In contrast, a study of SOC in a cross-cultural educational setting by Wiseman, Gonzales, and Salyer (2004) found no significant differences in sense of community due to one's biological sex. Examining SOC among medical professionals, Lewis, McVay-Dyche, Chen, and Seto (2015) also failed to find statistically significant differences in the SOC with regard to biological sex. To complicate the issue even more, Speer, Peterson, Armstead and Allen (2013) found that the relationship between gender (biological sex) and sense of community differed from one income group to another. In the study, the researchers worked with 562 people in five different communities in the United States. They focused on gender and its relation to the sense of community, while considering the income as a moderator of this relationship. They found that, among the participants of the study, income was associated with the sense of community, and the SOC could be related to the sense of empowerment of the individuals (Speer et al., 2013). In another study, Cicognani, Martinengo, Albanesi, Piccoli, and Rollero (2014), who studied the SOC in adolescents and the role of gender and age in terms of the SOC, found differences in gender. Their investigation included more than 1100 adolescents from 16 to 22 years of age, living in two Italian provinces and having a different quality of life (i.e. socioeconomic status). The researchers found that the levels of SOC varied among adolescents from the different provinces; that is, the individuals in the more "advantaged" context showed a higher sense of community. The increasing age was found to be negatively correlated with the SOC. With respect to biological sex, males showed a higher level of SOC as compared to females, except in the areas with a more "advantaged" context because there the females also had better opportunities to influence people in the community.

It has been noted that usually males enjoy more opportunities for social connectedness and the cultivation of social relationships with other people (Lee & Robbin, 2010). Furthermore, one study showed that the parents of males also encouraged them to become autonomous and make individual experiences and decisions outside their homes and families, while parents and family members of females tended to be more protective of them and restrict their participation in social settings (Wray, Crouter, & Mc Hale, 2010). On the other hand, the parents and family members of females tend to be more protective. Their parents also tend to restrict their participation in social settings, but they did encourage the involvement of females in caring organizations, such as religious organizations, and in the more adult-controlled environment (Cicognani et al., 2014). Kissinger, Campbell, Lombrozo, and Wilson (2009) investigated the effect of gender on the SOC and found that women had a higher SOC when it included increased opportunities. The study participants were from different technical fields, including computer science, civil, environmental and electrical engineering, in universities in the United States. The researchers discovered that the sense of belonging and community was higher among women who were present in the engineering fields, thereby indicating that women who have been highly represented have a higher level of overall sense of connection. It has also been noted that female students who were pursuing engineering had more opportunities to developing a strong SOC. On the basis of the findings of these studies, it can be argued that the sense of isolation in females resulted in the development of the decreased SOC, whereas the persistence in a particular field, the number of females in that field, and an increased level of opportunities resulted in increased SOC. Moreover, this sense of isolation could potentially be altered by increasing the opportunities for the females in a particular field (Kissinger et al., 2009).

Saudi Arabia

Women in Saudi

Gender literally denotes either of the two sexes, male or female, especially when regarding cultural and social variances rather than biological differences. The terminology is similarly used on a broad basis to mean the identity range not corresponding to established ideas of female and male (Mikkola, 2008). In simple terms, gender refers to the range of features that pertain to and differentiate between femininity and masculinity. These features may encompass social structures that are sex-based, sex, or gender identity (Carment et al., 2016). In Saudi Arabia, especially during the 20th and early 21st centuries, there was the limitation of Saudi Arabian women's rights because of the sharia law application (Carment et al., 2016). According to Carment et al. (2016), the ranking of Saudi Arabia for gender parity by the 2016 *Global Gender Gap Report* of the *World's Economic Forum* was 141 out of 144 nations, a deterioration from position 134 out of 145 nations in 2015.

It must be stated that the opportunities for higher education for Saudi Arabian women are on the rise because of the improvement in the provision of higher education for females. However, the government is still not in a position to give the quality of education that women require to obtain entrance to quality educational institutions across the nation (Al Alhareth, Al Dighrir & Al Alhareth, 2015). The opportunities and the provision are much more available for individuals residing in larger towns, whereas females in rural regions of the nation find it virtually impossible to access these opportunities for quality education. Women in the developed areas that are in close proximity to good universities have numerous limitation factors that include religion, society, and culture that effects them obtaining college education (Al Alhareth,

Al Dighrir & Al Alhareth, 2015). Nevertheless, the government of Saudi Arabia is on the correct track in improving education for its women.

Alfarani's (2014) study reveals two principal factors affecting the adoption and use of mobile learning among female tutors at a Saudi University. These factors are the perceived social culture and resistance to change (Alfarani, 2014). The analysis of an online questionnaire completed by 165 faculty staff of female sex unveils the present use and intention of using mobile learning. Several significant matters are revealed for mobile learning practice and research and further extending knowledge in the mobile-learning field (Alfarani, 2014). It is worth noting that female education advancement has the limitation whose cause is the social culture perception and resistance to change.

Alhejji, Ng, Garavan & Carbery (2018) explored the factors that hinder and promote the efforts of equality of an international corporation that operates in the Middle East. More precisely, the scholars obtained lessons from the case study to write an informal pressure exertion on a British International company that operates in the Saudi nation. The scholars were seeking to the various factors influencing the approaches of the host's gender equality (Alhejji et al., 2018). The results suggest that even though official institutions and policies support gender equality, there are cultural demands and customs that are daunting and intimidating to such initiatives (Alhejji et al., 2018). The broad investigation brought by this research provided information that the public policy and decision makers in the organization could use to find the correct policy instrument for promoting gender equality to enhance economic development.

Alhejji, Ng, Garavan & Carbery's (2018) study aimed to explore and support women entrepreneurs of Saudi Arabia, especially when commencing and operating a new business.

Welsh, Memili, Kaciak & Al Sadoon (2014) examined the factors relevant to family support,

knowledge base, and help from external sources that influence the creation of new ventures. Findings suggested that females are the key in the majority; that is 55% of females own businesses. Seventy percent of women possess more than 51% of companies and 42 began the ventures by themselves (Welsh et al., 2014). Businesswomen owners in Saudi are very educated, obtain help from friends and family, and have the rating of being excellent in innovation and interpersonal skills. More studies should be done on the contributing qualities of successful firms that are women-owned in Saudi (Welsh et al., 2014). The scholars do discuss the relevant implications that these qualities have for the business environment, opportunities and challenges to the women entrepreneurship of Saudi Arabia.

Al Alhareth, Al Alhareth & Al Dighrir (2015) expressed that the society in Saudi Arabia is a unique mixture of culture and religion, posing hardships for the administration over women's education. Women's position in the society is a complex one, and women face excessive hindrances in their efforts to earn an education because they live under the authoritarian rule of males (Al Alhareth et al., 2015). The scholars reviewed the literature on society and women in Saudi Arabia and the effect on women's academic achievement. While doing so, they took into consideration many varying factors that include the presence of Saudi Society Islamic Feminism, Feminist Theory, Women's status in the Saudi society, and the Quran, Muslims Holy Book. These factors bar the advancement of the female from academic progress in the Saudi Arabian society.

Culture and Saudi Women

As mentioned above, Saudi authorities have recently gained worldwide publicity with their introduction of a number of reforms to enhance the status of women in society. Women are now able to work in multiple career avenues, attend universities and even, as of 2018, are able to

drive. Given the renewed academic and journalistic interest in the subject, it would be logical to begin this subsection with the discussion of this new development. Because too little time has passed since the implementation of the reforms, and the effects of these reforms have not yet fully manifested themselves, there are few comprehensive studies that would systematically examine the changing face of gender roles in Saudi Arabia. The available literature is limited mostly to newspaper articles, although scholarly journal articles can also be found.

Thus, a careful search of online databases with key terms “reform,” “women,” and “Saudi Arabia” turns up a myriad of articles in *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Al-Jazeera*, and other influential international newspapers. One common thread in the reviewed literature suggests that Saudi Arabia had, until recently, been the only country in the world to where women are forbidden to driving motor vehicles (Shaw et al., 2018; Tucker & Lowi, 2018). In June 2018, however, the Saudi government officially lifted the ban (Tucker & Lowi, 2018). Several years earlier, in December 2015, the Saudi government allowed women to run for office and even vote in municipal elections (Tucker & Lowi, 2018). In addition to these important moves, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman—the chief mastermind behind the reforms—has also introduced measures to limit the powers of the *mutaween* (religious Saudi police), allowing female singers to perform in public, authorizing Saudi females to attend mixed-gender music concerts and other cultural and athletic events, and encouraging the entry of females into the national work force (Tucker & Lowi, 2018). Generally, the consulted authors concurred that the ongoing gender reform is designed to allow Saudi women into public space. They also concurred that Saudi Arabia has advanced considerably in empowering women and eliminating its ossified gender roles.

At the same time, however, the consulted authors were also unanimous in their belief that Saudi Arabia still has much work to do on the path of revising its gender roles and ensuring gender equality. According to Renard (2014) and Valentine (2015), despite the recent revocation of several decades-old bans, women in Saudi Arabia are still treated as legal minors or even servants. As shown by reviewed scholarship, Saudi women face a wide range of restrictions. They cannot enter a cemetery (Ammar, 2018), compete in sports tournaments (Beckerle, 2016), appear in the streets in improper clothes (Ammar, 2018; Beckerle, 2016), or engage in other activities without the consent of their male guardians. In the same vein, the religious police still patrol the streets with the goal of “enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong” (Valentine, 2015, p. 134).

The adherence to traditional gender roles in Saudi Arabia also causes a great deal of scholarly debates. Valentine (2015) agreed that gender roles in this country are still very rigid and outdated, as many traditional families relegate female members to the domestic sphere. Brought up on a dogmatic understanding of gender roles, parents willingly indoctrinate their daughters about their preordained mission of raising children and taking care of the household (Renard, 2014). At the same time, Renard (2014) maintained, such parents resist or are often mute about the ideas and ideals of gender equality. By contrast males are taught to be breadwinners and guardians of their female family members (Renard, 2014). Although similar approaches to children’s education can be witnessed in some other parts of the world, Saudis have taken these measures to extremes, delegating all decision-making powers to males (Beckerle, 2016; Renard, 2014; Valentine, 2015).

The system of male guardianship in Saudi Arabia merits separate attention in this context. Scholars agree that the system of male guardianship continues to restrict the freedoms of Saudi

women (Ammar, 2018; Beckerle, 2016; Valentine, 2015). Under this system, a male guardian (husband/father), has virtually unlimited freedom to make decisions on behalf of the female entrusted to him (Beckerle, 2016). Although this system is not enshrined in codified law, Saudi females are nonetheless required to obtain the permission of their male guardians for travelling both within the country and abroad, marrying and divorcing, or even exiting prison (Ammar, 2018; Beckerle, 2016). Ammar (2018) summarized conventional wisdom, stating that this system is deeply unjust towards women because it forces them to obtain the authorization of their male guardians even when females want to divorce them or file a complaint against them.

The plight of women is not limited to the restrictions they face. Likewise, the dominance of men is not limited to the decision-making powers they have over women and other preferences they enjoy. Nothing, perhaps, is more indicative of the skewed nature of gender roles in Saudi Arabia than the omnipresent gender segregation in the country. Moreover, gender segregation remains a persistent problem on the path to a more fairer gender policy (Ammar, 2018; Beckerle, 2016; Gorney & Addario, 2016). According to Gorney and Addario (2016), for example, virtually “all lines, counters, and eating areas are divided to keep unrelated men and women apart” with the supposed goals of showing deference to God, honoring traditions, and keeping society orderly (p. 1). Similarly, banks, offices, universities, and other public buildings have separate entrances for men and women (Ammar, 2018). Gorney and Addario (2016) agreed with their colleagues, further adding, and “All sorts of practical matters, including the physical layout of buildings, are arranged in deference to mandates that Saudi women be segregated from men” (p. 1). They even recounted a curious occurrence, when Saudi leaders had to decide how they should arrange seating in the Shura following the announcement of King Abdullah in 2011 began assigning women to his council (Gorney & Addario, 2016). Overall, the overarching

purpose of maintaining gender segregation is to prevent gender mixing and to minimize contacts between the sexes in the country. As one woman summarized, the generally accepted rules of propriety for Saudi females is this: “I cannot touch a male who is not my father, my uncle, my brother” (Gorney & Addario, 2016, p. 1).

At the heart of gender segregation in Saudi Arabia, the consulted authors seemed to agree, are several factors. Of course, the uncompromising reluctance of the Saudi leadership to introduce a radical gender reform is part of the problem. Yet, the roots of the problem reach deeper. Valentine (2015), for one, noted that the Saudis derive their understanding of gender roles from the Sharia, which is, in turn, based on the Quran and supplementary *hadiths*.

AlBendar (2017) cited the *Encyclopedia of Human Rights* to explain:

“Two traditional Islamic ideas that shapes the rights of women in Saudi Arabia are: the justification of the segregation of sex under the Sharia legal notion of “shielding from corruption” (*dar al-fasaad*), and women’s alleged “lack of capacity” (*adam al-kifaa’ah*), which is the basis of the necessity of a male guardian” (para. 2).

While the obligation of responsibility for continued disempowerment -- by Western standards, at least—of women in Saudi Arabia should be placed on consecutive Saudi administrations, it appears that at least some degree of responsibility lies with Saudi women themselves (Alwedinani, 2016; Makboul, 2017; Pileberg, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018). In her recent article, Makboul (2017), a seminal researcher of gender politics in Saudi Arabia, challenged the traditional assumption that the official interpretation of Islam is the only factor restricting Saudi women’s engagement in the public sphere. Alwedinani (2016) claimed that many Saudi women embrace their conventional gender roles on purpose, looking skeptically at the possibility of female empowerment. From the perspective of Shaw et al. (2018), female empowerment

remains an alien concept to many Saudis. In another study, Makboul (2017) investigated the support base of Saudi Arabia's online star and most prominent female preacher, Nawal Al-Eid and the behavior of Saudi women on social media in general to conclude that many Saudi women support gender segregation in the work place and other traditional gender roles (cited in Pileberg, 2017). Part of the explanation for this phenomenon is that Saudi women perceive increased secularism and liberal feminism as Western inventions—inventions that are inimical to their traditional lifestyles and values (Pileberg, 2017; Shaw et al., 2018).

“The first explanation is that religious men believed that by allowing girls to study at public schools, Saudi society would be exposed to the West and its culture, and then the Saudi society would be negatively affected (AlMunajjed, 1997). In fact, the religious men usually believed that any item or any idea imported from Western culture was not to be trusted, even though society might be in need of that idea” (Alharbi, 2014, p. 2022).

To provide just one example, Makboul (2017) explained how American support for the 2011 campaign to allow Saudi women driving privileges ruined the momentum for this campaign, as many Saudi people regarded this support as yet another Western plot to change Saudi society (cited in Pileberg, 2017).

Education

History of Saudi Arabia Education

The educational system of Saudi Arabia is known for the extensive influence of religion on its contents. The modern history of Saudi Arabian education can be traced back to the declaration of the country's independence in 1932 (Shahi, n.d.), which paved the way for the consolidation of Wahhabism as the country's ruling doctrine (Commins, n.d.). Thus, the early education system in Saudi closely conformed to the ideals of Wahhabism, meaning that it was extremely theologically oriented (Al Jarman, 2017). The curriculum was based on teachings of

the Qur'an, Islamic laws, Arabic grammar, and the life of Mohammad, the prophet. Various internal and external influences, however, paved the way for the expansion of the country's educational model.

One of these pressures came with the need for various industries for better-trained workers. While some of these companies had sent their employees to train in western universities, this approach was not sufficiently successful. The need to educate future workers resulted in gradual reformatations, and, in 1953, King Abd al-Aziz directed the transformation of the Hijaz-based education to the country's Ministry of Education (Commins, n.d.). Initially, the ministry received minimal financial support from the government. It was in 1958 when the education sector gained considerable support that an impressive improvement in elementary education occurred with the spread of schools in provincial towns.

Traditional Saudi Schools

The educational system in Saudi Arabia has seen several changes with the continuously rising demand for schools. The Saudi educational system has transitioned from only males being educated, to females the opportunity not only to attend elementary schools and universities, but also to be accepted in various careers that were once dominated by males. These schools also include middle schools in which both Saudi-born parents and foreign-born parents show interest. Foreign-born parents, however, often seek schools with English as the medium of instruction (Aburizaizah, Kim, & Fuller, 2016). The government has also allowed several private and international schools to grow in the country with the government curriculum (Prokop, 2003). Since 2003, Saudi government has taken the responsibility of educating the girls, although the female enrollment in gender-separated institutions started much earlier (Alhakami, 2004).

A common thread in the reviewed literature indicates that education is a powerful instrument in the hands of reform-minded Saudi women (Drury, 2015; Tucker & Lowi, 2018). Drury (2015), for example, claimed that the gains in women's education in recent decades have led to broader change of gender policies in the country. It appears that Saudi Arabia has indeed made dramatic advances in women's education. Rawaf and Simmons (1991) explained that public formal education was unavailable for women in Saudi Arabia until 1960. They reported that within a short time, in 1986, 48% of all Saudi girls aged 6 to 11 attended primary school. Likewise, 26% of all Saudi girls aged 12 to 17 attended secondary school in 1986 (Rawaf & Simmons, 1991). In the ensuing decades, school attendance rates increased further, as Saudi leaders made education compulsory (Alwedinani, 2016). Drury (2015) offered compatible statistics in her article, stating that female literacy rates in Saudi Arabia rose from less than 10% in the early 1970s to slightly over 90% in early 2010s. Overall, the reviewed literature shows that Saudi females have almost caught up with males in terms of school attendance and literacy within a few decades, and the education gender gap is rapidly closing.

In recent years, Saudi Arabia has scored a number of other achievements in the sector of education. For example, the establishment of Science in Technology at King Abdullah University in 2009 heralded a new milestone in the movement to desegregate the public sphere of Saudi Arabia. As Badri and Wiloughby (2015) explained, this university was the first coeducational university in the country. Even though the current Saudi Arabia leadership strives to enhance the quality of female education, some challenges still persist. First, when Saudi women desire to enroll in universities abroad, they need the permission of their male guardians (Alwedinani, 2016; Badri & Wiloughby, 2015). This is only one of the many manifestations of gender inequality in education. Second, Alwedinani's (2016) study shows that Saudi women

have a limited choice of subjects in higher education. Zoepf (2016) mentioned that law became part of the curriculum of women's colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia only in 2004, meaning that the first female law students in the country graduated four years later. Today, many laypersons and faculty members alike still frown upon female students undertaking legal studies (Alwedinani, 2016). In the same vein, available evidence indicates that women still face difficulties matriculating into engineering, science, and other male-dominated programs (Alwedinani, 2016; Badri & Wiloughby, 2015).

However, many of the consulted authors agree that the most troublesome manifestation of gender inequality in education is the continued gender segregation of classrooms (Alwedinani, 2016; Badri & Wiloughby, 2015; Baki, 2004; El-Sanabary, 1994). Almost all public schools, and higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia are gender segregated (Baki, 2004). In other words, boys and girls study in separate classrooms, as compared to mixed classrooms in the West. This arrangement supports the kingdom's parochial interpretation of Islamic values of modesty, Alwedinani (2016) stated. A quick analysis of the websites of international schools operating in Saudi Arabia shows that they are usually coeducational. The number of these schools is minimal compared to the number of public schools. In other words, the problem of gender in the educational sector of Saudi Arabia is as salient as ever. In this context, El-Sanabary (1994) discussed how such enduring problems as gender-segregated educational facilities and gender-specific educational policies emphasizing women's domestic function perpetuate gender divisions in the educational system of Saudi Arabia:

“Saudi education, a microcosm of Saudi Arabian society, has intentionally instituted these mechanisms and structures as a means of cultural conservation and social control. The Saudi experience proves previous research findings that female educational expansion

does indeed increase women's social and occupational options, but does not necessarily alter gender and power relations" (p. 141).

Although more than two decades have passed since the publication of El-Sanabary's (1994) article, his conclusions still remain valid today. Furthermore, evidence collected by psychologists and sociologists shows that any sort of segregation in educational facilities—racial segregation or gender segregation—can have detrimental psychological effects on individuals and equally detrimental societal effects (Braddock, and McPartland, 1989). Specifically, psychological effects of segregation run the gamut from low self-esteem, skewed self-concepts, and other personality issues to difficulties in peer relations (AlMatrouk, 2016). Moreover, a study by Keener, Mehta, and Strough (2012) found links between learning in gender-segregated classrooms, on the one hand, and sexism in adolescent years, on the other. Although no studies have been conducted to investigate SOC in gender-segregated classrooms, one might cautiously assume that students in such classrooms would have a different degree of SOC, compared to their peers studying in mixed classrooms.

Some of the consulted authors believe that gender segregation in Saudi educational facilities hinders female employment. Baki (2004), for example, asserted that gender segregation in education helps to transmit the traditional norms and expectations of Saudi society to the employment sector. In reality, however, there is no denying that academic literature supports the position that most Saudi women cannot apply their acquired knowledge in practice, regardless of whether they studied in gender-segregated classrooms or mixed classrooms (Valentine, 2015; Alwedinani, 2016). The most significant difficulty is that the dictates of gender norms prevalent in Saudi society still relegate women to domestic affairs. Syed, Ali, and Hennekam (2018) also studied gender inequality in Saudi Arabia and its employment of females.

In the study, the researchers interviewed 21 females in Saudi Arabia and then analyzed those interviews by utilizing a thematic analysis. They found that several factors at different levels, including macro, meso, and micro-levels, influence the opportunities for employment of females in the country. These factors may include religio-cultural factors, the notions of family honor and female modesty, and issues associated with gender discrimination, segregation, and harassment at work that result in restricting the mobility as well as career development opportunities for women. It has also been noted that male dominance is an important challenge for the females. On a further note, the absence of support of a female's father or husband could make it impossible for the woman to secure employment and to work in Saudi Arabia. However, some of the variables, such as family status, social class, and other aspects of individual identity, could also influence these factors (Syed et al., 2018). Apparently, this unfavorable situation in the labor market will continue until Saudis reconsider in a serious way the gender roles currently prevalent in their country.

International Schools

It is widely agreed that the term “international school” refers to those schools that have international accreditation and offer curricula different from those developed by the host country (Bunnell, 2014; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Pearce, 2013). Most often, curricula in international schools are designed to cater to the learning needs of students who are citizens of the same country from which the specific international school originates (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). Given this mandate pursued by international schools, it seems only logical that the first such schools were founded in overseas locations where there were sizeable communities of potential students. In their seminal study of the origins of international schools, Hayden and Thompson (2008) concurred with this judgment:

“Many such schools had their origins in the expatriate communities of, for instance, employees of multinational organizations whose wish to be accompanied by their children in their globally-mobile careers, and the perceived lack of suitability of local schools, led to the establishment of schools designed for the relatively transient student not catered for locally” (p. 15).

Not all early international schools identified themselves as such and because the very term “international school” has historically caused a flurry of bickering, Hayden and Thompson (2008) argued that it is impossible to pinpoint the origins of the first international school. Citing polarized opinions of several historians, Hayden and Thompson (2008) listed the International College at Spring Grove and the Maseru English Medium Preparatory School in Lesotho, which opened their doors to students in 1866 and 1890 respectively, as the first precursors of international schools.

Stuttering for much of the rest of the 19th century, the international schools movement gained impetus in the early 20th century. In 1924 alone, two international schools were funded in Geneva and Yokohama to cater to expatriate children away from their national contexts (Pearce, 2013). The consulted authors presented several major reasons why the number of international schools grew in the 20th century. Bunnell (2014), for example, ascribed this rapid growth of the international schools movement to the growing number of missionaries, diplomats, military servicemen, employees of multinational organizations, and other individuals travelling abroad for long periods of time. It has also been noted that several government leaders, who have been aided by international donors, have also supported the international or private and have assessed their schools as having a high degree of quality and efficiency (Aburizaizah et al., 2016; Essid, Ouellette, & Vigeant, 2010).

Hayden and Thompson (2008) echoed this idea, adding that such government leaders and international donors were increasingly becoming wary of leaving their children in boarding schools at home. Still, even though international schools grew in numbers across the globe in the 20th century, few people outside the community of diplomats and other expatriates knew about the existence of such schools (Hayden & Thompson, 2008).

Over time, as the concept of international schools evolved and matured, the focus of curricula in international schools shifted from one resembling national curricula of the country of origin to one emphasizing international education, global citizenship, and multilingualism (Pearce, 2013). According to Pearce (2013), international schools began to use this stratagem to both mold their current students into well-educated, worldly citizens and to augment their own appeal to wealthy parents of other nationalities residing in the host country. As a result, in the second half of the 20th century, local families gradually became aware of international schools in their vicinities and to consider such schools as an alternative to local public and private schools. Sharma (2016) explained that international schools metamorphosed from a “virtual foreign enclave within the host country” into sought-after learning institutions with a diverse student population (p. 1). In these circumstances, Hayden and Thompson (2008) concluded, ideology-driven international schools were being founded along market-driven international lines.

Although the consulted authors agreed that the international schools were already flourishing in the second half of the 20th century, they admitted that this sector was experiencing its heyday at this point of history (Bunnell, 2014; Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Pearce, 2013). Depending on how the term “international school” is defined, Hayden and Thompson (2008) estimated there were between 2,000 and 4,000 such schools in the world in the mid-2000s. Today, Sharma (2016) estimated, there are over 8,000 international curriculum schools in the

world, teaching more than four million students. The fulcrum of the international schools movement has now clearly shifted to Southeastern Asia. According to Sharma (2016), China, Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan each had about a dozen international schools in the early 2000s. Today, Sharma (2016) maintained, they have 530, 172, 142, and 233 international curriculum schools respectively.

In Saudi Arabia, there are several dozen international schools, most of them in Jeddah and Riyadh. The majority of these schools were established at the turn of the 20th century. Aburizaizah et al. (2016) further noted that significant differences can be found in the social class background and the students' language in three different types of middle schools, including government, private, and international schools. For instance, more affluent families financially support the private and international schools and help in attracting stronger teachers along with the more useful instructional materials. The length of instructional time has also been found to be significantly longer in the international and private schools as compared to the government schools. Moreover, the commitment of the teachers and the students to the learning has also been found to be significantly higher in the international and private schools as compared to that in the government schools. The principals of the schools also reported that in case of the scarcity of instructional resources, the collaboration of teachers among themselves are also reduced, thereby showing a decreased level of collaboration in the government schools (Aburizaizah et al., 2016). The researchers have also studied students from six different regions in Saudi Arabia and have found that while students' academic abilities differ but little by gender, the students' intelligence is highly variable from one school to another. It has been found that about 72% of the differences in the intelligence of the students could be attributed to the contextual variables of the schools and organizational characteristics, such as curricular context and the school types.

For example, Braun, Jenkins, & Grigg (2006) revealed differences in the intelligence of students coming from the public and private schools. Private schools usually offer an increased number of special, core, and extra courses, and this factor could be associated with the increased level of intelligence (numerical and verbal intelligence) of students enrolled in and graduating from these schools. The schools other than public or government schools also try to differentiate themselves from public schools by providing the specialized courses in areas such as math, science, and English (Hein, Tan, Aljughaiman, & Grigorenko, 2015). International and private schools also give significant consideration to the social organization and social engagement among students and teachers, as compared to government schools.

On a final note, the steady growth of the international schools movement at this juncture of history has important implications for educators. Indeed, because international-curricula schools are growing in popularity, it is imperative to study them from multiple academic angles, so as to better understand what interventions can be taken to not only to improve educational outcomes in such schools, but also to improve the sense of community within schools. Among other things, it is essential to explore how international schools facilitate or, conversely, stunt the development of SOC among students. After all, scholastic performance of students will depend on the atmosphere in the classroom (Berger, 1997; Solomon et al., 1996). For instance, the use of English language for instruction and the utilization of optimized pedagogical techniques in private and international schools may have resulted in the increased attraction of parents towards these schools (Aburizaizah et al., 2016).

As far as international schools are concerned, no such studies have been conducted thus far. Of course, educational settings used in studies by Hughes, Im, and Allele's (2015) and Rainey et al.'s (2018) were somewhat similar to international schools, since they involved

ethnically diverse samples of participants. Yet, international schools might also have other idiosyncratic characteristics about them, which are absent in traditional schools but could influence SOC. For example, many of the consulted authors described international schools as having exceptionally friendly environments with very low levels of bullying to help their expatriate students integrate into the environment of the host country (Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Mansell, 2012; Pearce, 2013). Hypothetically speaking, such a friendly ethos and atmosphere could have an impact on SOC among students in such schools. Most often the students who have been enrolled in private or international schools come from higher-income families, and they have more positive health-related behaviors. Moreover, these students perform at higher levels on different academic tests and exams (Aburizaizah et al., 2016). Yet, the fact that international schools in Saudi Arabia still need to follow some specific rules that are not common in other international schools might have an unexpected effect on the overall atmosphere in such schools.

Traditional Saudi schools vs. International schools

The traditional education in Saudi Arabia focuses on teaching about customs through conventional learning. The intent is to allow the student to learn more about their religious values, knowledge of who they are and their culture, and practices that each Saudi Arabian citizen should know. For instance, despite the introduction of new educational reforms, Islamic studies at schools include the values of practices of the Islamic faith. Religion and culture highly influence every facet of the Saudi Arabian society, including the educational arena (Profanter, 2014). Pavan (2013) states that while the curriculum expanded to include science and technology and other academic subjects, a considerable component of the curriculum still

includes religious studies. Moreover, history is one of the significant subjects in Saudi Arabia, likely because it plays a considerable role in ideological enforcement.

Nevertheless, in recent years, the country has implemented changes in its educational system. The reason for the educational system's expansion is "to make [it] more consistent with the inclusive policies and practices of other nations (Alharbi & Madhesh, 2017). For instance, the adoption of increased specialization program for children with special needs was one method Saudi schools used to solve a problem left unaddressed under the national curriculum.

International schools in Saudi Arabia are different from traditional schools in that the former offer diverse curricula. These schools are either administered by embassies or directed by private organizations. In contrast to traditional schools in Saudi Arabia, where boys and girls are segregated, international schools are generally co-educational. In addition, the curricula of the international schools are diverse, which is largely different from the traditional schools. The reason is likely because the curricula are based on educational models in other countries, specifically the western countries, such as America and Europe. International schools are intended to accommodate the learning needs of expatriates who are living in the region, especially since sending their children to boarding school in their home country may not be an option.

Summary

Saudi Arabia has a large network of international schools that are developed to fulfill the needs of students, both from Saudi and foreign parents (for example, parents who are American, British, French, German and other ethnic groups), living in the country. This diversity of population in Saudi Arabia also plays a factor in the increased level of concerns regarding the SOC in the communities living in Saudi Arabia. Because of the diverse cultural difference, one

can only question if foreigners truly feel a sense of community with Saudi Arabia. Another important aspect related to the people living in Saudi Arabia is the differences in the role of gender and, to a larger extent, gender segregation. For that reason, the researcher is using gender theory as the theoretical foundation, and outlined its main tenets in this review. This theory has several aspects, foundation and has outlined aspects is that gender is a gradually acquired rather than aspect inborn of identity. However, the relation of this theory with the SOC has not been explored much by researchers. The SOC is a term used to denote the feelings of individuals about other people in a community as well as the community itself. This concept started getting increased levels of attention during the last century. Several studies have been published regarding the SOC and its importance in the society. For instance, this sense has been found to be helpful in increasing the health and well-being of individuals living in a society. However, the studies on SOC in the context of Saudi Arabia are scarce. Moreover, the relationship between gender segregation and the SOC in Saudi Arabia requires further study. On an additional note, the role of international schools, which are different from the private schools or government schools in the provision of appropriate education to the students, especially female students, requires further investigation.

Overall, the study of relevant research has confirmed the idea that few scholars have paid attention to the correlation between gender and the SOC in schools, especially in the context of international schools. No single study has analyzed these correlations in the context of international curriculum schools in Saudi Arabia. Overall, although this literature review has provided the background for the analysis of the main question by outlining the main common threads from relevant literature, it has also attested to the need to conduct additional research on the topic. While both ethnicity and gender of students can have some impact on students' SOC,

the lack of studies exploring gender differences in SOC in the context of international schools in Saudi Arabia clearly justifies the need to conduct this research project. The Saudi context is particularly important because, as this literature review has shown, Saudi classrooms are often segregated, and Saudi students—even those studying in international curriculum schools—are expected to follow certain rules of propriety. All these factors might contribute to difficulties in peer relations and other issues that might have an impact on SOC. Indeed, a close reading of gender theory allows the author to surmise that male and female students in international curriculum schools of Saudi Arabia will display different levels of SOC because their inborn and acquired gender differences. By testing the hypothesis stated above, this study will also enhance the applicability of gender theory.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

In chapter three, the researcher introduces the methodology for the study examining the SOC by gender at an international school in Saudi Arabia. The chapter includes the study's research design, the rationale for the design, and the variables, the research question and the hypothesis. Chapter three also contains details on the setting, participants, the instrumentations, and procedures. The conclusion of the chapter will address the data analysis.

Design

This study used a causal-comparative design. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), a causal-comparative design is an observational approach that looks at the relationships between naturally occurring independent and dependent variables. Gall et al. (2007) further stated that a causal-comparison is vital in an initial investigation because it is not possible to manipulate the independent variable. A causal-comparative design allows a researcher to study the cause-and-effect relations under conditions where experimental falsification is impossible (Bloemraad, 2013). The rationale behind this conclusion is that since a researcher investigates the causes after they have influenced another variable, it is impossible to make alterations (Galloway, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to establish whether there is a significant difference in the SOC (dependent variable) in male and female (independent variable) students in an international school in Saudi Arabia. SOC, the dependent variable, is defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986) as one's feeling of belonging. A causal comparative research, according to Gall et al. (2007) is non-experimental in nature. Gall et al. (2017) further states that manipulation to the independent variable cannot be and the dependent variable will in some way be impacted. This variable will

be measured by the Sense of Community Index-2 Scale (SCI-2), which consists of a 24-question questionnaire scored on a four-point Likert scale. The gender of the students was the independent variable. Gender in this study refers to one's biological sex (male or female). The causal-comparative design is deemed appropriate for this study because the study's purpose is to investigate if there is a difference in females and males sense of community within their international school, which is examining the relationships between naturally occurring between two variables.

Research Question

RQ: Is there a difference in *sense of community* between middle and high school male and female students in an international school in Saudi Arabia?

Hypothesis

The null hypotheses for this study are:

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in the *sense of community* between male and female students in an international school in Saudi Arabia, as shown by the Sense of Community Index-2 Scale (SCI-2).

Participants and Setting

Population

The population for this study consisted of students from a private international school in Saudi Arabia. The international school is one of six international learning centers located in the city of Jeddah, a Saudi Arabian city situated in the Hijaz Tihamah area of the Red Sea (World population review, 2018). As the second largest city in the country, Jeddah has a population of approximately four and a half million people (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). It is the most innovative city in Saudi Arabia, and, as a result, it is known as the commercial hub of the

country. The average gross salary in Jeddah is \$63,151 USD, according to an average salary survey of 2017/18 (Average salary survey, 2018). A considerable number of expatriates visit the city to take advantage of available opportunities and prospects. As a result, the population in Jeddah is reasonably diverse.

The international school for this study has a total enrollment population of 1185 students. Of that number, the study's population will include 200 middle school students and 300 high school students. The international institutions in Jeddah often adopt foreign curricula to offer a more diverse education to the students enrolled. The school used in this study uses the American curriculum, with the adoption and use of Common Core standards across the school. It is the only international school in Jeddah that is supported by the Office of Overseas Schools of the US State Department. The student population is quite diverse and consists of students from 51 countries. Similarly, the staff is comprised of both foreign and local hires from over 20 countries. The entire school's population is 1150 students. There are 690 male students and 465 female students. There are 307 students who are Saudi citizens, 214 are male students and 93 are female students.

It is worth noting that the students are also offered after-school activities and clubs that include STEM, arts, music, technology, yoga, and theater. Middle and High school students can participate in sports, which include basketball, volleyball, soccer, table tennis, cheer, and academic quests. Furthermore, the school has various clubs including student council, yearbook, and National Honor Society.

Sample

From the population of students, a convenience sample of 110 students will be obtained from the international school in Saudi Arabia. Gall et al. (2007) defined a convenience sample

as one which is readily available and easy to access. A convenience sample was chosen for this study because it is within the population of the study's setting. This particular sample was chosen because it is taken from the researcher's place of employment, which makes it accessible and familiar. The students were between 11 to 18 years old. According to Gall et al. (2007), 100 participants are required, with a minimum of 50 participants in each group because it allows to obtain at least the minimum sample for a .05 alpha level with a medium effect size of .7.

Therefore, the collected convenience sample of 167 students exceeds the minimum sample size for an independent t test for a medium effect size. Therefore, a random sample of 55 males and 55 females was taken. Of the convenience sample, 96 were middle school students, and of those middle school students 47 were males and 49 females. Of the convenience sample, 71 were high school students, with 40 male and 31 female students. The students in this American International School come from various countries and that can be seen from the country of origin information, which is recorded in the table below.

Table 1

Information on country of origin

Country of origin	Number of students
Saudi Arabia	184
U.S and Canada	250
Gulf Cooperation Council	306
Europe	70
Asia	69
Africa	20
Australia/New Zealand	9
Latin America	10
South Asia	75

The participants are racially and academically diverse with all the major races in the world represented. However, students from Saudi Arabia and the neighboring GCC countries formed the largest percentage of participants. While English is not the first language of many of these

students, all participants are fluent in reading and speaking English, which makes it possible to conduct the survey.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study will be the Sense of Community Index 2 (SCI-2) (see Appendix A for Permission to use the Instrument). The SCI-2 is for students aged 11 to 18 years. McMillan and Chavis (1986) developed the Sense of Community Theory, the foundation from which this scale was derived. The purpose of this instrument is to collect quantitative data that measures the participant's SOC in a particular social setting. In line with this, it is imperative to note this instrument has been used in numerous studies that included workplace, universities, and virtual communities (e.g. Phipps, Cooper, Shores, Williams, Mize, 2015; Sawyer, Beaven, Stringe, Hermena, 2013).

The SCI-2 was developed from the Sense of Community Profile (SCP), created by Chavis in 1976 (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). The SCP consisted of 44 questions that were categorized into four subscales. These included the reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connections (Chavis et al., 2008). From the SCP instrument, Chavis and colleagues created the Sense of Community Index (SCI), consisting of 12 questions that followed the same purpose as that of the SCIP. Developers define the reliability of the SCI as an alpha coefficient of .97, and future studies determined the inconsistency of reliabilities within the subscales of the SCI (Chavis et al., 2008).

Despite the successes of SCI, Obst and White (2004) concluded that there was a need for an updated instrument. In short, the SCI showed inconsistency. Thus, they revised it and designed SCI-2. The SCI-2 was a 24 questions scale with the same measuring purpose and subscales.' The subscales are reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connections.

Reinforcement of needs can be defined as having your needs met through the particular community (Chavis et al., 2008). *Membership* can be defined as the participation within the particular community and *influence* is how person and the community influence each other (Chavis et al., 2008). *Shared emotional connection* is defined as the sense of belonging within the community (Chavis et al., 2008). Each subscale had six questions. Since then, the SCI-2 has been used in studies across multiple settings. For example, Phipps et al. (2015) utilized the SCI-2 to examine how participants who play sports at large institutions contribute to school's retention rates.

Prior to SCI-2, the SCI instrument was only composed of true or false responses, which offered limited variability. Through the revision of SCI, SCI-2 created using a 24 item Likert scale and showed great validity (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). Chavis et al, (2008) determined SCI-2 was a valid instrument and construct validity was determined through analysis. Life satisfaction correlations showed it was .320 ($p \leq .01$), while social and cultural participation correlation was .381 ($p \leq .01$). Ditchman et al. (2017) examined the life satisfaction among adults with brain injury, using the four subscales of the SOC. The outcome helped further prove the validity of the SCI-2 instrument, by showing us that high scores were associated disabled people and their and their feeling of sense of community. The researchers surveyed one hundred and seventy-seven participants and collected demographic information including race, age, and gender. Then, the Cronbach's alpha was employed to measure the reliability of this study.

Table 2

A Measure of Internal Consistency by Cronbach's alpha

Measurement	Score
Total score	.96
Membership	.84
Reinforcement	.91
Influence	.84
Shared emotional connection subscales	.88

Note. Reprinted from Ditchaman et al. (2017). The sense of community (SCI) revised: The reliability and validity of the SCI-2. In *2nd International Community Psychology Conference, Lisboa, Portugal*.

The 24 questions of SCI-2 are scored on a four-point Likert Scale with six questions for each subscale. According to Ditchaman et al. (2017), the survey ought to take between 5 to 10 minutes to complete and should include the scoring of each question and each subscale. The developed survey does come with a scoring guide (Ditchaman et al. 2017). The scores for each item range from 0=Not at all, 1=somewhat, 2=mostly, to 3=completely. The overall score ranges from 0 to 72. An overall rating of 0 means the participant does not have a SOC and the count of 72 means the participant has the highest SOC. It must be noted that none of the items are reversed scored.

Chavis et al. (2008) completed a pilot study, which supported this instrument. The authors tested 36 culturally different people in different settings across the world. To prove the reliability of SCI-2, this study produced the Cronbach alpha reliability scores found in Table 3.

Table 3

The measure of internal consistency by Cronbach's coefficient

Measurement	Score
Total score	.94
Membership	.79
Reinforcement	.83
Influence	.83
Shared emotional connection subscales	.86

Note. Reprinted from Chavis et al. (2017)

In the end, the findings by Chavis et al. (2008) proved to be both valid and reliable across culture, settings, and languages.

Procedures

The researcher sent an email to both the school's superintendent and the divisional (middle and high) principals explaining the study and its purpose. The primary purpose of the

message was to acquire approval to conduct the research. Once permission was granted, the Institutional Review Board's (IRB) approval was requested and was granted (see Appendix B for approval letter). After IRB approval, an email and a letter describing the purpose of the study, the instrument, and the anonymity of the survey was be given to the superintendent and divisional principals to share with the parents. At the same time, the researcher distributed the parent consent form (see Appendix C for consent form) to the school authorities and the parents. The letter and consent form were delivered both electronically.

The researcher met with the middle and high school students and teachers to discuss the nature of the test and explain how the survey should be completed and the time frame of completion. The survey was taken during the third quarter for middle school students and second semester for the high school students. The middle and high school homeroom teachers administered the survey at the beginning of their class. The primary reason for choosing the homeroom class was because all students begin their day with their homeroom teacher. Moreover, the first lessons of the day occur at the same time throughout middle and high school. For students to participate in the study, the consent form were turned in electronically and reviewed by the researcher. Parents only had a week to turn in the consent form.

After the researcher compiled the list of students who are permitted to participate in the study, the survey was sent out to all middle and high school students who receive consent from their parents. After that, the students were required to log into their computers and go to their email from the researcher. After that, the students clicked on the link to the survey from their email. Then, the welcome page was displayed, which provided students with the assent forms (see Appendix D for Student Assent form). Afterward, the students clicked “agree” if they wished to continue with the survey or “disagree” if they wished not to participate. If they

disagreed, they were directed to the end of the survey. If they clicked agree they then clicked "next" and typed-in their demographics, including gender, age range, grade level, and division. After clicking their demographic information, the students were directed to the rest of the survey, where they will answer the questions.

The researcher provided all the middle and high school teachers with a list of students who were permitted to take the survey. After the end of two weeks the results of the survey were calculated and analyzed.

Data Analysis

After the two weeks completion period, the results of the survey were downloaded into a spreadsheet. The responses were reviewed for full completion, and those that were incomplete or lacking answers to core questions were discarded.

The data collected from the survey was entered into SPSS 24.0 to perform the analysis and determine if there was a statistical difference between the groups. An independent t test was used for the data analysis. According to Gall et al. (2007), the independent t test is employed when measuring the statistical difference between the means of two groups. The researcher was examining if there is a difference in the SOC a biological sex (independent variable) and running the t test was appropriate for this study. This test was used to compare the means of two independent groups to determine evidence of significant mean difference.

A box-and-whisker plot for each group was examined for extreme outliers. In brief, an outlier refers to an observation that significantly deviates from other occurrences in the sample (Gupta, Gao, Aggarwal, & Han, 2014). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to test the assumption of normally distributed data, or normality (Gall et al., 2007). Finally, on the assumption of equal variance, the Levine's Test of Equality of Error Variance is employed to

indicate if the variations were equal in each group. Granato, de Araújo Calado, and Jarvis (2014) recommended this statistical test for checking for homogeneity of differences within groups.

Lastly, the *t* test was ran using an alpha level of $p < .05$, and a *t*-value-obtained. The researcher reported the descriptive statistics (M, SD), number (N), number per cell (n), degrees of freedom (DF), *t* value (*t*), significance level (*p*), and effect size and power. Effects size was reported using eta square (Gale, Gilbert, Read, & Goss, 2014).

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a difference between sense of community between middle and high school male and female students in a Saudi Arabia international school. Chapter Four includes the research question, null hypothesis, descriptive statistics, assumption testing and results.

Research Question

The research question for this study:

RQ: Is there a difference in *sense of community* between middle and high school male and female students in an international school in Saudi Arabia?

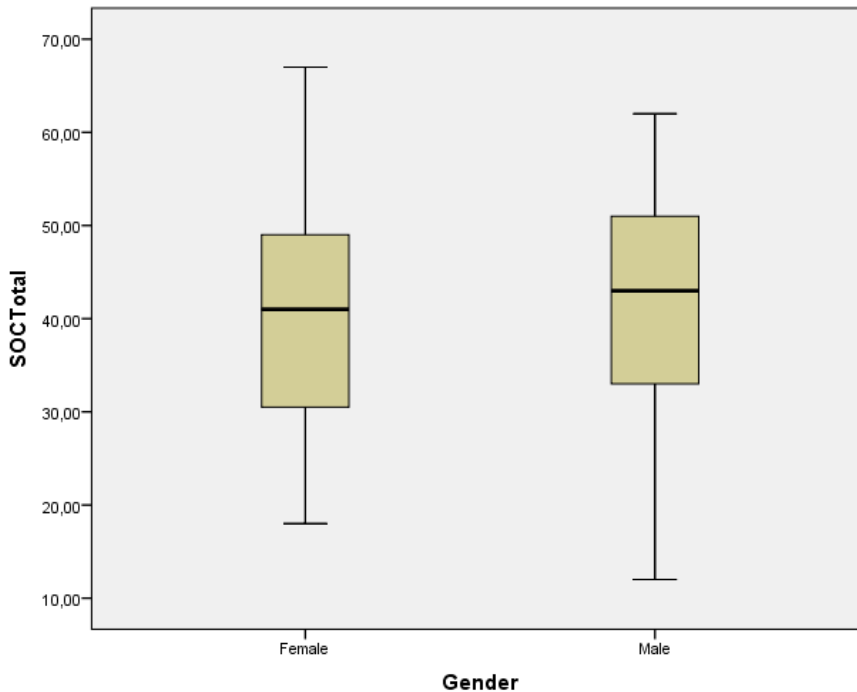
Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study:

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in the *sense of community* between male and female students in an international school in Saudi Arabia, as shown by the Sense of Community Index-2 Scale (SCI-2).

Data Screening

Data screening was conducted on each dependent variable. The data were sorted on each variable and scanned for inconsistencies. The results from the screening identified that there were no errors or inconsistencies. To identify any outliers for each of the dependent variable, box and whiskers plots were used. No outliers were identified in the overall sense of community and are shown in Figure 1. One of the male respondents had an extremely low membership score, as compared to the remaining sample. See Figure 1 for box and whisker plot.

Figure 1*SOC Total Box and Whisker plot*

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were obtained on the dependent variable for each group. The sample consisted of 110 participants. The survey has 24 questions. The SCI-2 questions have a range of scores from 0-3. An overall score of zero suggest there is no feeling of community, an overall score of 1 indicates somewhat of a feeling of community, an overall score of 2 indicates that there is mostly a feeling of community, and an overall score of a 3 indicates a complete feeling of community. Scores on the Sense of Community Survey (SCI-2) range from 0-72. A high score on the SCI-2 is a 72, whereas a low score of 0 means that the student only filled out his or her name on the test or felt a low sense of community. Within the SCI-2 are four

subscales, with a score range from 0 – 18. Demographic sample and descriptive statistics can be found in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4

Demographics of Random Sample

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	55	50.0
	Male	55	50.0
School Division	Middle School	63	57.3
	High School	37	42.7
Grade	6th Grade	21	19.1
	7th Grade	15	13.6
	8th Grade	27	24.5
	Freshman/ 9th Grade	14	12.7
	Sophomore/ 10th	8	7.3
	Junior/ 11th	14	12.7
	Senior/ 12th	11	10.0
Age	Under 12	3	2.7
	12-14	63	57.3
	15 - 18	44	40.0

Table 5

Sense of Community Scale and Subscale Demographic Statistics

	Male	SD	Female	SD
Sense of Community	41.45	13.23	40.40	13.06
Reinforcement of Needs	9.42	4.01	9.33	3.69
Membership	10.76	3.26	10.76	3.19
Influence	0.35	3.70	9.18	3.83
Shared Emotional Connection	10.93	4.18	11.12	3.80

Assumption Testing

Assumption of Normality

The Independent Samples t test requires that the assumption of normality be met.

Normality was examined using Kolmogorov-Smirnov because the sample size was more than 100 participants. The assumption of normality was met. See Table 6 for Tests of Normality.

Table 6

Tests of Normality

	Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
SOCTotal	Female	.060	55	.200*	.971	55	.207
	Male	.117	55	.058	.959	55	.056

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Assumption of Homogeneity of Variance

The Independent Samples t test requires that the assumption of homogeneity of variance be met. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was examined using the Levene's test. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was met where ($p = .675$). See Table 7 for Levene's test of Equality of Error Variance.

Table 7

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variance

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Overall Sense of Community	Equal variances assumed	0.205	0.652	-0.421	108	0.675

Results

An independent samples t test was conducted to determine if there was a difference in sense of community scores between male and female students. The independent variable was gender and the dependent variable were the SCI-2 scores. The researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level where $t(108) = -.421, p = .675$. Eta square equaled ($\eta^2 = .002$). The effect size was small. There was not a statistical difference between the SCI-2 scores of males ($M = 41.45, SD = 13.23$) and female ($M = 40.40, SD = 13.06$) students. See Table 8 for Independent Samples t -test results.

Table 8

Independent Samples t -test

		Sense of Community Score	
		Equal variances assumed	Equal variances not assumed
t-test for Equality of Mean	t	-.421	-.421
	df	108	107.982
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.675	.675
	Mean Difference	-1.055	-1.055
	Std. Error Difference	2.506	2.506
95% Confidence			
Interval of the Difference		Lower	-6.022
		Upper	3.913

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

Chapter Five will discuss different aspects of gender and sense of community. It details findings from the casual-comparative study, which considers relevant theories and studies. The latter section of the chapter deals with the limitations of the study where it touches on boundaries in relation to the exploration of community sense in male and female. The final section of the chapter gives recommendations to increase a sense of community for both males and females at the present time and also the future generations. It also discusses the potential for future research and how the field is not limited to the present research.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference in the sense of community between male and female students in K-12 international learners in Saudi Arabia. In order to discuss a sense of community, the definition of the term needs to be revisited. The sense of community is different from a general idea of community. It refers to the perspectives of individuals towards the group in which they live.

Sarason (1974), introduced the term of psychological sense of community (PSC). It is a foundation of how one defines oneself. Male and female students have a different sense of community (Kissinger, J., Campbell, R. C., Lombrozo, A., & Wilson, D., 2009). This sense of community defines how a student brings out feelings of affinity, dependence, commitment, and independence in a group setting. There are several social theorists who have acknowledged the perspective of an individual towards the community (Durkheim, 1964; Warren, 1963). There is a distinct difference between community and society (Rove, 2001; Graff, 2003). Community is more naturally and intrinsically developed than society, whereas society is a deliberate

formation, one that is more organized with a system based on logic (Al Alhareth, Al Dighrir & Al Alhareth, 2015).

There are also two notions of community. The first idea of community comes from the people who need cohesion, identity, and solidarity inside a group (Blennow, Persson & Persson, 2019). The second idea of community comes from a society that does not consider human individuality but sees the group as a whole (Chavis & McMillan, 1986). This concept was later evolved by Chavis and McMillan (1986), and it has helped in understanding the ideas of the community. The literature review discussed how Chavis and McMillan (1986) defined the four essential elements in the sense of community. The first is a feeling of sharing or belonging, which is called membership (Yasuda, 2009). Membership comes from personal boundaries, sense of identification and belonging, feeling of emotional safety, and investment from the individual towards the community. Boundaries play a large role for students in bringing about or developing a sense of community (Jason, Stevens, and Ram, 2015). They may result in feelings of rejection or isolation. Also, to be considered is the role of deviance in the boundaries of the community. These various attributes prevent a student from becoming a member of the community.

Influence is the second element in the sense of community among students. Influence is bidirectional. On the one hand, the group can exert an influence upon a student in regard to the actions the group may take toward this individual student. On the other hand, the student will make decisions about the group's actions, perhaps causing him or her to decline participation in the group. These decisions affect the cohesiveness of the group dynamics in the community. These contradictory opinions change the views of both male and female students differently.

On the one hand, the group can exert an influence upon a student in regard to the actions the group may take toward this individual student. On the other hand, the student will make decisions about the group's actions, perhaps causing him or her to decline participation in the group. These decisions affect the cohesiveness of the group dynamics in the community. These contradictory opinions change the views of both male and female students. They characterize the status of the student as he sees himself or herself being a competent member of the group, his competence being defined by these reinforcing binder (Omoto & Packard,2016).

The third sense of community comes from the fulfillment of needs. The meaning of fulfillment is similar to that of reinforcement. Chavis and McMillan (1986) state that for any group to continue feeling a positive sense of being together, there must be rewarding outcomes of individual and group associations. The authors also contend that reinforcement and having a feeling of fulfillment bring a strong sense of community in both male and female students.

The fourth element is a shared emotional connection. Male and female students show different emotional connections in a community. These emotional connections have their foundation on the shared history of the student with the group. This shared history is not a prerequisite, obviously, inasmuch as the new student is being added to the group. It is expected that the students will share some identification. If such identification is absent, the students will show less strength in the sense of community. Involvement will differ for male and female students.

The authors also argue that reinforcement and having a feeling of fulfillment brings a strong sense of community in both male and female students. It has its foundation on the shared history of the student with the group. This shared history is not a prerequisite. It is also okay for the students to share some identification. In the absence of this identification, the students will show

greater or lesser strength in the sense of community. This inhibition and involvement will also differ for male and female students.

Null Hypothesis

The research began with the null hypothesis that there is no difference between male and female students in their display of sense of community. To determine the validity of this null hypothesis, the researcher gathered data of students and tested for the hypothesis. Through the SCI-2 questions, the sense of community was measured among male and female students. The data included the overall sense of community as well as the four subscales, which have been discussed throughout the study. They were measured in the reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connection.

The data showed that sense of community was high for both male and female students, with male students showing one-point higher scores than females. It is interpreted that it is mainly due to the influence received within the community. The results when looked at from the view of the subscales, identified a discrepancy within the scores of males and females in the area of shared emotional connection. In a shared emotional connection, the female students scored higher as females show more compassion and empathy in comparison to males. Thus, it is evident that female students will have a proper sense of emotional attachment with the community. The need for reinforcement is similar to both male and female students, and membership is also the same. The reason for this similarity in membership is that the education system is now more inclusive than it was in the past.

The perceptions of female and male are rooted deeply and vary greatly between different cultures and are dependent on trends as well (Lemish, 2015). There has always been a gender disparity that changes over time (McCarthy et al., 1990). For a long period of time, there was a

significant gender gap between males and females. Thus, the modern woman has developed a greater sense of community in order to bring changes so that women have equal access to resources like education, livestock, jobs, services, and opportunities.

Through this research there were also insights into the gender gap. These insights allow the focus to be on gender roles in the community. In addition, it will address how roles and responsibilities of men and women are on bridging the gap between what a person does in building a community and their roles within the community. Such steps will help in the development of an equal place and help in bringing greater changes for positivity in the community.

Comparing Results with Theory

Gender Performativity

According to Beauvoir (2015), “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman(p. 283). These words of a famous feminist philosopher, Simone de Beauvoir, are now applied to more contemporary thinker, Judith Butler. It was in the early days that gender became distinguished from sex. Gender identity is thus a “performative accomplishment” (Open Culture, 2018).

Performative acts are typically indicative of wanting to ‘put on a show’ or ‘play a role’ and can take place within a variety of contexts. Examples of this that Butler gives include saying the word ‘guilty’ during a trial, which makes one an inmate, and ‘I do,’ which automatically intimates a husband/wife relationship. Gender performativity is similar, in that it communicates aspects of an identity by constructing it actively. These aspects of gender identity are continually repeated throughout life. They are in line with Beauvoir’s assertions that we are not born selves, but we become them through peer pressure and the desire to conform (Open Culture, 2018).

Interestingly, the results of the study seem to support—at least to some capacity—Butler’s theory of gender performativity. One of the results showed a higher level of compassion displayed by the female students in the study. According to Wilkinson (2018), this may have something to do with emotional labor, which is currently a topic being studied among feminists and other experts and authors.

The results from the study showed higher levels of empathy, but from a feminist perspective, which could have been due to increased emotional labor. Wilkinson (2018) notes women are often tasked with emotional labor at home and in administrative positions, where they are asked to put on a ‘happy’ face and suppress negative emotions for the sake of the collective group or community of women. Women more frequently experience this emotional labor than men (Wilkinson, 2018). In any case, any perceived in-group harmony could very well be—at least somewhat—contributable to higher tolls in emotional labor.

Female or woman is “an identity instituted through the stylized repetition of acts” (Hillier, 2020, p.14). The definition is congruent with her suggestions that women perform a role, and it is also in line with the findings indicating women are more empathetically oriented toward the group or collective.

The idea that women are behaving in empathetic ways within a collective environment may have even bigger implications and may be even better explained by performativity theory. For instance, in collective societies, gender roles are more pronounced, and women feel more of a need to belong by enacting and living these roles according to social norms. Yoon, Chang, & Adams (2018) note collectivist societies tend to be more patriarchal.

Women as the Second Sex

In her seminal work, *The Second Sex*, notable feminist philosopher Simone du Beauvoir (2015) talks about women's precarious position as 'second class' citizens, in comparison to men. According to Beauvoir, woman "is a womb" (p. 3), meaning her essence is tied up in her reproductive capacity, and nothing more . This is the stereotypical view that women societies, both in the East and the West, have had of women for many years.

In this sense, woman is always conceptually considered as the 'other' to man, the sideline, the unimportant piece, or a negation. The first statement a woman makes, when defining herself, is "I am a woman" (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 5), and other assertions follow from this central one. The root words for 'mankind' are always derived from 'man,' in both English and French, *hommes* (Beauvoir, 2011, p. 5). As such, woman is frequently positioned as a second-class citizen who has to complete or fit a missing puzzle piece.

Here, again, this is relevant to the finding indicating that females exhibit a greater sense of emotionality and empathetic connection to groups they belong in, in comparison to men. As nurturers and those who are frequently tasked with undertaking domestic work, women must bear the burden of caring for family members and loved ones, usually children and husband. This has to do with the idea of emotional burdening; women bear the brunt of care work, which necessitates stronger emotional attachments.

For instance, Beauvoir (2011) talks about the inequalities inherent in male/female relationships, as well as men achieving more politically and in the public sphere than women. While in the slave-vassal relationship that is characterized by the male/female marriage, there is some male dependence on women for biological sexual needs and reproduction. It is male that holds and hordes the power. Furthermore, Beauvoir mentions domestic work several times in her

book. She contends that “domestic work hence faded in importance next to man’s productive work” (p. 63).

There is also another aspect to the findings in the study that suggested men may have scored one point higher on sense of community because of validation received within the community, rather than any independent emotional factors. For instance, because men have typically enjoyed the fruits of high community participation—often in the form of public participation and influence—they may be more likely to display preference for a community that validates them.

Indeed, this is on par with Beauvoir’s assertions (2011) that man is positioned as the central figure in the drama, while woman plays the secondary role. She notes, for instance, that men’s work is valued and considered productive, while women’s is thrown by the wayside as somewhat irrelevant.

An article from LiveScience by Pultarova (2018) cites a study that was conducted on men and women that noted there were no genetic differences in empathy, while men typically display lower emotional intelligence than women. Ten different genomic variations were examined, which could not explain empathy differences (Pultarova, 2018). This has implications for the findings of the research done here, as women may discover they are attempting to perform, along Butler’s parameters, according to their assigned gender—female.

Women & Domestic Roles

The results also support Betty Friedan’s (2013) work on women. According to Parry (2010), Friedan was a Jewish-Hungarian feminist philosopher who explored the ways in which women had more independence in the 1930s but had retreated back to being ‘housewives’ around the 1950s and 1960s. According to Friedan, women felt guilty that they did not fulfill

more in their lives (Parry, 2010). Friedan (1964) suggested that women were “unfairly confined by the expectation that they should stay at home and focus all of their energies on family life” (Parry, 2010, p.1584).

These remarks, as attributed to Friedan, relate to the findings in the study that show females as more empathetic than males and more connected to the group in an emotional sense. Much like some of the other literature, it shows that there could be some correlation with women and their domestic roles, which have facilitated and promoted an attitude of ‘contentment.’ That is, women are expected to be happy in whatever situation they are placed and expected to display empathy. In the study, there was greater empathy displayed by the female students than the male students.

Bifurcated Consciousness

According to University of Regina (2006), the dual or bifurcated consciousness refers to women feeling positioned between the real and imagined world, navigating between the complexities of being their genuine selves and being what others have ascribed to them. “Suppression of the local and particular as a site of knowledge has been and remains gender organized” (Hart & McKinnon, 2010, p.1046). In this sense, women feel the disjunct between society at large, which is depicted as the universal, and their own subjective experience. When it comes to the study, female students displayed higher empathy, which may mean they uniquely perceive themselves to be a part of a collective and cannot ‘deviate’ from established norms that position them *as* empathetic people.

Overall Sense of Community

The conceptual underpinnings for the fact that both men and women typically experience a sense of community—often in different ways—is explained in literature by Pretty & McCarthy

(1991). Here, the authors explore the “psychological sense of community” (p. 351) within a corporate setting. Both genders were capable of experiencing a sense of community, but men primarily derived this sense from involvement and cohesion, while women derived it from involvement, work pressure and supervisor support. These observations are in line with the finding showing both the female and male students were capable of experiencing a sense of belonging to the community.

There are also ways in which our world is changing, and research shows that, when given similar opportunities, women perform in similar ways to men. According to Plott & Umansky (2000), “even the effects of early gender socialization can be reversed by adult experiences” (p. 13). New science emerges indicating that biological gender differences may be less significant than believed (Ngun, Ghahramani, Sánchez, Bocklandt & Vilain, 2011).

The results of this new science relate to the findings of this study, which showed that both men and women feel a sense of community. As the world opens up more to women’s needs, and acknowledges their talents and strengths, the need for performativity diminishes and women can be themselves. Women feel belonging when they can meaningfully contribute to their communities, while being considered equal and important.

Implications

This research and its results have brought additional information that supports the theories on community sense in males and females. There is limited information about the psychological sense of community based on gender in schools. This research relates to human relationships among the genders at school. There is little information that links PSC to the middle school male and female students. This study offers insight into the advancement of a psychological sense of community and theories associated with it.

One area in which this study adds to the earlier literature is that it shows how the role of gender plays a significant role in developing community sense. It shows how different elements vary with gender. It has revealed that both male and female genders have shown a high regard for community feeling, particularly as it is evidenced in the school setting.

This study also shows that there are variances in the subgroups. The subscale of influence did indicate a difference in the two genders. The idea of reinforcement came to be higher for male students, which may also be a result of cultural and social norms. The difference, however, is not significant. This information is particularly significant because it gives knowledge about the sense of community in relation to middle school male and female students, and it gives an in-depth knowledge of the elements regarding these students.

Other pertinent knowledge from this research helps sociologists and psychologists to review this research as reliable and relevant. Future researchers can use this information to meet the needs of the students in school settings in a complete and proper manner.

With more and more digital platforms being available, there is less face-to-face interaction between students, that has resulted in less poignant sense of community. This phenomenon takes place at the junior high or middle school level when students are entering their teenage years and going through a rebellious phase of their lives. In this time, there is a need to build a sense of community among the students. If the schools know what elements and factors are essential to their efforts to build a sense of community among their students, they can focus on these elements accordingly. This research will help practitioners to develop innovative ways that will help in reaching and engaging with more students in school and encourage them to become a part of community actions. This study adds to the body of literature about the

psychology of community sense and will help in addressing the development of this sense (Kagan, 2015).

Finally, this study helps in identifying the needs regarding the sense for the community that schools must develop in their environment for male and female students of the sample age group. The data that adds to this field of study comes from this research and will yield additional information if used for further development. For research in the future, this can also prove to be preliminary work as it takes into account the gender factors, which are the foundational units of a community and roles in the community.

Limitations

Every research comes with its limitations. There are several limitations one can find in this study. The first is a threat to external validity and making the results generic. This aspect is called generalizability, and it refers to the extent to which this research can be extrapolated to the entire population. In order to avoid this, the largest possible sample was taken into consideration and research for this study. However, as the sample consisted of the variables of males and females on a rather limited scale, there is always the possibility of extrapolation of these findings to a much larger population in other schools. These findings cannot be generalized beyond this population, which is why it is one of the limitations of this study

Internal validity threats are the next limitations to this study. Even with guidelines, there is a possibility that the participants may not have responded properly to the questions. There were guidelines and reviews done with the participants, but the sample was that of teenagers, and it is not ill-advised to think that some of the responses may have been given in a biased or an unfair or hesitant way. This brings a minor limitation to the internal validity of the work. This change will not be particularly huge, but it may have created a slight shift in the variances. It is

almost impossible to control this limitation. The only way is to train the individuals about the magnitude and significance of this research (Torres-Harding et al., 2015).

Another limitation that should be noted is with the causal-comparative design itself. The causal comparative is a non-experimental design in which the independent variable is not manipulated. With this particular design, it is impossible to choose the experimental groups due to the fact that the events already occurred. When using this particular design, it becomes difficult to assign a particular cause to the various groups (Salkind, 2010). What that means is there are several variables (i.e., school culture, school experiences, nationality and family culture, etc.), not controlled in the study and those uncontrolled variables could explain why the study's dependent variable came out a particular way. Using a causal comparative design will only determine possible cause and effect relationships.

The final limitation is related to the community and culture of the sample. The sense of community is developed differently among males and female students, depending on the culture. Some cultures are liberal, while others are isolated. Culture plays a factor in one's sense of involvement in the community. Other cultural factors like gender roles and the power of male and female are inherent in some cultures. This factor begins to develop in the teenage years and develops more fully in the adult years. Thus, this is one limitation that comes from the focus of the study.

Recommendations

After reflecting on this study and its results, there are a few suggestions for future research that should be taken into consideration. The following are suggested recommendations:

1. The first recommendation is a part of the study itself, which says that each sub-element of the community sense - reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared

emotional connection - needs to be developed and focused on separately. It is recommended that future research explore and compare the sense of community of students who have experienced both the traditional school setting and the online school setting. In the present age, with technology, especially given the pandemic we are currently experiencing; there is a reduction in face-to-face interaction. This shift may have caused a drop in the sense of community.

2. Future studies should evaluate and analyze more on the subscale reinforcement of needs, which show a significant difference among males and females. Most female students feel that they are not a part of the community because they have no power. Future research in this area, will allow researcher to examine if this difference is consistent throughout other settings. This aspect of the reinforcement of needs factor can be addressed with the help of training programs specifically designed to make female students empowered and bring a sense of belonging to them in the community.
3. Future research should investigate if the relationships of teachers and/or parents has any influence on the students' sense of community. It is recommended that the survey expand its questions/subscales to include questions about how teachers and parents play a part in the sense of community of students. In this digital age, there is a difference between the students today and students of some years ago as they relate to one another and to their teachers and parents when it comes to social involvement and interaction. This research shows how data will give a complete picture of the settings that may or may not be successful in bringing a change to community sense.
4. It is recommended that future research be done in each of the specific elements addressed in this study, particularly as they relate to the gender factor. Those elements consist of

gender and the score on the survey, but with a focus on all the subscales (reinforcement of needs, membership, influence, and shared emotional connections) as well as the overall sense of community. Future studies will help in the development of training programs that focus on the sense of communities in the schools (Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1995). It will help in the development of training programs focusing on community senses thoroughly.

5. Another recommendation for additional research within this topic would be comparing and surveying the sense of community of both female and male students between private schools and public schools in the area.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO USE THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY SCALE INDEX 2 (SCI-2)

RE: SCI Request Submitted

Sense of Community <soc@communityscience.com>

Wed 6/13/2018 2:11 PM

To:

Lee, Leon <llee26@liberty.edu>

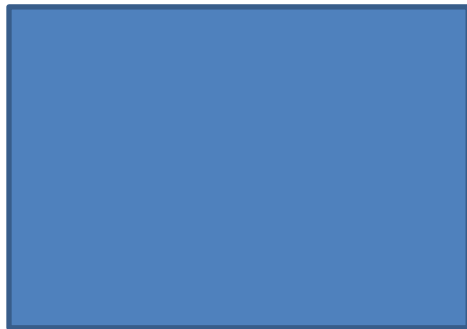
2 attachments (754 KB)

Sense of Community Index-2(SCI-2).pdf; SCI Index.pdf;

Hi Leon,

Thank you for your interest in the SCI, SCI-2, and sense of community research. I have reviewed your request form, and you are approved to use either index for the project you described. Please find the indices attached. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out, and best of luck with your work!

Thank you,



www.communityscience.com (Learn more about us)

www.senseofcommunity.com (Resources and discussions on SOC)

Community Science is a group practice of social change professionals who use knowledge to build healthy, just, and equitable communities.



Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

APPENDIX B

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 28, 2020

Leon M. Lee II

IRB Approval 4153.022820: The Difference in the Sense of Community Between Male and Female Students in an International School in Saudi Arabia

Dear Leon M. Lee II,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University IRB. This approval is extended to you for one year from the date provided above with your protocol number. If data collection proceeds past one year or if you make changes in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update form to the IRB. The forms for these cases were attached to your approval email.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

Your study involves surveying or interviewing minors, or it involves observing the public behavior of minors, and you will participate in the activities being observed.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.

Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971

APPENDIX C

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
2/28/2020 to 2/27/2021
Protocol # 4153.022820

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

The Difference in the Sense of Community Between Male and Female Students in an International
School in Saudi Arabia

This research study is being conducted by Leon M. Lee II, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University. Your child was selected as a possible participant because he or she is a middle or high school student at the American International School of Jeddah. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow him or her to be in the study.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to determine if there difference in the way our male and female students feel about their sense of community within their school.

What will my child/student be asked to do?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, he or she will be asked to do the following things:

1. Complete a 5 to 10-minute, anonymous, online survey (24 – questions) about their sense of community (belonging) to their school. They will also have to identify their grade level, school (middle or high), age range, and gender. The survey is called the Sense of Community Index – 2(SCI-2), which is a reliable and validated survey that has been well established over the years.

What are the risks and benefits of this study?

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks he or she would encounter in everyday life. The benefits of the study allow the schools to see if there is an equal sense of community between male and female students. This survey will help identify if there is a need for administrators review and focus on sense of community within their school.

Will my child be compensated for participating?

Your child will be compensated for participating in this study. Students who do chose to participate in the survey will be entered into a drawing to win a **1,000 SAR gift card**. Students' email addresses will be entered in the raffle when they have completed the survey. Students will write their email on a piece of paper and turn it in to their teacher at the end of completing the survey.

How will my child's personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Students will not have to record their name in the survey. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. I may share the data I collect from your child for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about your child, I will remove any information that could identify him or her, if applicable, before I share the data.

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Review Board has approved
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2/28/2020 to 2/27/2021
Protocol # 4153.022820

- Survey response will be anonymous. Participants' email address will be collected separately to be entered in the drawing and to be contacted in the event they win the raffle prize
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted

Professional Authority: The researcher serves as an assistant principal at the American International School of Jeddah. To limit potential conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated or their responses. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary? Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect his or her current or future relations with Liberty University or the American International School of Jeddah. If you decide to allow your child to participate, he or she is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey without affecting those relationships.

What should I or my child do if I decide to withdraw him or her or if he or she decides to withdraw from the study? If you choose to withdraw your child or if your child chooses to withdraw from the study, he or she should exit the survey and close his or her internet browser. Your child's responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do I contact if my child or I have questions or problems?

The researcher conducting this study is Leon M. Lee II. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at llee26@liberty.edu You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Constance Pearson, at cpearson@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

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Protocol # 4153.022820

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Name of Minor/Participant

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of Investigator

.

APPENDIX D

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
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Protocol # 4153.022820

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

The Difference in the Sense of Community Between Male and Female Students in an International
School in Saudi Arabia

This research study is being conducted by Leon M. Lee II, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University. Your child was selected as a possible participant because he or she is a middle or high school student at the American International School of Jeddah. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow him or her to be in the study.

Why is this study being done?

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a difference in the way our male and female students feel about their sense of community within their school.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. Complete a 5 to 10-minute, anonymous, online survey (24 – questions) about your sense of community (belonging) to your school. You will also have to identify your age range, grade level, school (middle or high) and gender. The survey is called the Sense of Community Index – 2 (SCI-2), which is a reliable and validated survey that has been well established over the years.

What are the risks and benefits of this study?

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. The benefits of the study allow the schools to see if there is an equal sense of community between male and female students. This survey will help identify if there is a need for administrators review and focus on sense of community within their school.

Will I be compensated for participating?

You will be compensated for participating in this study by being entered in a raffle. Students who do chose to participate in the survey will be entered into a drawing to win a **1,000 SAR gift card**. Your email addresses will be entered in the raffle when you have completed the survey. You will write your email on paper and will turn it in to the survey administer.

How will my personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. You will not have to record your name in the survey. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Survey response will be anonymous. Participants' email address will be collected separately to be entered in the drawing and to be contacted in the event they win the raffle prize.

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
2/28/2020 to 2/27/2021
Protocol # 4153.022820

- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted

Professional Authority: The researcher serves as an assistant principal at the American International School of Jeddah. To limit potential conflicts, the study will be anonymous, so the researcher will not know who participated or their responses. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this research survey, you may withdraw at any time. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from participating at any time, you will not be penalized for doing so.

What should I do if I decides to withdraw from the study? If you choose to withdraw from the study, you should exit the survey and close your internet browser. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do I contact if I have questions or problems?

The researcher conducting this study is Leon M. Lee II. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at llee26@liberty.edu You may also contact the researcher's faculty advisor, Dr. Constance Pearson, at cpearson@liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.