
**Determinants that impact first year male students' motivation
to learn at UAE public colleges**

Submitted by

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Abstract

UAE male undergraduate dropout is a bleed into the country's human resources in its strategic quest to enter the digital economy with a well-educated local generation in a post oil-era. The phenomenon is more apparent in first year students studying foundation courses of English to be prepared to enter college.

As students enter the learning environment of higher education institutes, they move from teacher-centric education to learner-centric education, from a predominantly Arab culture of high school, to a predominantly Western environment of colleges where challenges of adaptability arise. In these socially and academically changing education communities, students are expected to assume personal responsibilities in a learner-centric environment utilising different teaching methods and aiding technologies than what they were used to at high school. Inabilities to adapt to this environment have challenging effects on students' motivation leading to unsatisfactory academic results and even dropouts.

This qualitative descriptive research was conducted using 13 focus groups of first year undergraduate UAE males in the three public UAE colleges of United Arab Emirates University (UAEU), Zayed University (ZU), and Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT). The aim was to understand student perception of their social and education environment and its elements that affect their motivation to learn.

The results show that social, curriculum, personal and college related elements play important roles on students' motivation and engagement in learning. A theoretical contribution of the study is that it adds evidence that focus groups can be used as a self-contained research method. A practical contribution of the research is that it presented a detailed account of elements that have positive and negative impact on motivation, and the suggested remedies for higher education policy makers, administrators and instructors to implement and improve student retention. A side contribution of the research was the uncovering of elements that relate directly to both students' class failure and dropout.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.



26 Jan 2016

Signature of the Student

Date

ENDORSEMENT

Signature of Supervisor/s

Date

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List of Acronyms

- AD: Abu Dhabi
- BBM: BlackBerry Messenger (BBM)
- CBI: Concept Based Instruction (CBI)
- FESE: Frequency, Extent, Specificity and Emotion table
- FG: Focus Group.
- GCC: Gulf Cooperation Countries
- GPA: Grade point Average
- HCT: Higher Colleges of Technology.
- IELTS: International English Language Test Score.
- ISLPR: International Second Language Proficiency Requirements
- IT: Information Technology
- LMS: Learning Management System
- MUSIC: eMpowerment, Usefulness, Success, Interest, and Care.
- RAK: Ras Al-Khaima.
- SMS: Short Message System.
- SMT: Social Media Activity
- SSSP: Supplemental Support Study Programme
- TAM: Technology Acceptance Model
- UAE: United Arab Emirates
- UAEU: United Arab Emirates University.
- UAQ: Umm Al-Qaiwain.
- US: United States.
- USQ: University of Southern Queensland.
- ZU: Zayed University.
- ZUAD: Zayed University Abu Dhabi
- ZUD: Zayed University Dubai

1 Introduction

Stagnant enrolments and high dropout rates amongst male students is one of the most significant challenges facing the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the country strives to realise its vision for a dynamic, world-class higher education system. The government of the UAE seeks to provide all its citizens with a high quality education ("UAE 2021 vision," 2011) but the enrolment numbers for males have been lagging behind female enrolments for more than 20 years (Fox, 2007). Abdulla and Ridge (2011) show that more than 70% of current UAE students in higher education are females while NAPO, the UAE national admission and placement office, reports that the higher education enrolment rate for UAE males declined as low as 23% of total enrolment rates in recent years ("Fourth annual survey of no shows," 2005).

The high attrition rate of UAE male undergraduates compounds the problem. As many as 40% of UAE male undergraduates drop out of college within their first year (Swan, 2012a). The UAE is a small nation, with UAE citizens accounting for only 12% of its 8.3 million population ("Abu Dhabi has over 42% of Emiratis," 2011), and investment in human development is crucial for the country's future. Therefore, it is important that the issue of males in higher education is better understood. Understanding the factors involved will help facilitate a nurturing environment that will eventually reduce male students' attrition in UAE higher education.

Previous research in the UAE suggests that the structure of the educational system itself, cultural factors and issues within the colleges themselves make it difficult for male students to adapt and prosper (Engin & McKeown, 2012; Randeree, 2008). Previous studies have also found that students in general in the UAE are not highly motivated, particularly males (Engin & McKeown, 2012). Motivation is clearly a core issue as regards higher education in the UAE but only a very limited amount of research has been conducted on this topic within the country. Although motivation in higher education has been researched relatively extensively in other countries, particularly in the West, the social and cultural milieu in the UAE is so different that this research is tenuously applicable at best.

1.1 The Setting

In an increasingly digitized world of information, education is reforming itself as we are reshaping the way we interact with information and learning. With the arrival of globalization and the transnational economy, countries put educational reforms on the radar screen to help better equip their young generations with the skills needed to enter the global economy (Chan & Mok, 2001; Davies & Guppy, 1997).

The UAE is the Middle East regional hub for quality higher education. There are 103,431 students enrolled in 75 public and private higher education institutes, many of which are branches of world-renowned universities and colleges ("CAA 2011 Annual Report," 2011). In the Middle East, a region known for high unemployment because of the "low productivity of education" (Isfahani, 2010, p. 2), the UAE has taken the lead in educational evolution.

This evolution is well defined in the country's 2021 vision initiative. The UAE government promises first rate education built around innovation, research, science and technology. Student achievement is at the core of this vision and preparing students to lead the country into the global digital economy is the ultimate goal of this initiative ("UAE 2021 vision," 2011).

UAE educational bodies such as Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHSER) and Ministry of Education (MOE) are the prime targets of the UAE education vision. In particular, universities are key players in preparing students for the digital economy. Under MOE, the UAE public education is still largely a traditional face-to-face, teacher-centric education system ("Comprehensive new school model," 2009). However, MOHSER has driven the changes in higher education and forced public higher education institutes (PHEI) to re-align their strategies to accomplish the vision ("HBMeU e-learning," 2011).

As the vision's success depends on proper implementation, UAE PHEI has undergone changes to re-align their strategies to accommodate this ambitious vision. A shift in accreditation requirements has driven these institutes to adopt Learning Management Systems (LMS) and look for more progressive teaching methods. Colleges have either established in-house LMS, or purchased a Blackboard solution to leverage the benefits of active learning for their students ("HBMeU e-learning," 2011). This step was deemed necessary to create a technology assisted educational environment, better known as blended learning (Randeree & Narwani, 2009).

The implementation of blended learning has introduced high levels of change into the system and this brings both benefits and challenges. If the challenges are not addressed properly, the effects of change might exacerbate problems already present in the system. Some educational reform practices within UAE PHEI have already had a major impact on many UAE undergraduate students, increasing rather than decreasing levels of academic failure and doing little to address the high rate of attrition amongst males.

Technology alone is not the solution to the systemic issues in UAE higher education. Research suggests that macro-issues relating to the social environment and the structure of higher education must be addressed before real progress can be made. Examples of these issues include cultural and societal factors that make tertiary study less attractive to male students as well as widespread dissatisfaction with academic support.

The UAE, being a wealthy country with a small population, offers lucrative jobs to its citizens. This is especially the case in government jobs where the local workforce cannot be replaced by expats due to national security concerns: jobs in the military, police and ministry of interior. Some students feel that if their academic standing is not satisfactory, they can leave and join the military or police (Swan, 2012e) or "work in the business field or some other socio-cultural reasons" (Fayed, 2010, p. 2). As regards academic support, there are widespread concerns. For example, Alrawi, Ibrahim, and Alrawi (2012) link weak student achievement to inadequate academic support and Qashoa (2006) argues that poor

instructor support has a negative impact on the student learning experience and academic standing.

The high rate of male student attrition should sound alarm bells to educators and encourage them to investigate reasons that lead students to decide to leave higher education. However, instead of looking into the causes of attrition, some UAE PHEI raised the entry bar requirements, filtering out 3,250 students a year who were labelled as ‘low-achieving school leavers’ (Swan, 2012e). Understanding what impacts students’ academic standing in these environments is an issue that has to be addressed (Swan, 2012a).

1.2 Research Problem, Purpose, Goal & Question

Every research project, in its evolution from idea to a study, goes through a development cycle of stating the “topic, problem, purpose, goal, objectives and research question” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 63). The topic of this research is the lived experience of UAE students in a tertiary education setting and the impact of these lived experiences on their motivation.

1.2.1 Research Problem

Education is important both on a personal and societal level. Personal incentives to pursue education include, but are not limited to, financial stability, equality, satisfaction and social status. On a bigger scale, individuals with education become active members in advancing their societies’ economic growth and wellbeing. Societies also expect their members to go to school and college and become a positive force for advancement on all levels. This is especially important when the population of a society is small, as is the case in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE is a small, oil-rich nation in the Middle East. Albeit being a small and relatively new country established in 1972, the country has invested its wealth to build a modern, educated society where education forms a core strategy in its quest to advance in the global digital economy.

Higher education in the UAE plays a major role in supplying the country’s educated elite. Investment in higher education has included building many college campuses, often with satellite campuses in major cities and rural areas. There has also been massive investment in technology such as advanced science labs, iPads and laptops for all students and the hiring of international teaching staff utilizing a modern teaching curriculum. Although this effort has been intensive, the UAE has not yet reaped the benefits of this major investment.

Although the number of female graduates has been increasing annually, male graduate numbers have been on the decline. Many males drop out of college in their first year. For instance, a recent study states that only 33% of new-intakes of UAE male-students remain at college after a year of studying (Hatherley-Greene, 2014). The research confirmed that “of the 116 new foundations students who physically arrived at the college door on Day 1 for the start of the first semester on 4 September 2011, only 39 students remained on the

last day of Semester 2 on 7 June 2012” (Hatherley-Greene, 2014, p. 17). This statistic is nothing short of alarming.

Learning is a social activity (Bell, Tzou, Bricker, & Baines, 2013; Jarvis, 2012; Pea, 2004; Pirolli & Kairam, 2013; Richardson & Swan, 2003; Wenger, 1998; Wigfield, Cambria, & Eccles, 2012) in which students participate in different acts of engagement, interactions, choices and persistence over the course of their study. In essence, the rationale behind such behaviour, or the motive to act, is an important topic to be understood, measured and studied because motives impact human behaviour and decisions (Stone, 1997; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

As UAE students enter PHEI, they move from teacher-centric education to learner-centric education where challenges of adaptability arise (Burt, 2004). In active learning, students are socially and academically engaged in the college learning community. An inability to adapt to this environment often has detrimental effects on students, leading to unsatisfactory academic achievement (Schiefele & Csikszentmihalyi, 1995).

Research shows that student motivation tops the list of reasons for student attrition in higher education (Hernandez & Nesman, 2004, p. 464). A scientific approach is needed to understand the factors that influence UAE students, males in particular, to undertake tertiary education and engage in their learning environment. In particular, it is important to examine the influence of the social environment and the structure of tertiary education on student motivation.

1.2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive study was to discover motivational and demotivational factors as encountered by male students in their first year of study at UAE public colleges and the impact of these factors on their motivation. Motivation is a driver of achievement and can be nurtured or suppressed by the surrounding environment and personal experiences. There are many ways to understand student motivation and one of them is to ask students themselves to talk about their motivation in a non-threatening environment. Students’ perceptions of their motivation is what matters the most and this area has received little attention within the context of the UAE higher education. It is thus vital to understand what students go through in their first year of college, what experiences they live and how this influences their motivation to continue or opt out.

1.2.3 Goal

To understand the factors that impact undergraduate male student motivation in UAE public colleges.

1.2.4 Research Question

“What is the perception of first-year UAE male undergraduates of the factors that impact their motivation at UAE public higher education institutes?”

1.3 Research Motivation

Motivating learners has been part of the researcher’s job in the UAE government. In his last post, the researcher held the position of deputy director of a governmental institute for management training. Interactions with job trainees and students have enriched the researcher’s personal learning experience. The educational issues of student motivation, learning skills, and academic achievement within the institute are a mirror image of the educational challenges within the larger sphere of the UAE.

A review of UAE educational challenges has revealed a shortage in qualified local researchers in the field. There has been limited educational research in general and even less research on structural deficiencies, motivation in tertiary education and the pernicious problem of male student attrition. The researcher hopes that this study will provide an impetus for further research and, ultimately, policy initiatives that will address current issues. The researcher hopes to seek an academic career in the UAE, to disseminate the knowledge gained from this research, and to create a knowledge community that promotes further research and inspires a new generation of researchers in the field.

1.4 Research Scope

This is a study of first-year male undergraduate students at public higher education institutes in the UAE. The sample was drawn from the student population at the three public colleges of the UAE. This research was not an attempt to study individual participants but the focus was on the collective opinions of groups of students. Also, this research did attempt to observe how students behave in their daily activities at college.

1.5 Research Contribution

1.5.1 To Theory

- To the best knowledge of the researcher, very limited research has been undertaken on undergraduate students’ motivation and social learning experience within UAE higher education. There is a need to fill the void in this body of knowledge.
- This research will also contribute to the valuable and always evolving literature on motivation in general and as it applies to students in higher education in particular.
- A model will be tested in the study. This model will form a basis for further scientific research into motivation in higher education specifically within the UAE and other Gulf countries with similar cultures, for example Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait.

1.5.2 To Practice

This research will provide practical insights for those involved in day-to-day teaching in higher education in the UAE.

- The insights and results from this research will assist UAE HEI policy makers to incorporate important stakeholder viewpoints relating to learning experiences within these institutes in their strategic planning. This will help them to align strategies, policies and practices to best serve the interests of the nation in general and students in particular.
- The insights from this research will provide educators with potential tools which will allow them to address current issues in the learning environment, pedagogy, curriculum development and course design. They might also be used to introduce intervention programs in order to help students cope with their studies and gain the skills needed for career and academic success.
- The insights from this research will permit policy makers to better understand and potentially address the issues of low levels of male participation accompanied by high attrition rates.

1.6 Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following key terms are defined:

UAE Learning Determinants: will be defined as the UAE-specific learning related factors that are related to UAE society, students and learning environment along with known factors related to the social constructivist learning approach (mainly academic caring, self-efficacy and social interactions) that impact a student's decision to engage or disengage in a society of learning in a blended environment and its implication on academic achievement.

1.7 Thesis Organization

The thesis is organized in the following fashion:

- Chapter 2: Literature Review. Literature related to student motivation and the UAE learning environment is introduced.
- Chapter 3: Research methodology, including the philosophy, methods, instruments and validity and reliability.
- Chapter 4: Qualitative Data analysis and discussion.
- Chapter 5: Quantitative Data analysis and discussion
- Chapter 6: Research Conclusion.
- Appendices: Research appendices.

1.8 Summary

UAE educational reforms have instigated public higher institutes to adapt educational technologies in order to achieve the country's vision of preparing its population for the digital economy. In an effort to mitigate the effects these technologies have on student attrition, some public universities have raised their entry requirement so as to filter students with weaker skills outside their blended learning environment. The scene is set for a

scientific exploration to understand what factors affect UAE students in this social learning environment. In this chapter, the background of the study is mentioned along with the problems, issues and challenges that face UAE students in their education journey. The research question is formulated to achieve the goals and objectives of the current study.

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2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the literature relating to the motivational constructs impacting students' learning experience in higher education. The chapter also reviews the current standing of UAE literature on student motivation in higher education. These findings are of particular importance to this study as they shape the current quest of exploring student-related determinants that contribute to the understanding of social motivational constructs in UAE higher education.

The organization of the literature review chapter is as follows: an overview of motivation theory; a theoretical perspective focusing on the cognitive approach; the conceptual framework for the study; a review of applicable UAE research; and a chapter summary.

2.2 Theoretical Perspective on Motivation

Motivation can be viewed as the force which provides the impetus for human behaviour, causing individuals to initiate and sustain goal-directed actions (Jenkins & Demaray, 2015). It is related to the person's will to embrace or get involved in a task or a process of action and serves to explain why individuals pursue some courses of action but avoid others (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008; Weiner, 1992). Motivation has been the focus of much research involving many theories and constructs (Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, & Davis-Kean, 2009). Furthermore, motivation has been studied from multiple scientific perspectives including the cognitive, phenomenological, physiological and cultural dimensions (Ryan, 2012). Research into motivation crosses many disciplinary boundaries, including psychology, education and management.

Given the vast scope of research on motivation and the many theories it has spawned, a broad overview serves as a useful introduction. Furthermore, given that the discipline of psychology spawned research into motivation and continues to be the epicentre of related research activity, an examination of previous research via the prism of several of the major perspectives in psychology provides such an introduction with a strong conceptual foundation.

The psychodynamic perspective focuses on biological factors and unconscious motivations. Freud argued that drives are the key motivators of human behaviour, in particular sex and aggression, which includes control and mastery (McClelland, 1985). Drives are expressed directly and indirectly and build tension until a state of satisfaction is achieved. The psychodynamic approach has evolved over time and theorists now focus on motives and needs, including Freud's two basic drives but adding needs focused on self-esteem and relatedness to others (Mitchell, 1988; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). Theorists also began to link motivation strongly to affect, arguing that wishes and fears better expressed the forces that drive human behaviour than the basic drives proposed by Freud (McClelland, 1985). Wishes and fears are both associated with arousal and emotional

states. Whereas a wish represents a desired outcome and becomes less intense when that outcome is achieved, a fear represents an undesired outcome and is accompanied by unpleasant feelings (McClelland, 1985).

Experimental research has revealed that there is a strong unconscious element in motivation (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2005). McClelland (1985) argued that conscious motivation is explicit and often focused on concrete, relatively immediate goals whereas unconscious motivation is implicit and is the primary driver of behaviour over time. While explicit motivations do often override implicit motivations in the short term, long-term behaviour is predicated on unconscious motivations. Given that research also suggests a link between child-rearing practices and the power of implicit motivation (McClelland, 1985) and the link between these practices and culture, the psychodynamic perspective would predict significant differences across cultures in the dynamics of motivation.

The behaviourist perspective is not concerned specifically with constructs such as motivation but rather with operant conditioning. This is the simple notion that humans prefer to seek reward and avoid punishment. The theory focuses on drive-reduction, whereby the unfulfilled needs of humans lead to drives towards a state of homeostasis (Weiler, 2005). This drive towards a state of equilibrium is what motivates humans (Cheng & Yeh, 2009). This perspective has a long history in education as witnessed by decades of research into schedules of reward for positive behaviour and punishment for negative behaviour. However, it has fallen out of favour in motivational theory in general and as it applies to education in particular. This is due to the limitations of the perspective in terms of explaining the wide diversity of human behaviour (Cheng & Yeh, 2009) and, in an educational context, its poor explanatory power for many types of learning (Weiler, 2005).

The humanistic perspective focuses on the need people have to grow and achieve a sense of personal identity and fulfilment. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is the dominant theory within this perspective. The theory argues that motivation is driven by unfilled needs which are organised in a hierarchy (Neher, 1991). The hierarchy progresses from lower-level needs to higher-level needs along the continuum: physiological, safety, love and self-esteem. Each level of need must be satisfied to some extent before the next level becomes relevant (Neher, 1991). Thus, many people never reach self-actualisation but are stranded, forever driven and motivated by needs lower down in the hierarchy. The theory has spawned a vast research effort, particularly in industrial psychology, but many questions remain (Neher, 1991). Not only is the theory exceptionally difficult to test and validate but its fundamental premises have been rigorously challenged. Neher (1991), for example, challenged the notion that higher-order needs are innate, pointed out that in many societies the hierarchy does not work as described and argued that the theory, at best, only has limited application in affluent, western societies.

The cognitive perspective has come to dominate psychology in the last few decades and it also dominates research into motivation across many disciplines, not least of all education

(Trautwein et al., 2012). The cognitive approach views the human mind as analogous to a computer and focuses on information processing as well as decision making (Bandura, 2003; Trautwein et al., 2012). One of the dominant theories within this perspective is expectancy theory, which argues that perceived ability and perceived linkages between effort and achievement are central to motivation and will be discussed in some detail later. Bandura (2003) points out that goals are at the core of cognitive motivational theories, arguing that goals are outcomes desired by the individual that have their roots in social learning.

Goal-setting theory emerged from this focus on goals and has been extensively researched in organisational contexts (Locke, 1991). The focus here is on goals as outcomes that are desirable and deviate from the status quo. Locke (1991) argues that a specific set of conditions must exist before goals are able to motivate performance: goals must be specific and relate to a gap between the current situation and a desired situation; there must be a belief that the goal is attainable and regular feedback on progress is essential; goals must be at least moderately challenging and the individual must be relatively committed to achievement. This theory is directly related to expectancy theory and has found significant support in educational contexts (Latham & Brown, 2006).

In recent decades, an important branch of research within the cognitive perspective has focused on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. This research has challenged many of the key principles of the behaviourist approach and uncovered interesting parallels with the psychodynamic approach. Deci, Koestner & Ryan, (1999) challenged the focus of the behaviourists on rewards and punishments. They argued that rewards and punishments may act as extrinsic motivators and result in positive short-term outcomes, even to the extent of motivating people to develop competencies. Nevertheless, the most powerful motivators are those that are intrinsic, where people do things because they wish to do them. Deci et al. (1999) argue that rewards could in fact act as deterrents to performance where people feel that their autonomy is compromised and that the way in which the reward is offered is critical. They proposed self-determination theory which posits that motivation thrives in an environment where three innate needs are supported – competence, autonomy and relatedness. The correspondence to current thinking within the psychodynamic perspective is notable, with a direct link to relatedness and indirect links between self-esteem and competence / autonomy. New developments in self-determination theory further develop the link to the psychodynamic perspective with their focus on implicit motives, or motives that operate almost automatically at a level below that of consciousness

2.3 The Emotional Dimension

Many introductory psychology textbooks package motivation and emotion together in the same chapter. This is due to the fact that positive affect (pleasant emotions) and negative affect (unpleasant emotions) are highly likely to motivate specific types of behaviour (Gray, van Goozen, Van de Poll, & Sergeant, 1994). Essentially, affect may act as a motivator or mediate motivation. Research suggests that affect applies cross-culturally and is correlated

with cognitive breadth. Negative affect has a narrowing impact while positive affect has a broadening impact (Gray et al., 1994). In behavioural terms, positive affect tends to elicit approach behaviours while negative affect tends to elicit avoidance behaviours. Therefore, emotion always needs to be taken into account when motivation is researched, particularly when the situation under investigation might elicit powerful emotional reactions.

2.4 Motivation in the Context of this Research

Motivation should not be viewed as a general term but as a complex entity that has spawned many theories and models (Chaudhary, 2014; Rizwan, Tariq, Hassan, & Sultan, 2014). To understand motivation, it is important to study the cause of behaviour and the fluctuations it goes through (Nuttin, 2014). The sheer breadth of the research in this area is so vast that focus is critical in any research project. In the context of this research, student motivation relates to multiple theory-based constructs like interests, goals, self-efficacy and attributes that shape student motivation and impact academic outcomes (Pintrich, 2000). Buehl and Alexander (2009) point out the importance of “self-efficacy, competency beliefs, task value and interest, self-determination and goal orientation” (p. 479) in the study of motivation. The cognitive perspective is not only best suited to this research in terms of its relative theoretical adequacy but also due to the fact that it is less limited cross-culturally than some other perspectives. Furthermore, the links to the psychodynamic theory that are found in some of the theories that will be discussed in more detail provide the research with an even broader and more inclusive theoretical foundation.

The aim of this quest is to explore direct and indirect influences on student motivation and their impact on student experience. The first line of inquiry in understanding motivation is to understand how specific behaviours are formed. Motivation impacts behaviour initiation, direction, strength, and cessation. For example, why do people begin an activity? Why do they continue this activity? Why did they choose this activity over others? Why did they stop the activity? And will they repeat such activity again? Thus, the question of what causes behaviour may appear to be somewhat simplistic but is in fact highly complex. It includes all those elements necessary to understand the role of motivation in nurturing, impacting and explaining ongoing behaviour.

The second line of inquiry in the quest to understand motivation is to understand fluctuations in behavioural intensity. This insight is essential to the knowledge of the different reactions of behavioural activism and passivism within a person on different occasions or between people reacting to the same environmental event. Motivation shapes behaviour (Bahlmann, Aarts, & D'Esposito, 2015), changes over time (Kim, 2015) and waxes and wanes at times (Benedetti, Diefendorff, Gabriel, & Chandler, 2015).

2.5 Conceptual model

As a whole, motivation theory offers an understanding of how behaviour forms and changes over time, also accounting for individual differences. Motivation is a process in which behaviour is formed, energized and directed. In essence, there are internal processes in the

inner self and external processes arise from the surrounding environment that initiate human behaviour. Even when narrowing the theoretical scope of the research down to the cognitive perspective combined with some elements of the psychodynamic perspective, it soon becomes clear that the diversity of approaches and theories is such that a conceptual model is required in order to shape and structure the research effort.

Reeve (2008) proposed a conceptual framework for motivation that aligns well with this research. His framework emanates from self-determination theory which focuses on the interaction of inner motivational resources, innate growth characteristics, needs and sociocultural factors as people strive to develop and achieve a state of autonomous self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 2012c). Given that self-determination theory serves as the philosophical foundation for Reeve's work and also provides the impetus for one of the core internal components of his motivational model (needs), it is appropriate to review the theory in some detail here.

2.5.1 Psychological Needs: Self Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-determination-theory, in Figure 2-1, depicts human nature as a dynamic agent, which thrives or atrophies according to psychological needs fulfilment, facilitation or deprivation of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

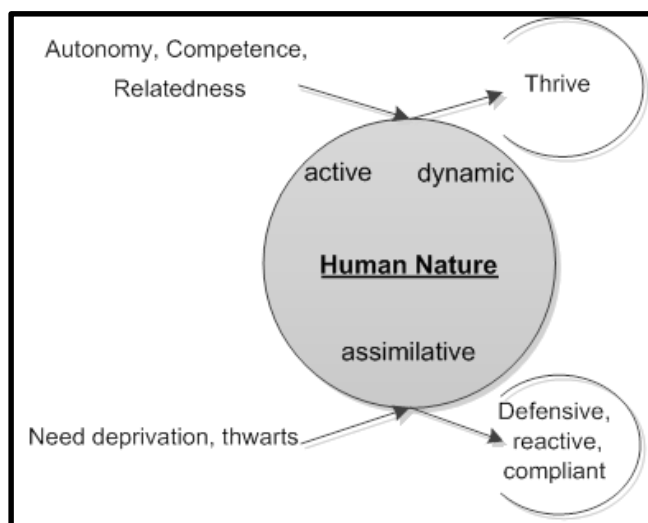


Figure 2-1: SDT Depiction of Human Nature

Source: developed by the researcher with reference to Ryan (2012)

Self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on inherent human development and psychological needs. At the core of the theory are three motivational states: intrinsic, extrinsic and amotivation. These states drive human behaviour, actions and choices. SDT

is associated with “personal development and behavioural self-regulation” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 68). This association relates human development to three inner needs that foster self-determination: competence, relatedness and autonomy. The three inner needs not only promote personality development but are also responsible for social integration in which the individual is either engaged or alienated in response to the surrounding social conditions. As such, the theory examines social environments that support human development and those that are antagonistic (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Psychologically, the three inner needs posited by SDT relate directly to personal growth and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2012a). The core concept is that people are in constant need to feel that they are able to interact with their surroundings in a competent manner, relate to others and are self-regulated towards their goals, lives, and actions. Figure 2-2 provides an overview of the contextual elements of SDT including the three psychological needs.

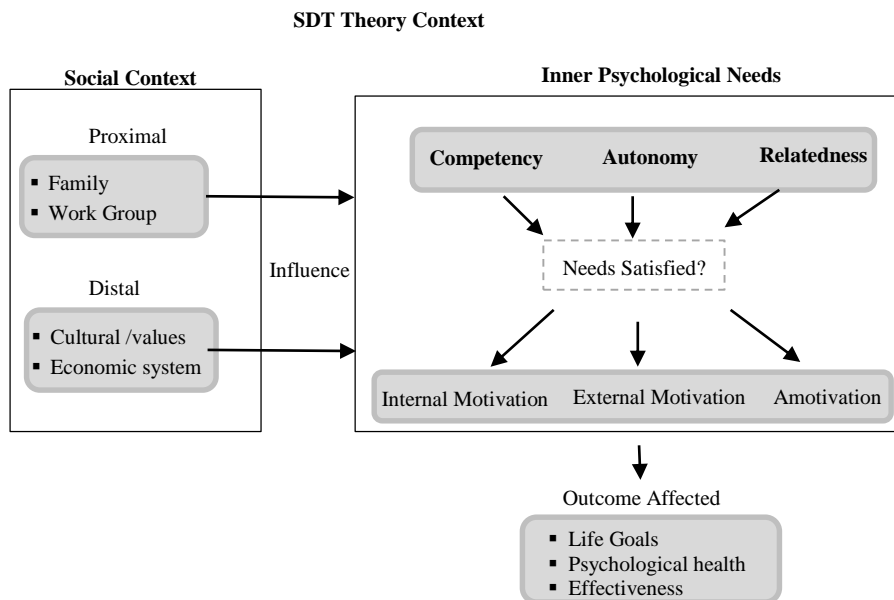


Figure 2-2: Context of Social-Determinant Theory

Source : Developed by the researcher with reference to Ryan & Deci (2000; 2006)

Figure 2-2 accentuates the connectedness and interdependencies between inner psychological needs, motivation and social environments. Inner psychological needs express themselves as drives towards competency, autonomy and relatedness. It is the social context of family, work, cultural beliefs and economic system which determines the motivational style appropriate to a particular situation. For example, the ideal environment permits intrinsic motivation to flourish in safe and supportive settings that facilitate capacity development and expansion. Extrinsic motivation, which is antagonistic intrinsic towards motivation, is more likely to emerge in environments where autonomy is limited

and reward / punishment is emphasized. Where individuals do not respond to the social context or their needs are not met, they withdraw from the situation. These individuals are said to be amotivated.

2.5.2 Unifying Themes in Motivation

Reeve (2012, p. 150) views motivation as a “force that energizes and directs people” where direction refers to purpose and goal-orientation while energy refers to “strength, intensity and persistence.” Reeve’s point of departure is the unifying themes underlying the construct of motivation, as depicted in Figure 2-3.

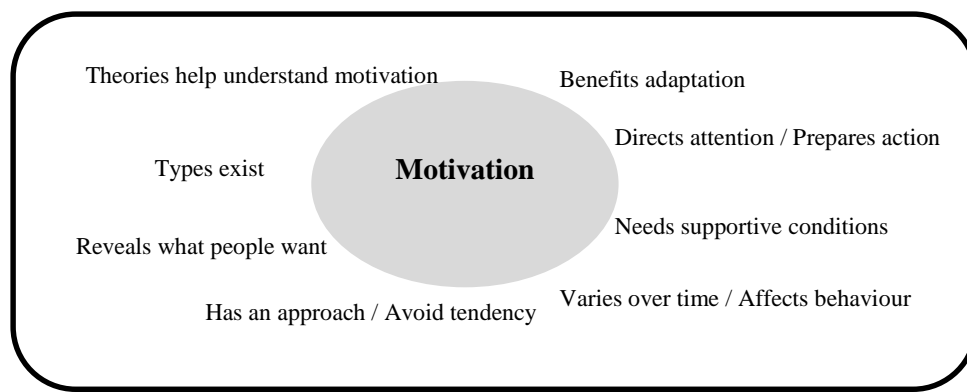


Figure 2-3: Unifying Themes of Motivation

Source: (Reeve, 2008, pp. 13-14)

The first of the unifying assumptions is that motivation benefits adaptation (Reeve, 2008). Humans live in an ever changing situations. With these different situations come opportunities and risks. In the face of constant environmental change, people need to preserve their well-being; they need to adapt. Motivation supplies humans with the resources that help them survive in such cases. The state of motivation in response to a particular situation can be both positive and negative, affecting the way people adapt. For example, students who are controlled by instructors, administrators, and parents might feel incapable of inner motivation and give up easily when faced with learning challenges. In contrast, students who are given more autonomy and freedom of choice exhibit more will to initiate inner motivations, set goals, and show more persistence towards difficult learning tasks.

The second assumption is that “motives direct attention and prepare action”(Reeve, 2008, p. 14). For example, a student who is sitting in a dorm might be faced with three environmental events: friends giggling next door, feelings of fatigue, and a loud fire alarm. These three events trigger and give rise to three motives: affiliation that encourages the student to leave the room and ascertain why the friends are giggling; rest that demands the student gets some sleep; and threat that demands the student to run down the stairs to avoid

the danger. Because the student can follow one action at a time, it is the level of urgency that will decide which motive will direct student action; in this case, because the threat motive has a higher precedence than the other motives, the student ends up exiting the dorm to avoid the threat associated with the sound of the fire alarm.

The third assumption is that motives change with time and impact our continuous behaviour. People have, at any given time, a pool of motives and one can be dominant at some point of time while the others remain dormant, weakened but not gone, waiting for environmental triggers to re-energise them. Consider the former example of the student in the dorm: once the fire alarm is over and the associated conditions cease to exist, the threat motive is no longer dominant. The other two motives of affiliation with friends and sleep move up the hierarchy, and the drive to join friends to discuss what happened takes precedence over the rest motive.

The fourth assumption is that motivation is not a singular entity but a collection of different types. People can be considered as multifarious motivational creatures (Vallerand & Losier, 1999). Consider two workers cutting stones. When asked what they are doing, one answers simply that he is cutting stone while the other mentions that he is building a castle. Two different types of motives lead to the same action, the motive to work, and the motive to achieve a goal. Both men are doing the same job, but the quality of their motivation differs, and thus one is engaged in a routine daily task and the other is more excited because of the more powerful motive he harbours. The former is a type of extrinsic motivation, where the worker is offered money in return for the effort to cut stone, while the other is intrinsically motivated to fulfil an inner goal.

The fifth assumption is that motivation includes approach and avoidance inclinations. People adapt approach behaviour when the outcomes are desired and adapt avoidance behaviour when the outcomes are not desired. Consider the former example of the student in the dorm. The first event of threat, the alarm sound, directed the student to run away from an un-desired outcome. Once the threat was over, the second motive of affiliation directed the student to approach friends in order to achieve the desired outcome of being in a social group.

The sixth assumption is that the study of motivation reveals what people want. Motivation theories show and explain that there are similarities in people, even in different cultures and societies, in their emotions, biological dispositions, and needs. Nevertheless, these theories also point out that people grow their motivational assets through experience and via the surrounding cultural and societal framework. Thus, there are universal motivations but there are also others that are more specific, for example to a particular culture or societal group. Thus, motivation theories when implemented associate which motivations are common to all humanity and which are more specific to particular environments.

The seventh assumption is that motivation depends on the environment for growth. If the environment is supportive then motivation will flourish and lead to positive outcomes. On the other hand, when the environment is not supportive, negative actions dominate. For

example, if students are given more choice and empowerment over their learning, they will exhibit more positive actions and become more engaged in their studies. However, if students are controlled and not allowed freedom of choice, they adopt more negative reactions like dropping out of college.

The eighth and last assumption is that motivation theories are essential to understand motivation. Motivation is an extremely complex construct and there is a wealth of motivation theories that, when utilized correctly, can help researchers understand an issue and then guide the solution to it. Without these theoretical frameworks, the inner workings of motivation would be unfathomable.

2.5.3 Sources of Motivation

Reeve (2008) argues that the sources of motivation include needs, cognitions and emotions, as shown in Figure 2-4.

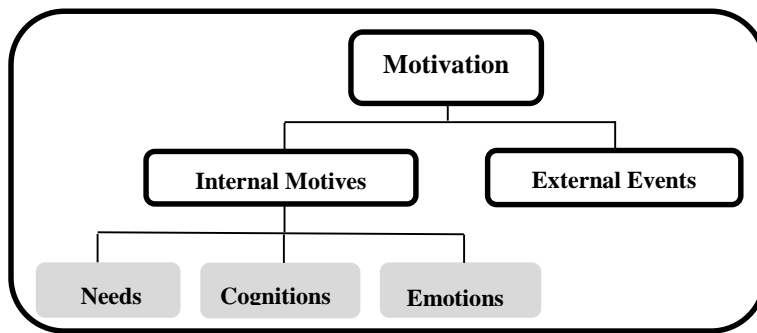


Figure 2-4: Sources of Motivation

Source : Reeve (2008, p. 9).

In Figure 2-4, the interplay of internal motivational forces and the external environment is highlighted. The external events might include characteristics of the task environment, situational constraints and sociocultural factors.

2.5.4 Expressions of Motivation

It is important to know that motivation itself cannot be observed because it is a “private, unobservable, and seemingly mysterious experience” (Reeve, 2008, p. 10). What is being observed or expressed are the behaviours that motivate or guide certain actions. Motivation is measured via direct observation of behaviour in controlled environments or via expressions of motivation such as observable behaviour, engagement, physiological changes and self-reports (Reeve, 2008).

Learning about motivation through observation is similar to lab experiments which scientists conduct in a controlled environment and register the outcome. Given the difficulties associated with this approach, the alternative approach of observing expressions

of motivation dominates the research. There are four expressions of motivation: behaviour, engagement, physiology and self-report, as depicted in Error! Reference source not found. below.

Table 2-1: Expressions of Motivation

Behaviour	Engagement	Physiology	Self-Report
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attention ▪ Effort ▪ Persistence ▪ Choice ▪ Probability of response ▪ Facial Expressions ▪ Bodily Gesture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Behavioural Engagement (attention, effort, persistence) ▪ Emotional engagement (interest, enjoyment, sadness, anger) ▪ Cognitive engagement (deep processing, Strategies (learning strategy, problem-solving strategy)), Self-Regulation. ▪ Voice Self-expressions (expressions of needs, preferences, & desires of the self), participation. 	Physiological reactions	Q & A

Source : (Reeve, 2008)

The first expression of motivation is behaviour. There are eight elements in behaviour that represent presence, intensity, and quality of motivation. These are attention, effort, latency, persistence, choice, probability of response, facial expressions and bodily gestures. The presence or lack of these elements indicates weak or intense motives within a person.

The second expression of motivation is engagement. The term engagement refers to “a student’s active involvement in a learning activity” (Reeve, 2012, p. 150). Engagement is a multidimensional construct comprising four highly inter-correlated dimensions, as follows:

- Behavioural engagement, relates to the more visible aspects of student engagement, including effort, participation, tenacity and compliance with rules (Reeve, 2008). The eight elements of behavioural engagement are: attention, effort, latency, persistence, choice, probability of response, facial expressions and bodily gestures. The presence or lack of these elements indicates weak or intense motives within a person. While the behaviourally engaged student may be hard-working and compliant, this does not ensure that learning is taking place.
- Cognitive engagement is required before true learning takes place (Reeve, 2008). Essentially, behavioural engagement refers to the quantity of the engagement while cognitive engagement is a more qualitative concept. The cognitively engaged student understands and masters the material while managing the learning process (Reeve, 2008). The focus here is on the intensity and quality of the engagement behaviour, emotion and cognitions. This also includes the monitoring of the self’s expressions of its needs.
- Emotional engagement relates to feelings of, for example, happiness, frustration, joy and anger about the institution, curriculum and fellow students. The emotionally engaged student is positive, enthusiastic and feels part of the institution (Reeve, 2008). Some theorists view emotional engagement as a form of relational engagement involving the extent to which the student feels there is a personal attachment and relationship with the institution, teachers and fellow students (Reeve, 2008).

- Voice relates to actual participation where the individual expresses opinions, desires, preferences, needs and so on.

The third expression of motivation is physiological reactions. Here, physiological responses are the focus, for example changes in the brain, hormones, heart rate, blood chemistry, and respiratory system. Physiological motivation is beyond the scope of this study.

The last expression of motivation is self-report. In self-report, people talk about their motivation in a participatory fashion when asked. Asking questions, whether survey or open ended questions, is a fast and a good way to retrieve specific behavioural expressions of motivation. Using this mode of motivational inquiry means that the obtained data is reliant on how accurately people describe their behaviour. Therefore, it is important that participants trust the interviewer and feel comfortable and safe sharing their emotions and behavioural experiences.

2.5.5 A Framework for Motivation

The intent of the motivation framework is to connect expressions of motivation to their initiating events and underlying motivational theories. Reeves’ (2008) framework, as shown in Figure 2-5 below, offers the mechanism to express such relationships. Here Reeve lays out the dynamics of the motivational process and the various forces that are in operation.

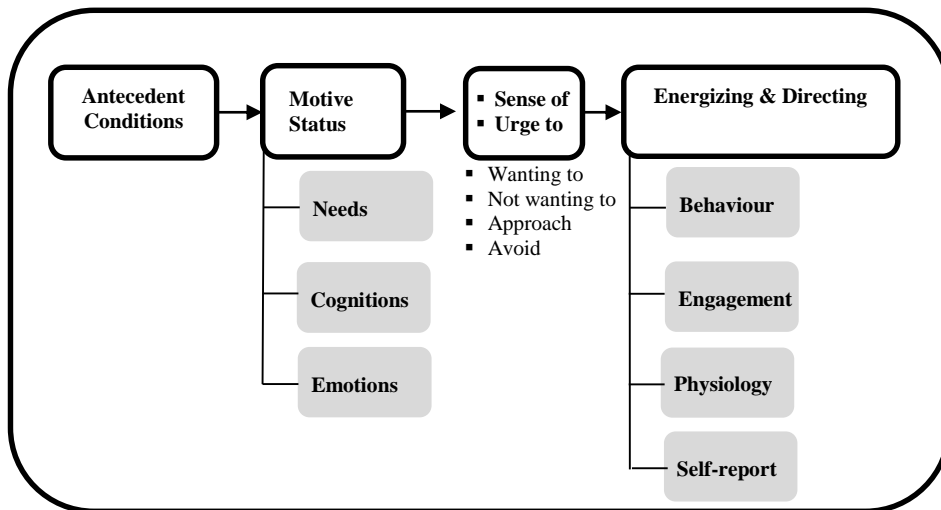


Figure 2-5: Motivation Framework

Source : (Reeve, 2008, p. 22).

In the model, applying motivation theories to triggering conditions of motivation represents a systems flow leading to specific outcomes. As seen before, motivation theories are

practical when they predict accurately the outcome of the antecedent conditions. Conditions in the environment interact with internal states in order to create sense of urgency to act. The motive status is where motivation theories of needs, cognitions and emotions are applied to predict the energy and direction of one's desire to approach or avoid, want to or not want, which leads to one of the four expressions of motivation. For the purposes of this study, physiology is discounted because of measurement issues.

The derived model shown in Figure 2-6 will drive data collection. It is hypothesized that students are more likely to talk about what they faced that led them to act or behave in a certain way and the effects on their motivations and learning. More specifically, students' self-reports will provide insights into the antecedent conditions they face, the dynamic interplay of needs, cognitions and emotions that drive them to respond in certain ways and, of greatest importance, their unique responses.

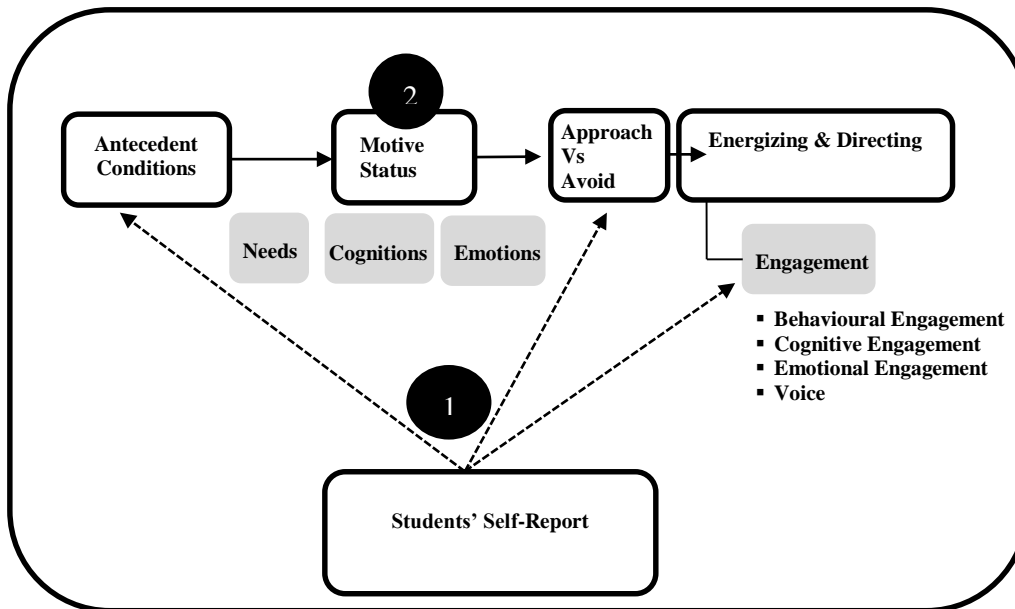


Figure 2-6: Proposed Research Motivation Framework

Source: Developed by the researcher with reference to Reeve (2008, p. 22)

The conceptual framework focuses on cognition, needs and emotion (affect). This framework aligns well with the theoretical impetus towards cognitive explanations without discounting the influence of needs, which have their roots in psychodynamic theory. The influence of emotion on motivation is also acknowledged. The framework proposes that the interplay of antecedent conditions and internal motives will drive approach or avoidance behaviour which in turn results in engagement (or otherwise) at the behavioural, cognitive and emotional levels.

There are now a significant number of theories of motivation and it is not possible to address all of them in a project of this nature. Given the focus on the interplay of antecedent conditions and internal motivational states and the cultural context of the study, a number of theories of motivation have been selected in terms of their suitability for the study. The first of these, self-determination theory, has already been discussed. Finally, theories of emotion which align with the emotional component of the model will be discussed.

2.6 Cognitive and Social Cognitive Related Motivation Theories

2.6.1 Self-Efficacy

Bandura defines perceived self-efficacy as “people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1994, p. 71). Pajares (1996) argues that we should not look to factors such as knowledge, skill or even track record if we seek to find the source of motivation, but to self-belief. Bandura (1994) points out that self-efficacy fosters a sense of personal control. Individuals who possess high levels of self-efficacy believe that they shape their own destiny. Those who think they can influence important events in their lives are the ones who are able to shape the future to their liking and achieve desired personal and social gains. On the other hand, inability to control one’s important life-events leads to “apprehension, dysfunction, apathy and despair” (Bandura, 2000, p. 16). Bandura points out that a sense of self-efficacy also builds a more positive self-concept, which, in turn, makes people more confident that they are able to master new tasks.

Bandura (1977) labels self-efficacy theory a social-cognitive theory and identifies three critical components of self-efficacy, as presented in Table 2-2: efficacy expectation, outcome expectation and self-efficacy.

Table 2-2: Efficacy vs. Self-Efficacy vs. Outcome Expectancies

Efficacy	Self-Efficacy	Outcome
▪ Can I do it?	▪ Can I do it well? If circumstances change during the task, will I be able to adapt and finish it?	▪ Will what I do work?
Am I able to master 10 pages a day	▪ Will I fully understand the material? If the instructor adds more reading for the exam can I adapt?	▪ Will I be ready for the exam next week

Source : Developed for this research with reference to Bandura (1977)

Efficacy expectation relates to an estimation of ability to carry out a certain task; hence it answers the question: can I do it? (Reeve, 2008) Outcome expectation forecasts what desirable result will be gained once the task is completed, answering the question: will what I do work? (Reeve, 2008) In both cases, the argument relates to whether a particular outcome might be achieved. On the other hand, self-efficacy is a dynamic self-judgment of one’s ability and capabilities, which in itself strongly influences whether outcomes are achieved. Perceived self-efficacy predicts the initiation and persistence of behaviour when

environmental circumstances become challenging (Bandura, 1977). Thus, the extent to which an individual exhibits coping behaviour in challenging situations is significantly predicted by perceptions of self-efficacy.

Generally, there are four sources, listed in Table 2-3 below, of self-efficacy: experience, observation, verbal persuasion and physiological state (Bandura, 1997). These sources imply that self-efficacy can be learned and nurtured. The first and most important source of self-efficacy is experience (Usher & Pajares, 2008a). In an educational setting, if a student has been doing well in math during her high school, then she will have high expectations that she will do well in math at university level. But if a student is introduced to a new subject she has not taken before, how well or how badly she performs in the first quiz or assignment will have a positive or negative effect on her self-efficacy beliefs in the subject. Past experiences are important, but so are new experiences, especially in educational settings where students learn new subjects and gain skills that help form their self-efficacy beliefs and guide their future learning behaviour.

Table 2-3: Examples of Self-Efficacy Sources

Self-Efficacy Source	Example		
Experience (Mastery beliefs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I achieved a high grade in mathematics last year. ▪ I am able to extract key points from readings. ▪ I have always done well on school assignments. 		
Observation (Vicarious experience)	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> Peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I had a close friend(s) whom I respected for math achievement. ▪ My friends tend to avoid math assignments. ▪ I feel confident when other kids in my class do well in math. </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;"> Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My favourite teachers are usually math teachers. ▪ No one at home is any good at math. ▪ Many of the adults I know have jobs that require good math skills. ▪ People I look up to (like parents, friends, or teachers) are good at math. </td> </tr> </table>	Peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I had a close friend(s) whom I respected for math achievement. ▪ My friends tend to avoid math assignments. ▪ I feel confident when other kids in my class do well in math. 	Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My favourite teachers are usually math teachers. ▪ No one at home is any good at math. ▪ Many of the adults I know have jobs that require good math skills. ▪ People I look up to (like parents, friends, or teachers) are good at math.
Peers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I had a close friend(s) whom I respected for math achievement. ▪ My friends tend to avoid math assignments. ▪ I feel confident when other kids in my class do well in math. 	Adults <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My favourite teachers are usually math teachers. ▪ No one at home is any good at math. ▪ Many of the adults I know have jobs that require good math skills. ▪ People I look up to (like parents, friends, or teachers) are good at math. 		
Verbal persuasions (Social)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My teacher often encouraged me by praising my math ability. ▪ My classmates said that I understood everything taught in classes. ▪ I feel confident when my parents tell me I'm doing well at math. 		
Physiological state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I was always anxious about math. ▪ I felt nervous when I had problems remembering how to spell a word. ▪ My mind goes blank and I am unable to think clearly when trying to do math 		

Source: (Usher & Pajares, 2008c, p. 756)

The second source of self-efficacy is observation. Observation involves individuals comparing themselves to others in their environment. People use social models as reference points. These models are successful in completing certain tasks that the individual is about to embark on and serve as good examples to follow. Self-efficacy then is improved and the attitude becomes that such an individual will think: if they can do it, I can do it (Bandura, 2004).

The third source of self-efficacy is verbal persuasion. Verbal persuasion is exerted by others on the individual. For example, students who are encouraged by their family or teachers acquire confidence and self-efficacy in their abilities to learn new skills and perform well in their assignments and exams. Some environments foster self-efficacy while others

destroy it. An optimal environment might offer manageable tasks, timely, detailed and balanced feedback, recognition of effort and general affirmation.

Finally, physiological reactions impact feelings of self-efficacy. When one experiences tension, anxiety and stress when a particular task is undertaken, these physiological cues may be interpreted as an inability to perform the task, even when they are caused by environmental factors. On the other hand, a relatively calm, supportive environment with little inherent negative emotive associations could be more conducive to success even if the task is challenging.

Table 2-4 delineates the impact of self-efficacy on behaviour in the following areas: choice, effort, decision making, and emotions (Bandura, 1986). Behaviour type relates to a category of behaviour that drives specific actions which in turn leads to impacts on the individual. The action taken in any particular situation is mediated by perceived self-efficacy within the broader environment. High levels of self-efficacy lead to approach behaviour, significant effort and persistence, a rational, problem-focused approach and positive outcomes. Low levels of self-efficacy lead to avoidance behaviour, limited resilience, emotive responses and negative outcomes. Self-efficacy builds confidence and encourages people to face challenging situations head on. Once a person is engaged, self-efficacy facilitates higher levels of persistence and effort, a more confident, goal-directed approach, focused and controlled decision making and positive emotional states.

Table 2-4: Impact of Self-Efficacy on Behaviour

Effects of Self Efficacy :					
Behaviour Type	Nature of events/ Environment /	Self-Efficacy Status	Action type	Action Example	Impact
Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Challenging ▪ Demanding 	▪ High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach ▪ Control ▪ Social 	▪ Participate in class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Growth in development ▪ Wider range of activities
		▪ Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid ▪ Escape ▪ Solitary 	▪ Withdraw from class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ development self-destruction ▪ Higher self-doubt ▪ Narrow range of activities
Effort & Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obstacles ▪ Setbacks ▪ Frustration ▪ Rejection ▪ Inequalities 	High (Strong)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Direct ▪ Control 	▪ Participate in class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quick self-assurance recovery ▪ Persistence & coping
		Low (doubts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indirect ▪ Escape 	▪ Withdraw from class discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give up ▪ Weak coping efforts
Thinking & Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demanding tasks ▪ Stressful events 	High (Strong)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approach ▪ Proactive ▪ Alloplastic ▪ Problem focused 	▪ Efficient analytic skills during stressful episodes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Task focused ▪ Quality thinking ▪ Quality Decision making
		Low (doubts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid ▪ Reactive ▪ Autoplastic 	▪ Attention to deficiencies of the self	▪ Deteriorated decision making

Emotional ▪ Difficulties ▪ Negative feedback ▪ Setbacks ▪ Threatening events (examination)	High	▪ Emotion focused ▪ Approach ▪ Control ▪ Alloplastic ▪ Problem focused	▪ Overwhelming demand of the task ▪ Attend to demands and challenges of a task	▪ Deteriorated thinking ▪ Decreased Fear and anxiety ▪ Feelings of (optimism , Interest enthusiasm,)
	Low	▪ Avoid ▪ Escape ▪ autoplatic ▪ Emotion focused	▪ Quickly threatened by difficulties ▪ Distress reaction to setback and negative feedback ▪ Attention to personal deficiencies & negative emotionality	▪ Feelings of (anxiety ,pessimism, depression) ▪ Increased fear and anxiety ▪ Root cause of anxiety is low self-efficacy

Source: (Reeve, 2008, pp. 237-241)

Self-efficacy provides a reference of “cognitive-motivational foundation underlying personal empowerment” (Reeve, 2008, p. 241). In the context of education, self-efficacy impacts academic achievement and is linked to important motivation variables such as “causal attributions, self-concept, optimism, achievement goal orientation, academic help-seeking, anxiety, and value” (Usher & Pajares, 2008c, p. 751).

Low self-efficacy leads to learned helplessness, a situation in which individuals think that life’s events are uncontrollable regardless of their behaviour (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Maier & Seligman, 1976). Learned helplessness lead to depression (Li et al., 2011), learning and motivational deficits, and emotional deficits. On the other hand, when faced with an uncertain and uncontrollable environment, some individuals try to take control and impact the outcome. This in essence is called reactance theory (Fogarty, 1997). Reaction is one’s attempt to regain their freedom of choice, decision and action in the face of what they see as threatening to this right of being free to act.

The link between self-efficacy and academic performance bears further examination. Pajares (1996) conducted a meta-analysis of previous work in this area and concluded that there is a strong link between self-efficacy and academic performance. However, this link is more powerful when there is a direct and specific link with criteria. Therefore, although generalised self-efficacy can be predictive of achievement, self-efficacy reaches its full motivational power when a specific outcome is involved. Pajares (1996) points out that self-efficacy is most effective as a predictor of academic performance when it is evaluated within a contextual framework and the outcomes are reasonably specific, for example overall success in a maths course. The theory therefore seems well aligned to this research because the study is particularly interested in contextual variables and specific outcomes: the participation and retention of male UAE students in higher education.

There is a strong link between self-efficacy and self-concept, a concept that itself is linked to academic performance (Pajares, 1996). The two concepts are highly related, and some theorists argue that they are synonymous. Pajares (1996) views self-efficacy as being more

specific in that it relates to the level of confidence in the ability to perform relatively specific actions or achieve relatively specific outcomes. He also argues that they need not be related, in that it is possible to have feelings of self-efficacy that do not enhance self-concept. In order to have a positive self-concept about a particular domain, self-efficacy is necessary but a positive self-concept operates at a broader level and incorporates feelings about the domain. For example, self-efficacy may be clear in a situation where a student is highly confident of expertise in a specific area of physics that will be examined next week. A positive self-concept might apply to the subject of physics in general and will often involve positive feelings about the subject as a whole and mastery of its content.

2.6.2 Goal Setting & Goal Striving: Achievement Goal Theory

Achievement goal theory is “a prominent social cognitive theory of motivation” (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002, p. 69). The theory has been used by many researchers in the field of students’ motivation for learning (Midgley, 2014). Since the theory revolves around goals, a better understanding of the perspective of goals and goal settings is explored to determine the relation of the theory to motivation. A goal is “whatever an individual is striving to achieve” (Reeve, 2008, p. 211). Pintrich (2000) stated that there are three types of goals: task specific, general, and achievement goals as shown in Figure 2-7 below.

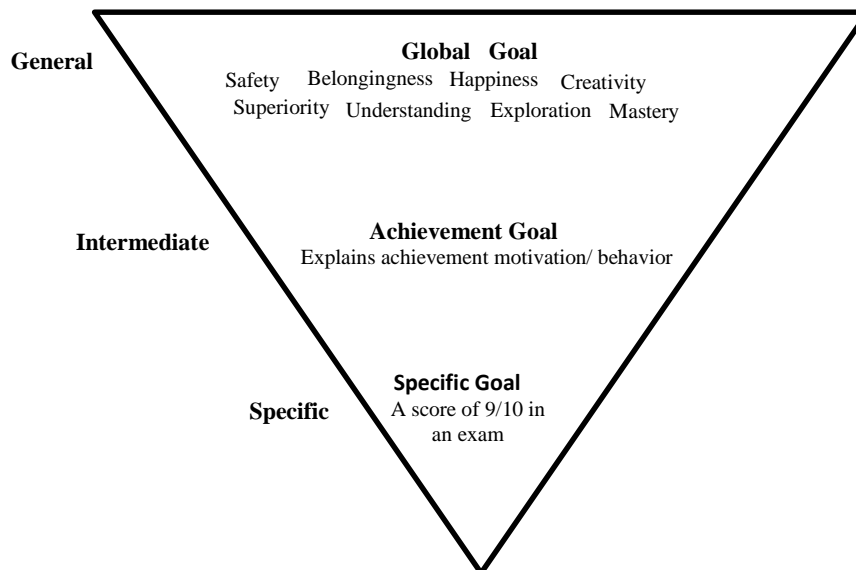


Figure 2-7: Pintrich’s Three Perspectives on Goals

Source: Adapted from Pintrich (2000, pp. 93-94)

The above figure depicts the interaction of the three types of goal. Global goals provide a broader context within which specific goals are shaped and constrained (Elliot, Elliot, & Dweck, 2005). Global goals apply to many life situations and explain the overall life-

purpose of an individual. These life situations can encapsulate goals such as belongingness, happiness, creativity, superiority, understanding, exploration, mastery and safety. In a specific goal, an individual sets a goal against a set standard (Pintrich, 2000). An example of a specific goal is when a student strives to get a grade of 9 out of 10 in a quiz. Achievement goals, however, are at an intermediate level between task goals and general goals. Achievement goals make general goals more concrete and provide a tangible outcome for goal-directed behavior (Pintrich, 2000). For example, a student with powerful global goals relating to learning and discovery will seek to achieve a deep understanding of a topic rather than merely studying in order to pass a test. Goal orientation often has very strong influence on eventual outcomes. In an educational context, students with different goal orientations can be involved in the same activity but their attitude towards this activity is different and thus their outcomes will be different (Brophy, 2010)

Students who set goals for their studies perform better than those who do not (Reeve, 2008). Three attributes facilitate goal-setting behaviour: specificity, difficulty, and feedback (Reeve, 2008). Goals that are specific offer clear guidelines for students to follow. Goals that are difficult have the potential to enhance student performance as long as they are not overly challenging. Finally, feedback on goals makes students able to track their progress and maximise their efforts accordingly. Feedback is associated with satisfaction (Bandura, 1997) When feedback is positive, students are satisfied and plan more difficult and specific goals to achieve.

Goal theory addresses two main education based motivational constructs: mastery or learning goals, and performance goals (Brophy, 2010). These two constructs usually considered in the context of two states, approach and avoidance (Elliot et al., 2005) as in Table 2-5 below.

Table 2-5: Mastery & Performance goals in Approach & Avoidance States

Goal Orientation	Approach State	Avoidance State
Mastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on mastering task, learning, understanding ▪ Use of standards of self-improvement, progress, deep understanding of task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on avoiding misunderstanding, avoiding not learning or not mastering a task ▪ Use of standards of not being wrong, not doing it incorrectly relative to task
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on being superior, besting others, being the smartest, best in task in comparison to others ▪ Use of normative standards such as getting best or highest grades, being top or best performer in class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on avoiding inferiority, not looking stupid or dumb in comparison to others ▪ Use of normative standards of not getting the worst grades, being lowest performer in class

Source: Pintrich (2000, p. 100)

Students with a mastery goal orientation in approach state set their minds to learn, understand, and master the task and engage in self-improvement activities, seeking feedback to reach their goals. On the contrary, the same students in an avoidance state focus their attention on avoiding rather than mastering tasks in order to avoid failure. Students with a performance orientation in approach state try to show they are the best or smartest

in the class by, for example, getting the highest grades in exams. By contrast, the same students in avoidance state would try not to be the worst in the classroom.

Mastery goals are related to interest in the course, retention and future planning (Brophy, 2010) while performance approach goals are related to doing well (Pintrich, 2000), higher grades and short-term outcomes (Brophy, 2010). Performance avoidance is associated with test anxiety, low self-efficacy, weak grades and study planning, and reluctance to seek help (Brophy, 2010). From a self-worth perspective, students sometimes find comparisons with others awkward and even threatening, fearing that they will be labelled as under-achievers, or failures. This could lead them to resort to counterproductive self-reactions including sandbagging, self-handicapping, procrastination and in some cases cheating (Reeve, 2008).

Another aspect of goal setting is its association with culture. The cultural impact of goal-setting has been studied primarily in the West where values of autonomy, independence, and healthy competition prevail (Covington, 2000). Morisano and Locke (2013) suggested questions for further research on factors that foster or hinder students' goal setting. In these questions, the quest is to find the impact of social goals on academic goals, how schools and cultural rewards affect student goals, and the impact of lack of goal clarity on student motivation and academic outcomes (Morisano & Locke, 2013).

2.7 Emotions and Related Motivation Theories

In educational environments, motivation is particularly subject to mediation by affective processes (Pekrun, 2000). Students are exposed to their social circle of instructors, colleagues, administrators, friends and family, each with their influence on the student's emotional state. Also, instructional variables and past academic experiences impact the formation of students' academic emotions. For example, Goetz, Pekrun, Hall, and Haag (2006) found that academic emotions tend to be associated with specific subjects. Students' feelings of enjoyment, boredom and anxiety showed strong correlation to specific subjects, rather than being generically related. Thus they suggested that 'it may be easier to infer a student's emotional experience in one subject from another emotional experience in that same subject'(Goetz et al., 2006, p. 304).

Emotions also relate to student academic experience. Boredom is linked to student performance where boredom had "consistently negative effects on subsequent performance, and performance had consistently negative effects on subsequent boredom" (Pekrun, Hall, Goetz, & Perry, 2014, p. 696). Presence of negative emotions also helps develop avoidance temperament, for example fear and behavioural inhibition, in students (Liew, Lench, Kao, Yeh, & Kwok, 2014). In exam related emotions, positive emotions enhance students' performance and decrease distractions, while negative emotions lower their motivation and increase distraction (Reeve, Bonaccio, & Winford, 2014).

There are three main perspectives of emotions: biological, cognitive, and social (Smith, 2014). Because of the nature of the research, the lack of proper equipment and time to

record the biological state of the participants, the biological perspective is not included in this research.

2.7.1 Cognitive Perspective of Emotions

The cognitive perspective of emotion focuses on the appraisal of events (Smith, 2014). In order to elicit an emotion, an event must be of significance to the person involved. When a significant event occurs, it is interpreted and appraised in terms of its affective (emotional) connotations. These appraisals and the reactions they elicit often have a dramatic impact on behavioural responses, including motivation. This discussion focuses on three main theories in cognitive emotion, namely Arnold's (1960) appraisal theory, Lazarus's (1991) complex appraisal theory and attribution theory.

Arnold's (1960) appraisal theory revolves around one appraisal dimension: pleasantness (1960). Under this appraisal, there are three processes that take place (Scherer, 1999). In the first process, events are constantly categorised into positive vs negative, good vs bad, and beneficial vs harmful. In the second process, events are interpreted in the light of past memories and experiences (Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001). Finally, emotional meaning is attached to events and approach / avoidance behaviour occurs in this broader context. The more pleasant the emotional connotation associated with an event, the more likely it is that approach behaviour will occur.

Lazarus's (1991) model of appraisal focuses on two dimensions: personal relevance and coping efforts. The theory combines primary and secondary appraisal processes (Scherer et al., 2001). In the primary process, personal goals and attributions about an event are used to evaluate the relevance of the event. As a result, events are categorized into three groups: beneficial, harmful, and threatening. Different emotions are then associated with different events (Smith & Lazarus, 1993). For example, happiness is often associated with progress towards reaching a goal, anger shows a response when one is demeaned by others, and anxiety might be prevalent in threatening situations (Smith, 2014). The result of the first appraisal process is an approach or avoidance action (Scherer et al., 2001). In the second appraisal process, a self-evaluation of coping capability occurs as the individual attempts to cope with the situation. If the coping is successful, the emotions change to an idle state. If the coping fails, emotions of stress and anxiety increase (Scherer, 1999).

More complex appraisal theories add multiple dimensions to the appraisal process (Smith, 2014). In these theories, dimensions such as responsibility, social compliance and legitimacy are used as extra layers to evaluate the events (Reeve, 2008). Attribution theory is a good example of a more complex approach (Kelley, 1967). Using attribution theory, the intent is not just to evaluate whether the event is good or bad, but also to understand what caused the event; its attribution (Weiner, 2012). A secondary appraisal process is utilized to relate events to their sources (Weiner, 2004). If events are positive, then individuals feel pride if it was related to their effort and gratitude if the cause is external to

them. In the case of negative events, a person feels angry if the reason is external and controllable, pity if the reason is external and uncontrollable, guilt if the reason is internal and controllable, and shame if the reason is internal and uncontrollable (Reeve, 2008).

2.8 Review of Motivation Research in the UAE

As this research is geographically bound to the UAE, it is essential to review past and current research in the UAE higher education environment that is related to factors impacting motivation. This review focuses on previous research in the area of motivation and the social characteristics which impact motivation.

2.8.1 Social Characteristics Impacting the Student Experience in the UAE

There are many social characteristics of the UAE that make it a unique environment of study. These social aspects can have an impact on students' perceptions of their learning environment and might bring into question the generalisability to the UAE of studies conducted elsewhere. Student related social factors include strong parental influence, no work experience, high technology awareness and access to assured lucrative governmental job offers. Social factors related to education include: public higher education is free for UAE nationals only, education is sponsored by the government, universities have separate campuses for male and female students and teachers in higher education are mainly expatriates. These themes are explored further in the next two sections.

2.8.2 UAE Students' Social Characteristics

Virtually all UAE students who enter and graduate from college still live with their families (Harb & El-Shaarawi, 2007). In fact, they continue living with their families until they are married. When females are married, they move to their husbands' house, which is usually his bigger family house. When males get married, they still live with their parents at least for the first year of marriage. Only a small percentage rent an apartment or a house right away when they get married. Unlike in western cultures, parental influence remains high into adulthood and plays a significant role in student motivation.

The overwhelming majority of UAE students do not have any work experience when they enter college and do not work while studying (Daleure, 2012). In most cases, students rely on parental support throughout their study. However, some male students who come from families with lesser financial means might work. Female students are not required to work by their families during their education years due to cultural and religious considerations, which dictate that females are taken care of by their families and then their husbands when they get married.

The third characteristic is that UAE students are tech savvy users in a country which ranks 24th of the world tech savvy countries, and 29th on individual access to ICT (kippreport, 2014). Because of the high family income of UAE nationals, technology products are

within easy access of students. It is not at all strange to find a primary school student with a smart phone and iPad at home. Most high school and university students do have smart phones and a high access rate to social networks such as twitter and Facebook in a country where 85% of the population maintain regular internet access (kippreport, 2014). Because of all these factors, UAE students are part of a newer Arab generation, called the Arab digital generation in the Middle East who connect to the internet on a regular basis and participate in an annual growth of internet access by 23%, more than the global internet access growth rate of 14% (Sabbagh et al., 2012). Students are more internet oriented and technology savvy than many academic staff. Does students' engagement in their social network in the classroom act as a facilitator or distraction from internal academic interaction? Does it have implications on students' interest in online academic interactions? The impact of technology and its use on student needs to be investigated further to see how it affects academic motivation.

An exceptionally important factor impacting young people in the UAE is that the government offers readily available, highly-paid jobs for UAE nationals who are eligible to work (Fayed, 2010). Because the UAE is a small, wealthy nation, many jobs are vacant and the government offers UAE nationals who turn 18 opportunities in the military, police, public service and other sectors with high salaries. Usually, male students are attracted to these jobs more than female students due to the nature of the job offered ("Educating the next generation of emiratis," 2007, p. 27).

2.8.3 Characteristics of Public Higher Education in the UAE

Public higher education is mainly offered to UAE nationals, with a few from the GCC. Students from other countries predominantly study at private universities. An increasing number of UAE nationals are attending private universities to seek a more prestigious degree that is more acceptable in the work place. Nevertheless, student cohorts in the UAE tend to be more homogenous than is the case elsewhere.

The UAE government fully funds and sponsors UAE higher education. There is no tuition fee incurred for UAE students and all subsidiary educational needs are covered. Students have access to free books and, if they require, free accommodation in university dormitories. An ambitious federal project was launched in 2012 to equip all 55,000 UAE students in higher education with handheld devices to leverage the power of these devices and enter the era of digital education ("CORE Education and Technologies," 2012). In terms of this programme, higher education students received 13,000 iPADS to improve their learning (Shane, 2012).

One of the key characteristics of public higher education in the UAE is the separation of male and female students in terms of time and / or place. By comparison, separation is far less common in private institutes and, as greater numbers of UAE students choose to study in the private system, they are exposed to mixed-gender environments. Religious and

cultural values play an important part in this segregation. This practice starts early in primary schools and continues to higher education.

Most university lecturers are non-UAE citizens and come from abroad because there is a shortage of UAE teachers. Although many UAE nationals can be seen in administrative roles within universities, only a handful of them occupy teaching positions. To tackle this issue, UAE universities recruit teachers from other countries to fill vacant teaching positions ("UAE Teaching Profession," 2013). It is normal to find instructors, support and administration staff from all around the world in a single university in the UAE. The communication as well as teaching language is thus English as it is the only common language that all staff comprehend. Expatriates in the UAE bring their own values, culture and traditions, which sometimes confronts traditional concepts and value systems. Therefore, "the social and psychological consequences are likely to be extensive" (Bebbington, Ghubash, & Hamdi, 1993, p. 61). Some UAE students feel that the wide spread of English language in universities, malls, and the workplace is a threat that "might set them apart from Arabic and its culture and heritage" (Qashoa, 2006, p. 42).

Most of the research in higher education is carried out by internal, expatriate staff (see appendix 1 for further analysis). Most studies in the UAE have been conducted by non-local university faculty from other Arabic or western countries who do not necessarily have significant insight into local culture and customs. The scarcity of local researchers who understand the social context of the UAE brings into question the validity of some of the previous research. Most research studies were conducted in English while this research will be carried out in Arabic to allow students to freely express their view without worrying about translating their feelings and finding the right term to express their point of view. Since we are after student perceptions, this method will be suitable to have an in depth understanding of their views.

2.8.4 UAE Research on Student Motivation in Higher Education

A cross sectional look into the structure of many UAE research literature revealed that some UAE research on student experience was found to have issues in areas of conformity to scientific research and sample balance. Appendix 1 lists a sample of the four types of UAE research on student motivation. There are subtle differences between basic, applied, action, and evaluation research methods. Basic research generates knowledge and theoretical understandings about human and other natural processes (B. Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

On the other hand, applied research focuses on using theoretical findings to answer a real world problem in its natural setting. Furthermore, action research is a cycle of action and research using empirical procedures to solve practical problems (Punch, 2009). And finally, evaluation research evaluates current initiatives or programs (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). Review of the UAE literature reveals that applied, action, and evaluation research are dominant and basic research is limited in the area of undergraduate student experience.

Appendix 2 presents UAE research sample participants. Clearly, more studies have been conducted on female students than their male colleagues. Almost thirty percent of all studies were conducted within female only student populations while even those studies conducted on both genders were numerically dominated by female students. This imbalance potentially leads to bias (B. Johnson & Christensen, 2012).

The literature review suggests that UAE research on student experience is generally inconclusive. Research conducted in a multinational private university shows that although female students' academic achievement is higher than their male counterparts, their satisfaction level is lower (Abou Naaj, Nachouki, & Ankit, 2012). This contradicts findings by Nasir et al. (2011) using a larger sample of 455 multinational undergraduates which revealed that male students were less satisfied. AlSagheer (2011) found that 56% of both male and female undergraduate students are satisfied with academic support. Although Mohammad & Job (2012) agree with this finding, Nasir et al. (2011) found that undergraduate students were generally dissatisfied with academic feedback and instructor interaction.

The IELTS test is widely used in the UAE and has a major impact on students in tertiary education. Scores on the test are often determinative in terms of acceptance to university and course progression. Aboudan (2011) analysed the written feedback of 250 university general requirement units (UGRU) students at UAEU on reasons students fail to score the required IELTS. The analysis showed that the short period allocated to the mastery of English, class schedules, the number of students in each classroom, traditional teaching approaches and under-maintained English clubs have negative impacts on students' IELTS performance. The limitation of this study is that cognitive impact of these issues was not discussed, student gender was not mentioned, and there was no direct discussion or exchanges between students to challenge or confirm each others' perspectives. This was not a scientific study but rather a post-hoc analysis of students' feedback which nevertheless signalled that a major problem exists.

Swan (2012a) found that UAE males have a much higher dropout rate than females. Hatherley-Greene (2014) supporting this with the finding that 66% of male students drop out of college within the first year. Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, Ajaif, and McKeown (2015) focused on surveying student and parent opinion on family support and involvement in higher education. Female students made up 90% of the research sample. The finding shows strong correlation between academic success and positive financial, emotional and encouragement involvement. However, family involvement in academic support was weak. The result showed that, with family support, males outperformed females. These differences are of concern but could be questioned on the basis of the imbalanced male/female sample in the research and the sample selection criteria that might have resulted in choosing only those high achievers amongst male students. This imbalance and the fact that the family plays such an important role in student achievement suggest that further research is needed to discuss the dysfunctioning of males in higher education.

In an effort to understand how the transition between traditional UAE family values and western cultural values found in the UAE higher education environment impacts student experience, Hatherley-Greene (2014) conducted a study examining the journey of male students across this divide. A significant number of students experienced problems and they often left college for a government job when this happened. Issues arise when students are not able to adjust to student-centric learning in a language foreign to them. Further, a perceived lack of care on the part of teachers factored significantly in college drop out rates. The high male drop out rate (77 out of 116 students) influenced the researcher to ask a penetrating question: “whose interests are being served (or not) by expecting students to cross sometimes stressful cultural borders into college life with insufficient support, and asking them to study using the dominant second-language of English?” (Hatherley-Greene, 2014, p. 17). This question also motivates this study. However, the Heatherley-Greene study only examined a limited number of factors and a broader study is required to uncover the full extent of the problem and inform the needed intervention programs.

Some research has been conducted at high-school level that is likely to be relevant at tertiary level. Research conducted on reasons students drop out of high school in the UAE show that de-motivating school factors, along with low parental education level and lower socio-economic status contribute to male students’ drop out (Ridge, Farah, & Shami, 2013b). The demotivating factors were related to teachers, peers, school safety, and students’ attitude towards learning. The research was limited because the sample was not representative of the population and thus can not be generalized to the wider community, albeit giving an insight on the impact of student experience at high school. The question is, then, do these factors replicate itself in higher education? More specifically, do UAE male students who continue to college experience the same demotivating factors in higher education that lead them to drop out?

Scientific studies that have explored the issues associated with undergraduate student learning experiences in the UAE PHEI are limited, and those focusing on motivation even more so. Research is lacking where it is most needed. A balanced gender sample is required as UAE male undergraduates are marginalized unintentionally in the current UAE research literature and the focus is more on female undergraduate students. Even at a global level, research on “what institutional characteristics matter in student dropout/persistence decisions is still very limited” (Chen, 2012, p. 501). To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, comprehensive scientific research on UAE undergraduates’ perceptions of their social learning experience and the possible link with academic achievement not been conducted. A better understanding of what factors motivate UAE undergraduates to undertake and succeed in higher education would serve UAE higher education well.

2.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the concept of motivation, its associated theories, frameworks, and related UAE research have been discussed. Motivation drives behaviour. Theories related to needs, cognitions and emotions, and the three sources of motivation, have been laid out and a proposed linking motivational framework was introduced to relate different behavioural expressions of students to the proper antecedent motives. The UAE literature on student

motivation has not comprehensively covered the theory and has focused instead on separate aspects of it. Motivation is a complex theory that encompasses many sub-theories. As such it can be researched in a single area like care, connectedness, belonging, satisfaction, interest, and so on. Most of the UAE research follows a unitary approach and in most cases does not make the link back to motivation. To fill this gap, the current research focuses on studying UAE student motivation from a comprehensive perspective.

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3 Methodology

The review of literature presented in the previous chapter exposed the need to look further into the relationship between social factors and student motivation in the context of UAE higher education. There is a need for a deep and thorough understanding of such factors. The previous chapter highlighted a shortage of UAE research in which student participants, the people whose opinions most directly affect higher education outcomes, talk about their experience and perceptions about their learning experience.

It is essential to listen to UAE students discuss, share ideas, thoughts, and contradict each other's opinions about what they perceive is socially important that decides the course of their involvement in the learning society with its associated college activities. Thus, this chapter will focus on the methodology used to explore the aspects of the UAE social environment that students perceived important to their learning, and that impact their motivation and decisions, in some cases, to opt out of college.

This chapter is organized in the following sections:

- Research Paradigm, Methodology & Method
- Instrument & Protocol Design.
- Role of the Researcher
- Ethics
- Data Collection
- Data analysis
- Trustworthiness of the Results

3.1 Research Paradigm, Methodology & Method

3.1.1 Paradigms: Introduction

In scientific research, it is important to choose a research paradigm. A paradigm is a “comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (Willis, 2007, p. 8). Paradigm designation varies from one author to another (Guba, 1990). In its classical, simplistic designation, a paradigm can be quantitative or qualitative in nature (Willis, 2007). A more recent addition is a mixed paradigm utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

A modern, generally accepted designation is the three paradigms of post-positivism, critical theory and interpretivism which are dominant in social science research literature (Willis, 2007). Each paradigm has its own “values, terminology, methods and techniques to understand social phenomena” (Kumar, 2014, p. 31).

Post-positivism accepts scientific methods and objective data where the nature of reality is external to human mind (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). On the contrary, in critical theory, explaining the structure of reality is accomplished using ideological and value

oriented subjective inquiry to “determine local instances of universal power relationships and empower the oppressed” (Willis, 2007, p. 83). Interpretivism utilizes a subjective inquiry approach where reality is socially constructed and has two major notions; rationalism, the notion that empiricism is not always the better way to gain knowledge; and relativism, the notion that reality is shaped by one’s experience and culture (Willis, 2007). Interpretivism is sometimes referred to as constructivism.

There are three characteristics that set paradigms apart, ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba, 1990). Characteristics of the current research ontology, epistemology and methodology are analysed hereafter, followed by the paradigm chosen to reflect these characteristics.

3.1.2 Research Ontology and Epistemology

A paradigm contains assumptions about issues of truth (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology). In Figure 3-1, ontology and epistemology can be thought of as branches of philosophy called metaphysics, which at its core is concerned about the what and how that dictate ontology and epistemology in nature. The what part is set to find out the characteristics of things and the how part is set to question how we know that these things exist (Willis, 2007).

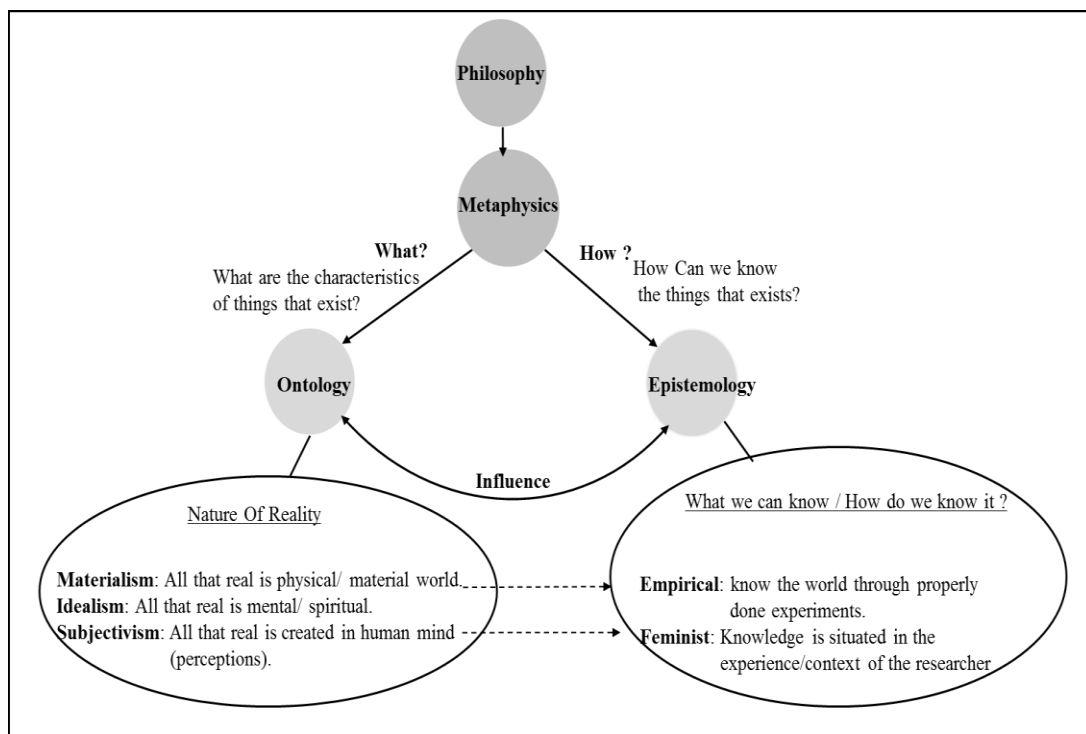


Figure 3-1: Ontology vs Epistemology.

Source: Modified from Willis (2007, pp. 9-10)

Ontology is concerned about the nature of reality while epistemology is concerned about how we know this reality. In ontology, there are different positions, mainly materialism, idealism and subjectivism. Materialism stresses that all that is real is physical world, while in idealism all that is real is mental. In between these two strands, subjectivism proposes that all that is real is in the perceptions of the human mind.

These ontological positions influence epistemological views. Materialistic ontology drives an empirical epistemology approach in which one knows about the world through properly done experiments. On the contrary, a feminist epistemology is derived by subjectivist ontology. It claims that knowledge is situated in the experience and context of the researcher.

Further, a paradigm describes laws and theoretical assumptions, instrumentation techniques, a guide to work within its epistemology and ontology and how to apply the whole framework into the practice of research design (Willis, 2007, p. 8). A paradigm will dictate the progress of research from the design process to the conclusion (Flowers, 2009). According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), a research paradigm gives the researcher:

1. Guidance on how to conduct research.
2. Research standards to follow that are specific to the paradigm chosen for the study.
3. Weakness and strength of the techniques utilized for the research. The researcher should benefit from the strengths as well as address, and minimize the effects of, the weaknesses in the design.

The understandings of ontology and epistemology were used to determine the research paradigm and the related design. Considering that ontology is concerned about reality, and how the researcher views reality, the research took into account that reality is subjective. To be more specific, the researcher followed a subjective ontology, where reality exists in the experience of the students that will take part in the research.

This dictates that the research epistemology proposes that knowledge is gained through observation and interpretation of these experiences students have. Therefore, true objectivity is difficult to achieve in this social research because the researcher's values and preferences are present (Flowers, 2009).

3.1.3 Research Characteristics

The current study has several characteristics. First, the central phenomenon of the research circles around the elements that impact UAE male students' motivation, leading them to diminished academic achievement and inevitably in some cases to drop out of college. The quest here is to develop an understanding of these phenomena; an understanding that the literature review in the previous chapter concludes has not been fully realised prior to the current study.

Second, the literature review, has played a small part in exposing the elements that impact UAE male undergraduate motivation, but has played a bigger role in justifying the need for the research. This justification comes from the fact that UAE research into students' perspectives on the subject at hand is at best scarce and inconclusive. Third, the research questions have been formulated to be general enough to comprehend students' own experiences.

Fourth, the intention in the methodology is to choose a paradigm and a research method that will dictate collecting and analysing data from a representative sample of the student population to reach an understanding of the phenomena as viewed by the students themselves without neglecting to mention researcher reflexivity and bias. The above mentioned characteristics are synonymous with a qualitative research paradigm. Thus, the research is best suited to employ a qualitative approach. The research characteristics, as mentioned previously, are mentioned in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1: Research Characteristics

Research Stage	Qualitative Research Characteristics	Current Research Characteristics
Research problem	Exploring a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon	Yes (Motivation of UAE Male Undergraduates)
Literature Review	Having literature review play a minor role but justify the problem	Yes (scarce UAE research/ Gap exists)
Purpose/ Research Question	Stating the purpose and research question in a general and broad way so as to the participants' experience	Yes
Data collection	Collecting data based on words from a small number of individuals so that the participants' views are obtained	Yes Data to be collected from small students sample
Data analysis	Analysing the data for description and themes using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings	Yes Results are to be shown from a student's perspective
Discussion	Writing the report using flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria and includes the researchers' subjective reflexivity and bias	Yes Discussion is based on student's views and mentions of researcher role and bias.

Source: Modified from Creswell (2011, P16)

3.1.4 Research Considerations

Current research considerations are listed in Table 3-2 below. These considerations have a close resemblance to those of interpretive constructivism (Rubin & Rubin 2012). The six considerations of interest include how people view and attribute meaning to events or objects; people have different perspectives of the same event and hence reach different conclusions; multiple and sometimes contradicting views of the same event occur and can

simultaneously be true; people in groups create and share understandings amongst themselves; knowledge is sought using a deductive approach and the researcher’s self-awareness is realized.

Table 3-2: Considerations of Interpretivism & Current Research

Interpretive Constructivism considerations	Current Research Considerations
How people view an object or event and the meaning that they attribute to it are what is important	It is important to know how students: View their college environment (classes, teachers, facilities, etc.) View their social environment (families, friends, etc.) Interpret the events or incidents that impact their motivation
People look at matters through distinct lenses and reach somewhat different conclusions Multiple, apparently conflicting versions of the same event or object can be true at the same time.	Students construct their views, opinions based on their own experiences, expectations and bias. Students will often offer different perspective, disagree or contradict each other’s view on certain events or objects based on their own view and ‘reality’.
Groups of people create and share understandings with each other	Students study together at the same college, and routinely interact with their colleagues, teachers and are subjected to similar events, college rules or experiences. Students then, create and share their understandings of the ‘things’ or ‘realities’ in their environment with each other. For example, they might share similar views on a certain teacher or subject they have.
Follows a deductive approach to knowledge	Students’ views, stories and recollections of events, their words, the way they say it and their modes when they say it is important to deduce the themes of the research.
Researcher self-awareness is emphasized	Researcher is not neutral. Researcher role including bias and assumptions and how the research is influenced by it is exposed. Researcher will learn how to listen to students, and acknowledge that their understandings are different than his.

Source: Modified from Rubin and Rubin (2012, pp. 19-20)

The study at hand focuses on the exploration and impact of both social issues specific to UAE culture and academic issues on student motivation. Reflecting on these considerations, the research shares common principles of interest. These include the importance of how students view their experiences; the awareness that multiple versions of truth exist in students’ opinions; the fact that students being in groups in the classroom or the college environment implies that they share common understanding; themes will be deduced from students’ opinions and views; and finally the researcher places emphasis on reflecting and presenting his own self-awareness and the steps followed to minimize its effects on the research. An integrated knowledge is at core of the researcher’s interest with the rejection of reductionism (Boersema, 2008).

3.1.5 Research Paradigm: Interpretivism

In light of the research ontology and epistemology and research characteristics and considerations highlighted in the previous sections, the research adopts an

interpretive/constructionist paradigm to be able to understand what drives or inhibits UAE undergraduate student motivation. The considerations of the research reflect an interpretive paradigm. The general characteristics of an interpretive paradigm are presented in Table 3-3 below.

Table 3-3: Interpretivism Paradigm Characteristics

Issue	Interpretivism
Nature of Reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially constructed
Purpose of the research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect understanding
Acceptable methods and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective and objective research methods are acceptable
Meaning of data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding is contextual • Universals are deemphasized
Relationship of research to practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated activities • Both guide and become the other

Source: Adapted from Willis (2007, p. 95)

3.1.6 Research Methodology: Qualitative Descriptive Approach

The third characteristic of a research paradigm is methodology, which is the “identification, study, and justification of research methods” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 589). Typically, researchers have been adapting the four main types of qualitative methodological approaches including phenomenology, ethnography, case study and grounded theory. However, researchers are not obliged to follow the typical methodology choices and in fact, when considering the topic, time and available resources, a qualitative descriptive methodology can be a useful alternative to the mainstream approaches in qualitative research (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009). Qualitative descriptive studies are the least theoretical of qualitative methodologies and aim to comprehensively summarize experiences of individuals or groups in their natural settings (Lambert & Lambert, 2012)

Descriptive research has been used in many educational research studies. Descriptive studies on students in educational settings have covered many subjects, such as the context of students’ perceptions on satisfaction and self-confidence (Ma, 2013), student leadership and self-motivation (Collins, 2012), academic caring (Mackintosh, 2006), student personal qualities (Pitt, Powis, Levett-Jones, & Hunter, 2014), students’ reflective practice (Duffy, 2009), perceptions and behaviour of university students (Daniels & Roman, 2013), computer learning (Smith, 2007), students’ self-management techniques (McDougall, 1998), students’ achievement (Fransisca & Zainuddin, 2012) and student motivation (Chang, 2010; Griner, 2012; Haller, 2014; Järvelä, Volet, & Järvenoja, 2010; Oliveira et al., 2014)

A qualitative descriptive approach, represented in Figure 3-2 below, is adapted for this exploratory research to uncover the determinants affecting students' motivation in college. Student motivation, whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic, is a complex construct involving multiple theories such as behavioural, humanistic and cognitive theories (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012), implying that there are multiple factors that impact student motivation. Examples of these factors could include, teachers, parents, administrators, interests, personality, pedagogy, technology and interaction. Therefore, the study should follow a design that ensures understanding the elements that impact motivation of students as a group rather than an individual.

The intent is to understand how students' college and non-college experiences affect their decisions to continue or drop out of college. Knowing what students go through in their first year of college is vital to understanding how their motivation is affected. Several groups, from different classes and colleges are studied where students describe their current experience to further explore and understand the impact of students' experiences on their motivation.

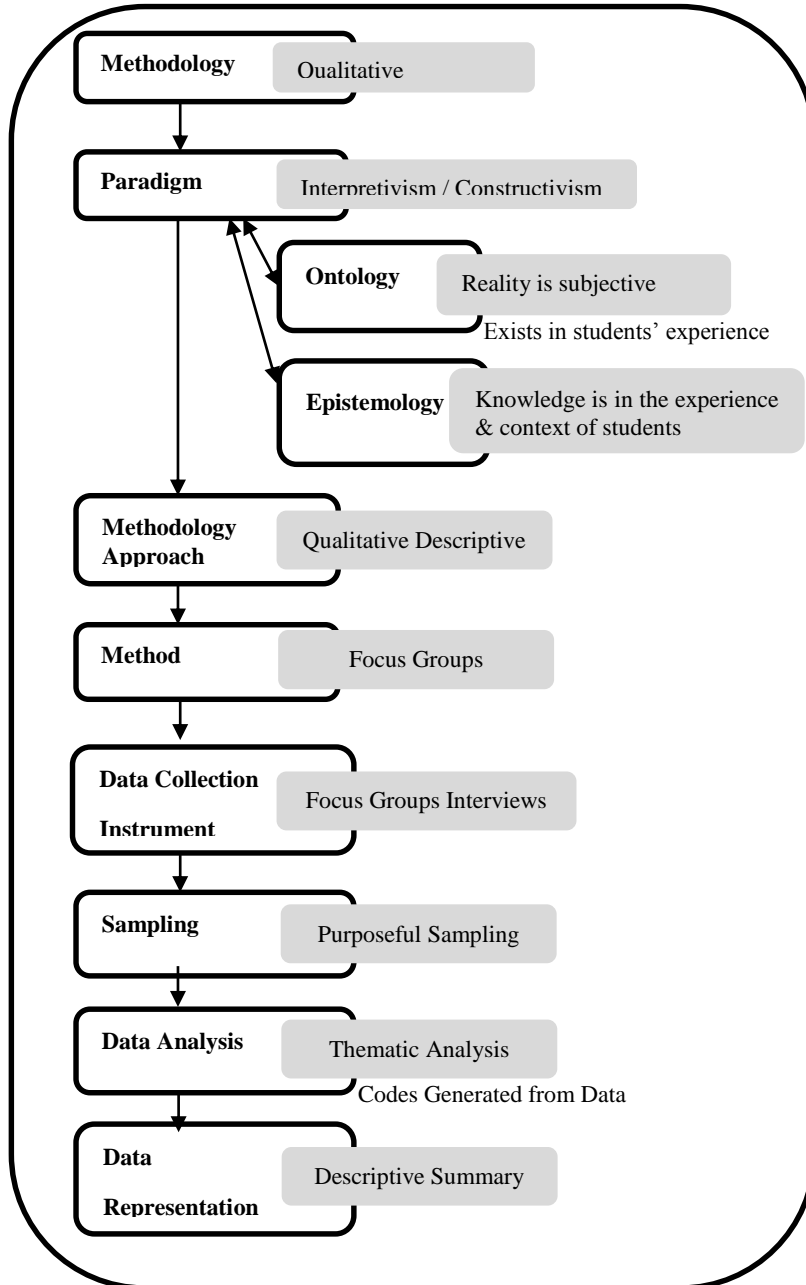


Figure 3-2: Research Methodology and Method

Source: Developed for this study

3.1.7 Research Method: Focus Groups

While a methodology is typically a general approach to the study, a method is a specific research technique that is aligned with the methodology (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Focus groups are group interviews (Morgan, 1997) in which participants engage in a discussion of a topic chosen by the researcher or moderator (Morgan, 1998). Focus groups can be defined as “carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment” (Krueger & Casey). Focus groups are also considered a form of unstructured interview that are “generally better for studying perceptions, attitudes, and motivation” (Connaway & Powell, 2010, p. 17). In this regard, focus groups explore participants’ feelings and beliefs that shape their behaviour and perceptions (Connaway & Powell, 2010) in their discussions which are then used as a prime data source to be analysed to answer the topic’s inquiry (Liamputtong, 2013). Besides obtaining thorough clarification of the different accounts of participants to the same issues, a focus group helps researchers obtain valuable insights and “information about feelings, thoughts, understandings, perceptions and impressions of people in their own words” (Liamputtong, 2011, p. 6)

Focus groups have been used in a variety of educational research studies such as personal motivational characteristics and environmental social supports in college outcomes (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005), college students’ behaviour (Deliens, Clarys, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Deforche, 2014), teacher impact on students (Siegle, Rubenstein, & Mitchell, 2014), the use of technology in the classroom (Venkatesh, Croteau, & Rabah, 2014), perception of college learning (McIntosh, Fraser, Stephen, & Avis, 2013), undergraduate students’ attitudes (Lea, Stephenson, & Troy, 2003), student autonomy and motivation (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002), students’ perceptions about e-book use in the classroom (Lim & Hew, 2014) and students’ instructional preference in their first year of college (Latham & Gross, 2013). When planned well, the technique can be efficiently used to carefully answer the research question. Following is a discussion of alignment between the focus group technique and the research question and its use as a sole research method.

3.1.7.1 Research Question & Method Alignment

This study was constructed following a qualitative descriptive method design to acquire first-hand knowledge and gain a better understanding of what social issues affect student motivation. It is essential that the research design follows a baseline design process. The flow of design of this study took into account Onwuegbuzie and Collins’ (2007) guidelines for a sound research design technique, where research goal, objectives, purpose and research questions guided the selection of the research design. In other words, the methodology and method chosen, analysis technique and discussion presentations were carefully constructed to answer the research question.

Revisiting the research question, it is stated as what is the perception of first-year UAE male undergraduates of the factors that impact their motivation at UAE public higher

education institutes? In order to be able to answer this question, an exploratory research method was designed to bring students to share, discuss and give their opinion in a friendly environment. Exploratory studies have been used in educational research to identify various phenomena or gain more insights into factors that have an effect on student learning and achievement outcomes (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2005; Ertmer et al., 2007).

The intention was to design such a method in a way that would encourage participants to share their thoughts more openly and discretely than they would in comparison to observation or individual interviews. Focus group interviews were chosen for this study because this technique expands the researcher’s options between the research question and a suitable qualitative method to answer it (Morgan, 1997, p. 17). Focus groups allow the study to “explore the nature and effects of ongoing social discourse in ways that are not possible through individual interviews or observations” (Kamberelies & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 396). Table 3-4 below lists a comparison between focus group and both individual interviews and observation.

Table 3-4: Focus Groups vs Observation and Individual Interviews

Focus Group	Individual Interviews	Observation
Explore group characteristics and dynamics as relevant constitutive forces in the construction of meaning and the practice of social life.	Individual interviews strip away the critical interactional dynamics that constitute much of social practice and collective meaning making	
Can be used strategically to cultivate new kinds of interactional dynamics and, thus, access to new kinds of information.		Observations are a bit of “Crap shoot” in terms of capturing the focused activity in which researchers may be interested.

Source: Adapted from Kamberelies & Dimitriadis (2008, p. 396)

Although the settings for group discussions are considered less natural than the usual natural environment that surrounds observation study, group discussions have an edge when it comes to the time duration and type of participant behaviour that is of interest to the study (Morgan, 1997). From a time perspective, the study at hand was inclined towards gathering data in a more limited timeframe than is usually required for observational study. Also, the focus was on discussing students’ behaviour, related to the focus group, but not on studying their behaviour as would be the case in observation methodology.

From a social context, in focus groups students were able to make “meaning of their past and current life experiences” (“Overview of focus group methodology,” 2012, p. 28). When compared to individual interviews, focus groups have the edge of observing interactions in a group which provides several advantages. Of these advantages, the ability to see the differences in opinions and experiences and the richness of content these differences

introduce is immediate in focus groups, but in individual interviews these differences are reached after analyses of separate interviews (Morgan, 1997).

Further, Krueger’s (1994, p. 44) rationale for using focus group interviews is adapted by the researcher. This rationale favours the use of focus group interviews when: exploratory study is required; a communication gap between groups of people is present; the purpose of the research is to uncover factors; the themes of the research are to come from the group and the information in question is needed for a larger quantifiable investigation. In Table 3-5, the researcher has listed this study rationale for using focus group that adhere to Krueger’s (1994) recommendations.

Table 3-5: Rationale for Choosing Focus Groups for the Study

	Krueger’s Rationale	Researcher’s Rationale	Agree?
1	Insights are needed in exploratory study	The research is exploratory in nature to understand what students’ think about the factors influencing their motivation	√
2	There is a communication or understanding gap between groups or categories of people	Students have different understanding of motivation than the policy makers and instructors. This research offers a chance to open a channel of communication between students and educators to better enhance students motivation.	√
3	The Purpose is to uncover factors relating to complex behaviour or motivation.	The research at hand is set to uncover a multitude of factors affecting student’s motivation in college and non-college environment.	√
4	The researcher desires ideas to emerge from the groups	There is a host of factors studied internationally that impact student motivation. However, due to the specificity of the UAE culture, the researcher hopes to understand, from the students themselves, what UAE specific factors emerging as important to their motivation.	√
5	The researcher needs additional information to prepare for a larger-scale study.	The themes emerging from focus group data analysis will be used in a post-PhD quantitative study to generalize the finding of the study.	√

Source : Adapted from Krueger (1994, p. 44)

Focus groups “produce data that are seldom produced through individual interviewing and observation and that result in especially powerful interpretive insights” (Kamberelies & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 397). Therefore, in this study, focus groups have been used instead of observation or individual interviews because it was better suited to answer the research question (Connaway & Powell, 2010; Liamputtong, 2013).

3.1.7.2 Focus Groups as a Self-Contained Method

The assumption that focus groups are to be used only in conjunction with other research methods stems from marketing research (Morgan, 1998) which has used focus groups mainly as a preliminary data collection tool or in a mixed method design (Morgan, 1997). Since then, focus groups were used more often in social science, among other fields like health and marketing, as a self-contained research method (Connaway & Powell, 2010;

Liamputtong, 2013). In fact, focus groups “like other qualitative methods, can be a well-chosen, self-contained means for collecting research data” (Morgan, 1997, p. 18).

When focus groups are used as a self-contained method, they can be used for complex decision making, uncovering important issues, exploring new areas, and observing perceptions (Connaway & Powell, 2010). In this research, they were used as a tool to examine the research question from students’ perceptions. Focus groups as a self-contained research method can bring not only participants’ opinions and attitudes but also their perspectives and experiences to form a richer and deeper understanding of the research subject in a way that is not possible in other methods.

The main characteristic of a self-contained focus group is that the research findings that are drawn from sharing and comparing experiences and perspectives can stand on their own as an acceptable body of knowledge (Morgan, 1997). People like to compare and share their experiences with others in a subject of interest and are less likely to challenge others’ opinions in a group interaction. Knowing one’s perspective is a better way to know what and how participants think in a certain way that led to formation of their own attitudes and opinions (Morgan, 1997).

From a methodological point of view, the focus group is a valid methodology just like grounded theory, narrative or communication theory (“Overview of focus group methodology,” 2012, p. 26). Focus groups is a great tool for “revisiting epistemology, interrogating the relative purchase of both lived experience and theory, reimagining ethics within research practice, and enacting fieldwork in ways that are more attuned to its sacred dimensions” (Kamberelies & Dimitriadis, 2008, p. 396). The main argument for preferring focus groups over other methods for this research is the group interaction that takes place during the sessions that “reveals participant experiences and perspectives that may not be accessible without group interaction” (Liamputtong, 2013, p. 78).

3.1.7.3 Focus Groups Advantages

There are many advantages of focus groups as noted by Krueger and Casey (2008), Liamputtong (2013) and Morgan (1997). These advantages include:

- Focus groups are quicker and less costly than individual interviews in collecting in-depth knowledge.
- Focus groups are flexible. This helps finding valuable and unexpected information that will enrich the findings of the research.
- Focus groups emphasise the interactions of the participants to produce information that gives an in-depth insight to human behaviour.
- Interaction amongst participants motivates some of them to talk about their own experiences when they see others share an experience similar to theirs.

- The chance of misunderstanding the topic of discussion is slim since participants are able to ask anything and clarify for each other in case of topic misunderstanding.
- If planned well, focus groups can stimulate participants' interests and enthusiasm and help build trust amongst the group and the researcher and can lead to participants forming friendship with each other.

3.1.7.4 Focus Groups Limitations

Limitations of focus groups are not necessarily weaknesses in design but more of characteristics that the research acknowledged in the design process to avoid pitfalls and errors in data gathering, analysis and discussion. Some of the limitations of focus groups (Morgan, 1997) include the following:

- Information gathered from the sessions represent the participants' voices only and usually are not sufficient for a generalization to the population.
- Results are qualitative in nature and numbers are not in the interest of the researcher nor the research.
- Since the focus is on group interactions, complex beliefs and practices of individuals cannot be covered in focus groups.
- The perceptions and views of participants relate only to the topic of the discussions and cannot be used to forecast the behaviour of the participants in different areas or topics.
- Some issues that are related to group discussion might be present such as groupthink, where one person's opinion is nodded by the whole group, and cold groups, where not enough discussion and information is carried on. These could impact the quality of data and researcher or moderator should be prepared to overcome such situations during the session.

3.2 Instrument & Protocol Design

3.2.1 Instrument Design

The focus group techniques was used by the researcher for the purpose of obtaining general background information and student perceptions in higher education in a blended learning environment. Focus groups are "recruited on the basis of similar demographics, psychographics, buying attitudes, or behaviour, who engage in a discussion, led by a trained moderator, or a particular topic" (Greenbaum, 2000, p. 3).

3.2.1.1 The Focus-Groups-Interview Instrument Design

Focus group protocol was carefully designed to extract the maximum information from students. The research opted for a technique that is a blend between specific and general inquiry about the topic at hand. The generality here was intentionally being controlled by

the topic introduced by the researcher, to let students freely determine, by themselves, the factors that they deem important to their motivation.

When students went off topic, the researcher role was to make them come back to the main topic. This technique is called group interview. Focus group and group discussions can coexist in the same session, dependent on available time and protocol design, because both are “facilitated group discussions in which a researcher raises issues or asks questions that stimulate discussion among members of the group”(Kumar, 2014, p. 156).

Table 3-6: Group Interview vs Focus Group

Comparison	Group Interview	Focus Group
Setting	In a group	In a group
Degree of specificity	More general	More specific
Main Discussion Topic	Determined by researcher	Determined by researcher
Specific Discussion topics	Determined by the group	Determined by the researcher
Researcher Role (when Discussion is out of focus)	Directs participants to main discussion topic	Directs participants to specific discussion topics

Source: Modified from Kumar (2014, p. 157)

As seen in Table 3-6 above, both methods can coexist in a group setting. Also, because of the characteristics of both methods, they complement each other in uncovering a topic both in general and specific terms. In the group interview, the researcher plays a marginal role of directing participants to the main topic, giving them empowerment over the discussion topics.

On the contrary, the researcher, in focus groups, plays a more controlling role, determining each topic of the discussion and directing participants to discuss a topic at a time. These multiple roles of researcher allow participants to be both general and specific, if the two methods are used constructively and planned well in advance.

3.2.1.2 Design Advantage

The advantage of such a design, is to take participants gradually from general topics, to specific ones. Moreover, this technique allows the study to cover all aspects related to the UAE factors that could not be predetermined by the researcher, by letting students specify these factors during the session. Then, a set of predetermined factors is given to students and these factors are discussed one by one.

This strategy is suitable because some students, are more comfortable talking in general alone (Leedy & Ormrod, 2009) about their experience at college, and then can be gradually led by the researcher to specific encounters. However, in some cases there are cold groups (Krueger & Casey, 2008) where participants refrain from giving enough information on a

certain topic, especially when the topic is general like in group interview. By using the two techniques sequentially, the focus group topics will stimulate interest, especially if these topics are specific to students' experience, and will eventually lead to a more productive discussion from the participants.

Furthermore, student interaction patterns are of importance to the researcher for this type of unstructured interview (Morgan, 1997). These interactions helped the researcher understand the causes behind student behaviour towards their social indulgence. In addition, it facilitated understanding the effects of these participations on students' motivation by letting them "probe each other's reasons for holding certain views" (Hobson & Townsend, 2010, p. 234).

3.2.2 Protocol Design

There were three interrelated processes in the development of the focus group protocol. These three processes were protocol development strategy, questionnaire development guidelines and constraints. The processes were revisited at times to alter, change and enhance the quality of the questionnaires. These processes also continued during the sessions when there was a need for improvement according to participants' feedback.

3.2.2.1 Protocol Development Strategy

The protocol development strategy is related to the strategy for question development, sources of questions and development process (Krueger, 1998a). As seen in Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. below, these elements constitute a general framework on how to start formulating the focus group questionnaire.

Table 3-7: Protocol Development Strategy

Protocol Development Strategy	
Development strategy	▪ Questioning Route (Sequence of questions in complete, conversational sentences)
Source of questions	▪ Research problem & literature review ▪ Brainstorming sessions ▪ Potential participants
Development process	▪ Allow time (Good questions take time to develop) ▪ Share and revise (with supervisors, researchers & participants)

Source: Adapted from Krueger (1998a, pp. 3-17)

First, the focus groups technique uses complete sequences of questions written in a conversational manner. The advantage is that it is easier to be understood by the participants and assures a high quality analysis of the collected data. Second, the sources of questions can be from the problem, brainstorm session and literature review. A researcher must

understand the problem well in order to formulate good questions. Third, the protocol development was an ongoing cycle before and through the sessions.

Initially, the researcher formulated a set of questions taken from the literature, see Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. below, and extracted from the problem at hand. Then, he had brainstorming sessions with fellow researchers on how to improve the questions. Once that was done, the questions were sent to the research supervisors. The advisors' comments were used to further enhance the quality of the questionnaires. Because of the large number of focus group sessions conducted, the researcher had the opportunity to work with a professional moderator to improve the questions in the first three focus groups.

During this effort the first focus group participants were asked after the session to give their feedback on the protocol. Occasionally, the researcher also enhanced the questions during the remaining sessions based on participants' comments in a way that did not alter the meaning but helped clarify the ideas in a more understandable form to the participants.

Table 3-8: Sources of Focus Group Questions

Sources of Protocol Questions		
Q	Description	Source
1	Introduction	(Krueger, 1998a)
2	Study experience	(Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 2013; Goodenow, 1992)
3.1	Non-college factors	Research problem
3.2	Family	(Fan & Williams, 2010; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994)
	Friends	(Ambrose & Kulik, 1999; Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Klassen et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 1994)
	Work	(Reay, Crozier, & Clayton, 2010)
	Social / peer pressure	(McClure et al., 2011)
	Career aspirations	(Ames, 1992; Miller, Behrens, Greene, & Newman, 1993; Watt et al., 2012)
4.1	College related factors	Research problem
4.2	College environment	(Zuniga, Williams, & Berger, 2005)
	Curriculum	(Hofman & Van Den Berg, 2000; Sambell & McDowell, 1998; Shavelson et al., 2008; Shawer, Gilmore, & Banks-Joseph, 2012)
	Interaction	(Heirdsfield, Walker, Tambyah, & Beutel, 2011; Holsapple & Lee-Post, 2006; Jaasma & Koper, 1999; Liao, 2006; Mahle, 2011; Rodriguez-Keyes, Schneider, & Keenan, 2013)
	Care	(Mason, 2012; Rodriguez-Keyes et al., 2013; Ryan et al., 1994)
	College facilities	(Keating, Guan, Piñero, & Bridges, 2005; Pascarella, 1992; Price, Matzdorf, Smith, & Agahi, 2003)
	Online discussion	(Cheng, Paré, Collimore, & Joordens, 2011; Hew, Cheung, & Ng, 2010; Richardson & Ice, 2010)
	Social networks	(Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011; Junco, Heiberger, & Loken, 2011; Kim, Sohn, & Choi, 2011)
	Technical support	(Bennett, Bishop, Dalgarno, Waycott, & Kennedy, 2012; Lee, 2010)
	iPad	Suggested by participants in FG 1
	IELTS	Suggested by participants in FG 1 & 2
5	Summary	(Krueger, 1998a)

Source: Developed for this research

3.2.2.2 Protocol Development Guidelines

Good questions lead to better understandings, deeper thinking, and provide the “foundation of high-quality focus group research” (Krueger, 1998a, p. xix). The focus group questions for this research have been developed following Krueger’s (1998a) questionnaire development guidelines as listed in Table 3-9 below. The guidelines offer insight on what constitutes a good question, how to phrase and sequence questions, the categories of focus group questions, a list of engaging-type questions and the usefulness of probe and follow up questions in the discussion.

Table 3-9: Protocol Development Guidelines

Protocol Development Guidelines	
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity (short, one dimensional & understandable) ▪ Conversation style (direct, comfortable & simple) ▪ What works is right (If the question yields helpful results, include it) ▪ Use open ended question (participants determine the response’s direction)
Phrasing Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don’t ask (why) (does not lead to reliable answer) ▪ Keep questions simple (stimulates shape and form to the discussion) ▪ Limit examples in the question (limits thinking & answers in one-dimension)
Sequencing Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background information ▪ General questions before specific ▪ Positive questions before Negative ▪ Uncued questions before cued ▪ Participant categories before other categories
Categories of Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opening question (participants get acquainted and feel connected) ▪ Introductory question (begins discussion of topic) ▪ Transition question (moves smoothly into key questions) ▪ Key question (insight on area of central concern in the study) ▪ Ending question (where to place emphasis & conclusion)
Engaging Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To engage participants, use questions that have a list, rating or choices and ask participants to discuss the items.
Using Probes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Probes lead to additional information or clarification (explain further, give me an example, and say more, anything else?)

Source : Adapted from Krueger (1998a, pp. 20-48, 61-70)

The five questions of the protocol followed the same category description listed in the table. The first question is an opening question asking students to state their names and major. The second question was an introductory and transition question, asking students to talk about their college experience. The main structure of the protocol is listed in Figure 3-3 below.

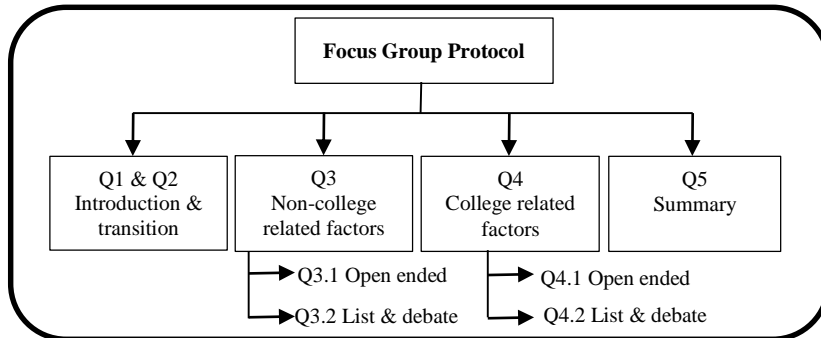


Figure 3-3: Structure of the Focus Group Protocol

Source: Developed for this study

The third and fourth questions were key questions of the protocol. These questions, gathered from the literature review, asked students about college and non-college factors affecting their motivation. The fifth question was an ending question that summarised the previous questions and asked students to share their comments or suggestions on improving student motivation. An excerpt of the content of the protocol is represented in Figure 3-4 below.

Q1 Opening Question
Please state your name and tell us and what you intend to study in college?

Q2 Introductory & Transition Question **Simple, clear, conversational question**
Please describe your study experience in college?
Probe Questions (if time allows):
Are you enjoying your study experience? **Positive before negative**
Tell us about some positive aspects of your study experience?
Tell us about some negative aspects of your study experience?
Do you intend to complete the program?

Q3 Key Question **Uncued question**
Q3.1 Describe **what** external factors have influenced your academic motivation to study?
Cued question
Q3.2 This is a list of some of external factors that might influence motivation.
Please review & comment on factors that had an influence on your motivation:
- Family.
- Friends.
- Work experience.
- Family responsibilities. **List**

Q4 Key Question **Uncued question**
Q4.1 Describe **what** college factors influenced your academic motivation to study?
Cued question
Q4.2 This is a list of college factors that might influence academic motivation.
Please review & comment on those factors that had an influence on your motivation:
- The college environment and ambience.
- The quality of the curriculum.
- The quality of the teaching.
- The relevance of the curriculum to the real world. **List**

Q5 Ending Question
- Summary of Questions 3 & 4
- Have we missed anything? **Simple, clear, conversational question**

Figure 3-4: Research Protocol Content Excerpt

Source: Developed for this study.

As can be seen in the figure, consideration of the focus group protocol guidelines helped decide the structure of the questions in relation to the research problem and research question. The intent was to discover the factors that impact UAE students' motivation by first letting students express their own thoughts as in questions 3.1 and 4.1, and then by introducing a list of determinants that students discussed in questions 3.2 and 4.2. This procedure was adopted to ensure a comprehensive coverage of factors and what students think about them. The intent was to give individual students their chance to express their opinion on the effect and importance of the factors that impact their personal motivation.

Furthermore, taking into consideration the phrasing and guidelines for characteristics of good questions, all questions were simple, open ended and formulated in a conversational manner. In addition, probes were used when students' answers were not very clear and

needed further investigation. Examples of probe questions used in the sessions are: Can you explain more? Can you recall a situation or example? Do you want to add anything? And I am not sure I understood your point clearly, can you describe further?

In an effort to make the questions more engaging, lists of factors were given to students as part of the key questions. In questions three and four, students were asked first to talk about factors that impact their motivation without a cue. In some cases students asked to be given a cue and the researcher gave general examples in an effort to limit the one-dimensional effects of giving examples as per the guidelines.

Then, for each question students were given a list of possible factors that are college and non-college related. They were asked to take few minutes, read, and then discuss the factors they think are important to them. This was a very helpful technique because some students did not talk at the beginning but when they read the list and found factors that were related to their experience it stimulated their interest to cast their opinions into the discussions. The research protocol with examples of how Krueger’s (1998a) guidelines were implemented is shown in appendix A.

3.2.2.3 Protocol Constraints

There were five constraints that the protocol design followed in order to produce reliable results. These constraints are session time, clarity, cultural and language used in the focus group (Krueger, 1998a) as shown in Table 3-10 below. Furthermore it is preferable to limit changes to questions to a minimum.

Table 3-10: Protocol Constraints

Protocol constraints		
	Question type	Time limit (minute)
Time Constraints	Facts	< 1
	Examples & stories	5-10
	Discussions & comparisons	10 -15
	Activities, involvement	> 15
Clarity constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conceptual clarity: Researcher must understand the problem. ▪ Question clarity: Questions should be clear, simple and direct. ▪ Audience clarity : Questions must be understandable by the participants 	
Cultural constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions should be suitable for the culture of the participants 	
Language constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language of the session to be in participant’s native language if the researcher is familiar with it. 	
Changing Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions can be changed using parallel or similar questions. ▪ The questionnaire should remain consistence when changing the questions. 	

Source : Adapted from Krueger (1998a, pp. 49-59)

The guidelines advise certain time limits for the different categories of questions. Furthermore, in order to achieve complete clarity, the researcher should become familiar with the problem at hand to be able to produce clear questions that are understandable by the participants.

In addition, cultural and language constraints relate to use of questions that are appropriate for the participants' culture and if possible using their native language during the session. The last guideline relates to changing questions and not affecting the meaning or consistency of the rest of the protocol. The researcher implemented these constraints in the protocol as seen in Table 3-11 below.

Table 3-11: Protocol Constraints Compliance

Research Protocol constraints' compliance				
	Question type	FG-1	FG -2	FG3-13*
Time Constraints (minutes)	Q1 Facts	3	2	≈ 2
	Q2 Examples	14	8	≈ 6
	Q 3 Discussions	23	18	≈14
	Q4 Discussion	25	20	≈16
	Q5 Summary	7	5	≈ 3
Clarity		Q 3 & Q 4 needed explanation	Q3 & Q4 rephrased	OK
Cultural		Q 3.2 (religion) removed	OK	OK
Language		Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
Changes		Adding iPad to Q4.2	Adding IELTS to Q4.2	Reversing order of Q3 and Q4

*Some groups took more time because of a larger number of participants, late arrival of students and students' interest in the subject. Because of this, some sessions were cut short because of time constraints due to students prior commitments (exams, other classes)

Source: Developed for this research

Initially the researcher recorded the time for the questions in the first three focus groups. This was realised with the help of the assisting moderator who was present at these first sessions. The researcher was able to track which questions took more time and changed the strategy of asking questions in the next sessions until the limits fell within acceptable criteria of the guidelines.

One of the reworked issues was the clarity of the key questions. These questions were revisited after each session. A brainstorm work shop was held between the researcher and the moderator in which the questions were changed in a manner that produced simple and clear questions without sacrificing the quality. In addition, some questions were not suitable for the culture and were removed based on the participants' feedback. An example was the question about impact of religion. It was deemed a sensitive and private subject by students.

On the contrary, other questions were added based on students' suggestions. Issues related to iPad use in the classroom and IELTS score were highlighted during the first two sessions and were added to the protocol. As for the language, the protocol was translated to Arabic by a legal translator and the whole session was carried out in Arabic where students felt comfortable and used local slang language to explain their point of view, which was understood by the researcher who shares the same culture.

3.3 Role of the Researcher

Unlike the internal studies carried out by academics and students in the current UAE literature, the researcher comes from outside the UAE higher education spectrum. The researcher does not have prior views, or interest in selecting certain themes, observations or records of information over others. However, the researcher did exercise self-reflection (Johnson & Christensen, 2012) to understand and control any potential bias to a minimum.

In addition to the neutral background, in this thesis, the researcher played different roles, sometimes simultaneously during the focus group sessions. The researcher was involved in the planning and moderating of focus groups with the participant colleges and had to carry multiple roles based on the requirement for each stage. These roles were related to learning, cooperation, management and reflections necessary to carry successful execution of the study. Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. shows the roles the researcher assumed in different phases of the study.

Table 3-12: Role of the Researcher

Phase	Tasks	Role	Role Details
Data collection	Planning	Coordinator/supervisor	Coordinating logistics, ethical applications and informed consents, and screening, with participant universities.
	Executing	Learner	A professional moderator was invited to improve researcher moderating skills.
	Executing	Observer	One session was run by a professional moderator with the researcher observing participants responses and emotions. As a moderator, researcher played multiple roles :
	Executing	Moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeker of wisdom - Challenger - Referee
Analysis/ Discussion	Executing	Self-Critique	After each session, researcher reviewed his field notes and reflected on his mistakes and biases
		Interpreter	Use of participants' own words in a descriptive style to carry out discussions and show results of the study.

Source: Developed for this research

As per the table, during preparation for data collection, the researcher was involved with university administrations to help students' screening process, setting the dates and times of the sessions, and to choose the proper location to conduct the interviews. The researcher also made sure that the research information sheet and consent forms were sent two weeks

before the interview sessions to give students ample time to read, comprehend and ask for any clarification needed before signing the forms.

For groups 4-6 at campus 2, the researcher was given the phone numbers of participants and called each one of them well ahead of the session. The researcher then called the participants two days before the session. Even though they promised to attend, some students sent SMS messages apologising for not attending on the day the session was conducted. They requested that the researcher does not contact the administration to report their absence. Their request was respected and in conformance with participants' confidentiality. Luckily, groups 4 and 5 had adequate attendance, but group 6 had only two participants.

As a novice moderator, the researcher assigned a professional moderator to help improve his moderating skills. This happened in the first three focus groups. In the first and second focus group, a professional moderator was present to review the skills of the researcher. After this session, the comments on the researcher's skills were discussed. The researcher's skills were acceptable, and the comments focused on how to efficiently control the time, adequately ask probing questions and handling of difficult participants.

During the third focus group, the researcher was in the audience observing the professional moderator demonstrate her skills. The researcher learnt from this session how to control the time and conflicting views in the group. Because of logistical issues and work commitment, however, the professional moderator was not able to attend the rest of the sessions but the researcher had gained better moderating skills through the professional moderator's remarks and observations.

While conducting the sessions, the researcher played multiple roles such as the seeker of wisdom, the challenger and the referee (Krueger, 1998k) based on the situation at hand. Most of the time during all focus group sessions the researcher played the role of the seeker of wisdom. In this position, the goal was to obtain participants' wisdom by asking them adequate questions to obtain such knowledge (Krueger, 1998k).

At other times, the researcher was in the challenger stance. This stance was utilized in some focus groups at campuses 1 and 2 where students would have an opinion unchallenged by others. The researcher had to step in and, at times, challenge others to respond which ultimately helped bring different points of view to the discussion and enriched the results (Krueger, 1998k).

In rare cases, especially at campus 4 where tense emotions were present, the researcher had to play a referee role. This was necessary because some students did not allow others to explain their different points of view. In order to be fair, the researcher made sure that different opinions were listened to and respected (Krueger, 1998k).

Also, the researcher played a role of self-critique using reflexivity after each session. This was accomplished using field notes and listening to the recordings of the sessions. This

technique helped the researcher reflect back and improve his skills from one interview to another.

During data analysis, the researcher tried as much as possible to be the voice of the participants. Points of view, perceptions and experiences were described with the most relevant words. Participants' conflicting views were also presented. In order to avoid using numbers, the researcher used a table to show the different positions students took, how often a theme reoccurred, and how much details were revealed in explaining the theme.

Also, the researcher made an effort to capture the emotions present when students were sharing their opinions. Each student quotation was labelled with its emotional attributes like sadness, anger, happiness and even indifference and formal positions. The author used a novel technique of drawing those emotions instead of writing them up to help the reader get a clear picture of students' feelings during the sessions.

3.4 Ethics

3.4.1 Ethical Concerns

Ethics are the “principles and guidelines that help us uphold the things we value” (Johnson & Christensen, 2012, p. 99). Research ethics dictates and guides the conduct of the researcher towards the research participants' rights and any other personnel affected by the research (Saunders et al., 2009). There are three different ethical philosophies that researchers consider when judging ethical acceptability of their studies. The first philosophy is the deontological approach, in which a universal code is assumed for guiding ethical issues. The second approach is ethical scepticism where the individual's conscience decides what is right or wrong. The third approach is utilitarianism where ethical decisions are weighed to compare between the research's benefits and consequences for the participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This study followed the utilitarian ethical approach.

There were two primary areas of ethical concern for the research: professional issues and treatment of the research participants (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). From a professional point of view, the researcher is value oriented and is under no pressure from a sponsorship organization, a grant agency or the university to publish results to receive positive evaluation or promotion. This kind of pressure has led some field researchers to engage in fraudulent activities and to alter their research results (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In addition, the researcher followed strict guidelines to ensure that there was no physical or psychological harm to the participants. These ethical guidelines are discussed in the following section

3.4.2 Ethical Guidelines

Because this research involves humans and human feelings, the researcher followed the university ethical code for research and the participant organizations' research ethics and procedure. Particular emphases was placed on the subjects' informed consent, deception, freedom to withdraw, protection from mental and physical harm, confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. Table 3-13 depicts the research ethical considerations.

Table 3-13: Research Ethics

Research Ethics		
Section	Details	
Philosophy	Utilitarianism	
Ethical clearance	Obtained from 4 universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ USQ ▪ HCT ▪ UAEU ▪ ZU
Ethical Issues	Including participants and data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informed consent ▪ Deception ▪ Protection from mental and physical Harm ▪ Anonymity ▪ Confidentiality

Source: Developed for this research

The researcher obtained four ethical approvals to conduct this research. Ethical approvals given for this research were the following:

- Ethical approval from the researcher's university
- Ethical approval from participating universities

The overarching ethical clearance came from the researcher's university (USQ). Under the USQ ethical application, the researcher had to define risks, participants' treatment, consent forms, research information sheet, data handling, and confidentiality and privacy issues. Once approved, the researcher then contacted the three participant universities with an initial brief letter describing the study objectives and characteristics of the participants required to conduct the research. All universities asked the researcher to apply for ethical clearance with emphasis on informed consents and privacy issues. The application with supportive documents was reviewed by each participating university ethical committee. Although the approval from some universities was delayed for few months, it was a necessary process to ensure ethical concerns were treated under the appropriate guidelines.

3.5 Data Collection

To conduct focus groups for the data collection phase, consideration of location, session venue, ethics, participants and sample, focus group type, language, and timeline were highlighted. Those considerations are discussed in the following sections.

3.5.1 Location

The UAE is composed of seven emirates, six of which are stretching on the shore of the Arabian Gulf. These are Abu Dhabi (AD) the capital, Dubai the business capital, Sharjah, Ajman, Um Al Qaiwain (UAQ) and Ras Al Khaima (RAK). Fujairah is the seventh emirate that is located on the Arabian Sea. The only other big city is Al Ain, which is in the province of the emirate of AD and is located inland close to the Hajar Mountains. The study included the three UAE public (government) higher education institutes of UAE University, Zayed University (ZU) and Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT). The research was conducted within large UAE public universities that adopt blended learning within their curriculum. As shown in Table 3-14 below, the three public universities, UAEU, ZU and HCT all have a Blackboard system as a learning tool in their efforts to promote blended learning environment.

Table 3-14: Participating Universities' Information

University	N of students	Campuses	Locations	Colleges	online learning	Targeted college/ program
UAEU	14,000	6	1	10	Black board	University College
HCT	18,000	17	9	8	Black board Vista Black board Learn	First year students at preparation program
ZU	10,000	2	2	8	Black board	University College

Source: ("About ZU," 2011; "HCT Overview," 2013; "UAEU facts and figures," 2013)

The three universities have a total of 42,000 students, most of which are UAE students. The targeted college is University College at both UAEU and ZU and students within their first year of college at HCT. The particular reason for this choice is that many UAE male students drop out of college within the first year (Swan, 2012a). It is within the first year that issues of adaptability to the new environment have most impact on students' motivation.



Figure 3-5: Participant Universities' Campus Locations

Source: ("About ZU," 2011; "HCT Overview," 2013; "UAEU facts and figures," 2013)

In Figure 3-5 above, campus locations of UAEU, ZU and HCT through the whole country are shown. UAEU is the oldest university of the three and has 6 campuses scattered around one city, Al-Ain. Zayed University has two campuses in the capital AD and the country's business capital Dubai. It was not until 2010, that Zayed University started admitting male students. HCT is the largest college in terms of student intake and has campuses scattered all around 17 locations in the UAE.

In a recent study conducted by Ridge, Farah & Shami (2013a), it was concluded that the northern emirates of RAK, UAQ and Fujairah had the highest male students dropout rates, while the capital Abu Dhabi, experienced the lowest rate of school dropout. Many students from these northern emirates regions prefer to go to campuses near their emirates. Most likely they end up joining HCT campuses in RAK, Fujairah and Sharjah, UAEU in Al-Ain and ZU campus in Dubai. Thus it is important the focus group interview design take into account the regional location of the universities.

3.5.2 Venue

Because focus groups should be conducted in a permissive environment, it is important to select a place that is as neutral as possible. An improperly chosen location might distract the participants, possibly affecting the quality of their responses (Krueger, 1994, p. 48). Most colleges participating in this study have conference and meeting rooms that provide the privacy and isolation appropriate to conduct the session. In two campuses, mainly HCT and ZU of Abu Dhabi, the researcher was able to work with the administration to reserve

the conference rooms for the interviews. However, some sessions were disrupted by college staff who asked to use the facility. The researcher solved the issue by putting a do-not-disturb sticker on the door.

On the other hand, some sessions were held in normal classrooms at UAEU and ZU of Dubai. This was due to the fact that the conference room was reserved well in advance in UAEU. For the case of ZU of Dubai, there was no conference room because of the small size of the campus. In the latter settings the researcher had to rearrange the chairs to form a circle in which students were able to face other and in a way that permitted the researcher to observe the participants' emotions and engagements. All things considered, the conference rooms and the classes chosen for the sessions were proper venues allowing an open, trusting environment with minimum visual and sound distraction.

3.5.3 Participants

Since this phase involved intensive investigation of the specific UAE social factors that impact their motivation, selecting a small and homogenous sample was the most appropriate technique (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). From a researcher's perspective, students who can provide the required information to fulfil the purpose of the study were included (Krueger, 2000). Those students had similar characteristics so that the group composition was of a homogenous sample as much as possible because having a homogenous sample is one of the defining characteristics of focus groups (Krueger, 1994).

It is important to define the characteristics of the students of the study. The research targets of study were first-year-undergraduate UAE male students in public universities. The gender factor was set in advance by the research problem described in Chapter 1 of the study, which revealed that males have a higher dropout rate and lower enrolment than females in the UAE. The insistence on first year college students was because of the high dropout rate of this group of UAE males within their first year of study. The intention was to interview students in their second semester because they have experienced the blended environment of the college and were able to reflect on their experience and share their perception of the study experience.

Dividing students into groups helped maximize homogeneity and increased "the likelihood that they would feel comfortable contributing to discussions" (Hernandez & Nesman, 2004). In a previous study on student motivation, students were divided, based on their scores into three groups of high, medium and low motivation levels to yield a more homogenous sample (Mistler-Jackson & Songer, 2000). For this research, it was not possible to access students' scores. So instead, the students were divided according to the English level they were in to three groups labelled low for the lower English classes, medium for the medium level classes and high for the higher level classes. Students were not told about the labels or which group they were in; these labels were shared strictly in confidence with the university administration to divide the students into the groups. The

researcher did not ask to know the individual student grades, because it does not serve any purpose for the research and is considered private information that the research will not collect.

3.5.4 Sample

Three to six focus groups were deemed suitable, as a minimum, with each having 6-10 participants (Krueger, 1994; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). The goal was to select group size so that the outcome information reached the saturation point where no new information could be obtained, while keeping the groups small enough for deep understanding (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The study avoided selection invalidity. Selection invalidity refers to the risk that the outcome of an experiment depends on uncontrolled individual differences (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). It was avoided by selecting participants from a homogenous sample of university students (Tuckman & Harper, 2012). Initially the researcher planned to conduct 9 focus groups, 3 for each campus. However, after ZU administration suggested an extra campus and groups, the researcher added 4 more groups and the final count of the focus groups conducted for the research was thirteen. Table 3-15 shows the stages of sampling procedure done for this research.

Table 3-15: Research’s Sampling Process

Stage	Sampling Consideration	Result
Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals are selected that provide the information needed to address the purpose 	Criterion based selection
Selection method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> select a homogenous group to gain in depth understanding of how factors impact their motivation 	Homogeneous sample selection
Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large enough to reach saturation Small enough for deep case oriented analysis How many participants/group (desired Sample) are enough? 	6-10 students/group
Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many focus groups to be conducted? 	13 focus groups
Response rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the response rate? 	Response rate is 80% (0.8)
Original sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many students/group should be invited (Original Sample)? Original Sample = Maximum desired sample/ response rate. 	Original sample = $10 / 0.8 = 12.5$ or 13 students/ group
Invited Sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of invited students = original sample * n of focus groups 	Total number of invited students = $13 * 13 =$ 169 students

Source: Adapted from Johnson & Christensen (2012, pp. 235-237) and Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2007).

As per the table, another consideration was the response rate of the participants and how many students should be invited to the focus group sessions. With the help of the participating universities, the researcher assumed that the response rate would be near 80%. Therefore the original sample invited to the sessions was the result of dividing the desired sample of 6-10 participants over the proportion likely to attend (0.8) (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This yielded 8-13 original samples with a total of 169 original samples to be included. In some groups, all invited participants attended, and in other groups, many students did not show up. In focus group 6, only two students participated in what can be accepted as a dyad (Edmunds, 1999) focus group.

To be able to send invitations, student screening was done to produce the desired characteristics of the participants. Purposeful sampling is the commonly used sampling method for focus groups (Deliens et al., 2014). In criterion based selection, individuals who have the characteristics that will reflect the information needed to understand the determinants that impact student motivation will be selected. Out of this population, the identified sample will have the same characteristics and is called a homogenous sample (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The screening process included factors like nationality, student English level standing, and which semester they were currently in. Although nationality was important, it was not used in UAEU because the administration did not provide it. As a result some students were from the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) but were residents of the UAE. Another screening factor was the English level. Students in lower English classes were separated from those in middle and higher level classes each into different lists. Once that was accomplished, students who were in their second semester were then chosen for each group and the rest were dismissed. The administration then chose random names from the list of each filtered group and they were the ones invited to the sessions.

3.5.5 Layered Focus Groups

Given considerations of available resources and time, deciding on a focus group type took into account three elements: types of participants, groups needed by participants' type, and design configuration that would allow maximum information to be extracted from the interviews (Krueger, 2000).

The participants were divided into three groups based on their English level standings: lower, medium, and higher levels of English. Also, to cover the three universities and the diversity of the locations in the UAE, four locations or campuses were chosen to represent the different geographical regions in the UAE. The socioeconomics in Fujairah, Ajman, UAQ and RAK are almost similar and students from these regions have been shown to have similar behaviour patterns and attitude to school (Ridge et al., 2013a). Dubai and AD have different socioeconomics, because more of the country's wealth is concentrated within these two cities.

Table 3-16: Focus Group Layered Design

Layer 1		Layer 2	Audience	Related Focus Group (FG) session
Geographical Location		University		
State	City			
Northern Emirates	RAK	HCT	Group 1(Low English level students)	FG3
			Group 2(Medium English level students)	FG1
			Group 3(High English level students)	FG2
Political Capital	Al Ain	UAEU	Group 1(Low English level students)	FG5
			Group 2(Medium English level students)	FG4
			Group 3(High English level students)	FG6
Political Capital	Abu Dhabi	ZU AD	Group 1(Low English level students)	FG9
			Group 2(Medium English level students)	FG7
			Group 3(High English level students)	FG8
Business Capital	Dubai	ZU Dubai	Group 1(Low English level students)	FG11
			Group 2(Medium English level students)	FG12
			Group 3(High English level students)	FG10
			Group 4(High English level students)	FG13

Source: Created for this research using Krueger's (2000, p. 32) multiple layer design principle

Considering the locations of universities, the researcher chose to conduct three focus group interviews, one for each student group, at each of the four campuses in four locations. As described in Table 3-16 above, the first set of focus group interviews was conducted at the HCT campus of RAK. The second set was carried out at the UAEU in Al Ain Campus, representing the emirate of AD. The third set of focus group interviews was conducted in ZU campus of Abu Dhabi. The last set was conducted in ZU Dubai. This is called a multiple layers focus group design, in which the first layer involves the geographical location of the universities where students represent different socioeconomic cohorts, and a second layer where the focus group interviews are repeated for different student groups (Krueger & Casey).

3.5.6 Language

Since all students are Arabs, all questions were translated to Arabic language and then the answers were translated back to English through an authorised local legal service translator. This ensured that participants were able to express their opinion without the difficulty of looking for the right expression in a second language that they might not know very well.

The chosen translation service provider was one of many legal translators in the UAE who are authorised by the notary authority of the UAE government to translate legal and private Arabic documents to English and vice versa for banks, police, court proceedings, and private companies as well as individuals.

3.5.7 Time Consideration

There were two time-bounded stages in conducting focus group interviews: first contact with the academic institution, and the actual dates of the interviews. The time line to conduct the focus groups depended on the academic calendar of the university under research. Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. below shows the academic calendar of all three universities of interest to the researcher.

Table 3-17: Participating Universities' Academic Calendar

Campus	Class Start	Class end	Best contact Period	Focus Group Time Window		
				From	To	Reason
UAEU	08-09-13	04-02-14	26-08-13 To 08-09-13	11-11-13	28-11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term 1 exam over. • Beginning of Term 2
HCT	08-09-13	06-02-14	14-08-13 To 08-09-13	20-11-13	12-12-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before recess & holidays
ZU	08-09-13	26-01-14	18-08-13 To 08-09-13	10 -11-13	28-11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term 1 examination end • Beginning of term 2 • No examination

Source: ("About ZU," 2011; "HCT Overview," 2013; "UAEU facts and figures," 2013)

First, the researcher had to establish links with the administrations of the universities. An initial letter of intent was disseminated to the three institutes. The researcher had to allow time for university approval, additional requests and ethical application review. This process was started at the earliest possible time on academic calendar, which was the middle of August when university staff resumed their work before the start of semester 2.

The dates of the actual focus group interviews were included in the letter of intent but were changed after the ethical approval because of logistical reasons. When the researcher got the go ahead from the institutes, then the next step was the actual selection of the participants according to the sampling technique and screening process. The selected students were then sent an invitation letter, participant's information sheet, and consent forms within the ethical process guidelines.

Upon selecting participants, the next phase was to select the proper time to conduct the interviews. The selected times in the table above were deemed suitable because they all are after term 1 examination, and just before the semester break. Selecting an earlier time would have most probably yielded lower rates of attendance because students were busy preparing for their exams. The timeline restriction gave the researcher a window of one month to conduct the focus group interviews.

3.6 Data Analysis

All focus group proceedings were audio recorded for analysis. Data entry and storage was done through transcription (Hobson & Townsend, 2010). All audio recordings were typed in Arabic language into Microsoft Word documents without any language, syntax, and grammar correction. All Arabic files were translated to English using a professional translation service. English Translation was translated back to Arabic using another professional service to check if the resultant Arabic translation matched the original

interview scripts. The results were matching except for minor variations where the words were synonyms but the meaning did not change.

Data analysis followed the interim analysis techniques in which data was interpreted at different analysis phases such as segmenting, coding, identifying relationships, constructing diagrams and results corroboration (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). In the data analysis phase, a long table approach was used to code, query, take memos, reflect, and explore interview data for themes of interest (Andrew, Salamonson, & Halcomb, 2008; Cumming, Kim, & Eouanzoui, 2007; Glynn, MacFarlane, Kelly, Cantillon, & Murphy, 2006; Pittam, Elander, Lusher, Fox, & Payne, 2009; Taylor & Mander, 2007; Williams, Colles, & Allen, 2010).

3.6.1 Factors Affecting Analysis Method Choice

There are various approaches to data analysis, but before following a particular approach, it is best to look into the factors that impact the analysis and develop a general guideline that, once followed, leads to selecting a more aligned method that will help direct research efforts to better results. The first of such guidelines is fitness for purpose. Defining the purpose of data analysis will help in the choice of analysis method and the way it is written up. In the case of this study, the research question was set to discover the factors that impact student motivation, and thus it is of interest for the research to be able to explore and generate themes about these factors.

A second influencing factor on data analysis is the study type. For example, ethnography is best written as narrative while biography and case studies can be written as chronological narratives. However, this research has implemented focus groups as a means to collect data. Focus group analysis is “systematic, sequential, verifiable and continuous” (Krueger & Casey, 2008, p. 128). Table 3-18 below summarises characteristics of focus group analysis.

Table 3-18: Focus Group Analysis Characteristics

Characteristic	Meaning	Benefit
Systematic & sequential	Analysis strategy is sequential, documented and understood by the researcher who can point to the trail of evidence effortlessly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results reflect what the group shared • Avoids making mistakes • Avoids overlooking critical factors
Verifiable	Other researchers can arrive at the same conclusion using focus group data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids trap of selective perception
Continuous	Analysis begins from the first focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved data collection. • Helps refine questions in subsequent groups to get better answers

Source: Adapted from Krueger & Casey (2008, pp. 128-129)

Indeed, data analysis started early on from the start of the first focus groups. Change in questions composition and format helped students' understanding and obtained better answers in subsequent sessions that enhanced the result. Analysis of the data followed a systematic four step process that reflected groups' opinions in an orderly manner without neglecting any important details.

Another determining factor is how the analysis should be driven. In other words should data analysis be driven by issues or by people/individuals? Analyses focusing on issues are fragmentary and those focusing on individuals are atomistic. There is always a dispute in data analysis between the tendencies to keep the big picture of events and the tendency to breaking down the data into sub-parts, categories and groups (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). It is therefore important to keep in mind how the data collection questions reflect and relate to the research questions before choosing an analysis strategy. Since the focus groups in this study are composed of students who bear similar characteristics, the intent, from the design of data collection, was to focus on the issues that span all student groups and thus the analysis is an issue-driven one.

3.6.2 Coding

Analysis was focused on the respondents' way of thinking about their environment, whether it is college related, or non-college related, and its inclusions of people and objects. Coding for the analysis followed the same trend with focus on the respondents' opinions. This type of coding is one of ten types acknowledged by (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In the study, students' focus groups were divided into groups of three levels of English and three universities with four campuses. Students expressed their opinion either by describing what they think are factors affecting their motivation, or by debating a factor from the researcher's list. Some of the factors span college and the social environment outside the university, and some were specific to a certain location. Based on all these considerations, factor coding provided a way to enable the research to divide the responses in a clear and organized manner. As a result it helped develop understanding of the effect and extension of each discussed factor.

3.6.3 Analysis Method: Long Table Approach

A long table approach was the method used for data analysis. It is advised for researchers in their first qualitative research, as is the case here, to follow the long table approach because it is "systematic. It breaks the job down into doable chunks. It helps make analysis a visual process" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 137). Analysis began with coding the factors for each of the thirteen focus groups on its own using the raw transcribed data of each recording. Then, using a long table technique, similar factors and opinions were gathered and tabulated for clarity and coherence. This helped with reducing redundancy during analysis.

The researcher has adapted his own tailored long table approach, depicted here in Figure 3-6 below, in which each focus group is dealt with one at a time. The questions organize the responses but the issue was that students' thoughts did not follow a predictable structure. They tended to address categories out of sequence. Therefore, it was necessary to manually read and reposition those text segments into their corresponding categories.

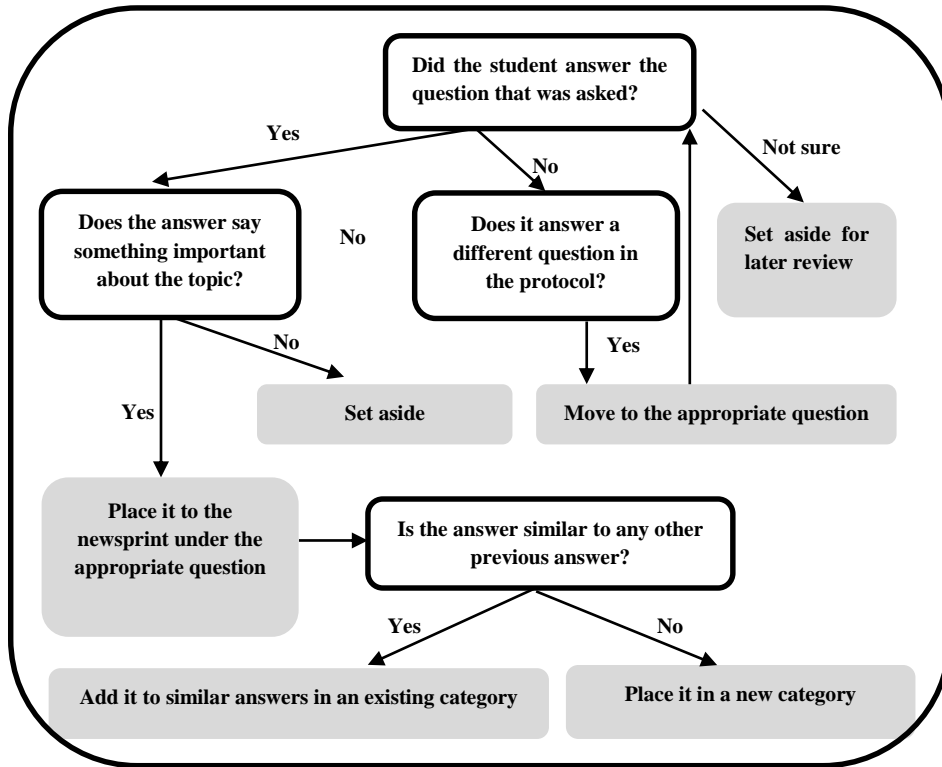


Figure 3-6: Researcher's Theme Analysis Path Line

Source: Adapted from Krueger's & Casey (2000, pp. 134-135)

This process is described as a mini-long-table approach, where answers that fit certain categories are moved to that category, and grouped with similar responses for each focus group. It is not unusual to see participants' answers go off topic in a focus group, nor is it strange to see answers that are not related to the subject. In fact, generally speaking, focus group participants "regularly get off topic or expand in detail on an aspect of minimal importance to the study" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 135). In the mini-long-table approach, this issue is solved by organizing the answers utilizing the theme analysis path line shown in the figure above.

3.6.4 Analysis Steps

Analysis followed a 4-step process as follows:

- Step 1: Transcribed raw files were analysed using the long table approach to:
 - o Manually generate initial themes.
 - o Enter comments from the researcher's field notes.
- Step 2: The files were revisited to :
 - o Generate a frequency, extent, specificity and emotion (FESE) table after listening to the focus group recording again.
 - o Generate and record the researcher's during/post analyses reflection
 - o Generate Students' Bio data tables.
- Step 3: Further manual analysis using long table approach to :
 - o Group similar answers into themes.
 - o Write researcher's comments/ summary for each theme.
- Step 4: Theme groups were revisited again to merge and organize them under four main categories: campus, curriculum, social and personal related themes.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Results

Validating results is a task carried by the researcher to ensure that the findings of the study are representative of what the participants have said or meant (Creswell, 2012). This task was done for the study at hand by methods of triangulation and member checking. Those two methods are described in the following sections. The research focused on incorporating interpretive validity, which refers to accurate descriptions of the meaning of participants' opinions in the focus group interview sessions (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). This was achieved by means of participant feedback and low-inference descriptors such as participants' direct quotations (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Themes development was achieved using pattern matching and, group triangulation, comparing multiple focus groups' data, to have better evidence of the outcome (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

3.7.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is a process used to validate a study's findings by "corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection" (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). Triangulation has been used on three different levels of analyses. Sources for comparisons came from different individuals and settings. These sources were the different students in one group, different groups in one campus, and finally cross-campus comparisons. Evidence from each level of comparisons was used to support the validity and credibility of the results.

First, for each focus group students' opinions have been compared to each other to check the convergence of data. Once this process was completed, a second iteration of comparisons was conducted for each campus. Three focus group results have been evaluated for each campus with the exception of campus four which had four focus groups.

These comparisons were used to check the validity of themes and students' opinions on campus specific issues.

The last level of the triangulation process was a cross-campus comparison of the common themes that spanned all campuses. This gave a vivid picture of the accuracy of the data and validated the results. The process of triangulation was embedded in the analysis cycle described previously, where most of the comparisons have been completed. Where applicable, evidence of comparisons has been presented along with the different sections of the results chapter.

3.7.2 Member Checking

Another validation procedure adopted by the researcher was member checking. In member checking, the researcher approaches some of the participants with the study results and seeks its validation (Creswell, 2012). After each session of the focus groups, the researcher asked the participants if he could keep in touch with them or some of them for future interview sessions. Many students accepted after they found out that they would participate in results approval.

After conducting the analysis, the researcher revisited the students with the results. The researcher was able to meet with at least two students for each of the nine focus groups of campuses 1, 3 & 4. For campus 2, the researcher was able to meet only with three students. The meetings were informal dinner gathering for each group of students in a shopping centre near their homes as the researcher made sure the venue was outside the college. Students gave valuable feedback on the accuracy of themes and interpretations. This feedback was then incorporated to align the final descriptions of the results with what the participants' thought resembled their perceptions and opinions.

3.8 Chapter 3 Summary

The methodology design of the research follows an interpretive view as a philosophical approach. The nature of the relationships between research objectives, aims, purpose and questions have been explored in the research design. A descriptive qualitative approach has been chosen as the guiding principle for the design of the research. This study utilized a focus group method design to answer the research questions and fulfil the aims deemed important for the study as shown in the previous sections. In addition, valid ethical concerns for this type of human inquiry research have been also considered with special emphasis on issues like informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, deception and protection from mental and physical. Furthermore, the researcher's multiple roles throughout data collection, analysis and discussion have been explained in depth. Special attention was aimed at describing the data collection and data analysis procedures. The methods used to validate results were triangulation and member checking. In the next chapter, these results

will be described in depth along with the resulting themes and students' quotes to help answer the research question.

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4 Chapter 4 Introduction

In the previous chapter, research methodology, focus group technique was discussed as a data collection tool to investigate the phenomenon of UAE students dropping out from college, and expose elements affecting their motivation in higher education. Following the data collection phase, this chapter presents the research results that which were obtained as a result of a data-analysis process. This chapter will present the views students shared in their discussion. The stories, opinions, and experiences will be presented along with quotes that have led to themes emerging from these views. The context and analysis methods used to extract the themes from raw data are explained first, followed by the findings and chapter summary.

The analysis started with transcribing audio tapes into Microsoft Word files, then translating the Arabic text into English. The English script was then analysed using a long table approach. The raw themes and comments were re-examined in follow up analysis where all themes were revisited in a 4 step analysis process to group them. The themes that emerged, their associated figures and graphs, comments and reflection were then laid out throughout the chapter. The steps that represented the analysis process conducted for this chapter are represented in Figure 4-1 below.

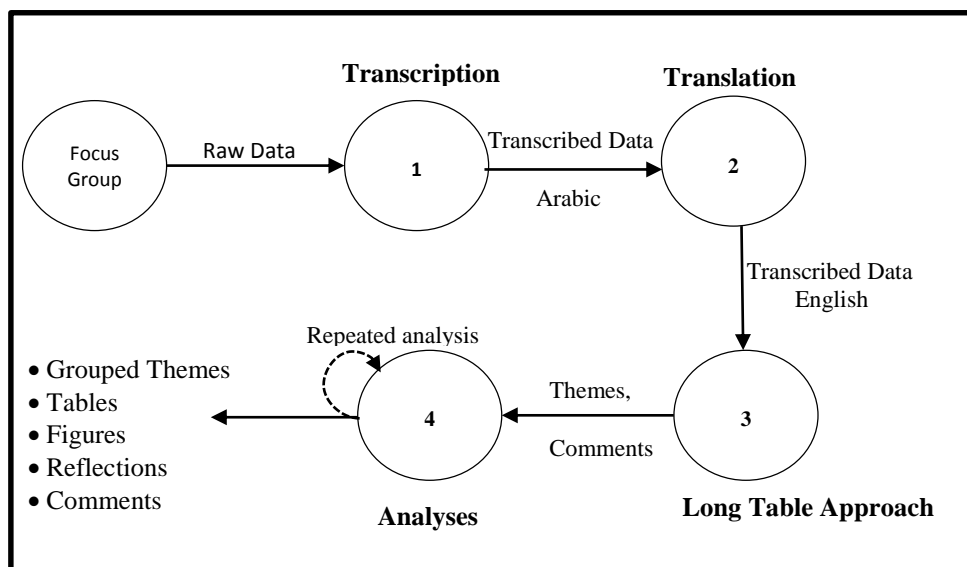


Figure 4-1. Research's Data Analysis Process.

Source: Developed for this research.

4.1 Context

The research was designed to elicit determinants impacting first-year UAE students' motivation in the government owned higher education institutes. The high dropout rate among UAE male students in their first year in public college have not been studied deeply

to understand what leads students in their decision to opt out of college, in a fully sponsored education.

Data collection was conducted at the three government universities in the UAE. The universities are: Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) in Ras Al-Khaima City (RAK), United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) in Al-Ain city and Zayed University in Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi Campus is designated ZUAD) and Dubai (Dubai Campus is designated ZUD). The reason for choosing these universities was because the phenomenon of UAE male students dropping out of college was taking place in these universities. A sample representing the three universities was carefully considered for data collection, and the researcher included all three universities in 4 different Campuses designated as HCT-RAK, UAEU, ZUAD and ZUD.

Thirteen focus groups were conducted with students in their first year to develop an understanding of what the students consider as barriers or enablers to their will to continue or to withdraw their efforts and leave college. The focus groups included both open-ended and list-type questions. Students discussed, argued, sometimes calmly and sometimes with intense emotions, their university experiences. The results of data analysis provide answers the question asked in the research project. The results of data analysis have been deemed suitable to answer the question of the research at hand.

4.2 Themes Presentation Process

4.2.1 Presentation of Themes

Most themes in this chapter are presented in two sections; a descriptive section and an impact section. Depending on the collected data from the sessions, while most themes have extensive descriptions laid out in the two sections, some themes merged for clarity and presentation purposes. Figure 3-1 shows how the generated themes were presented in this chapter.

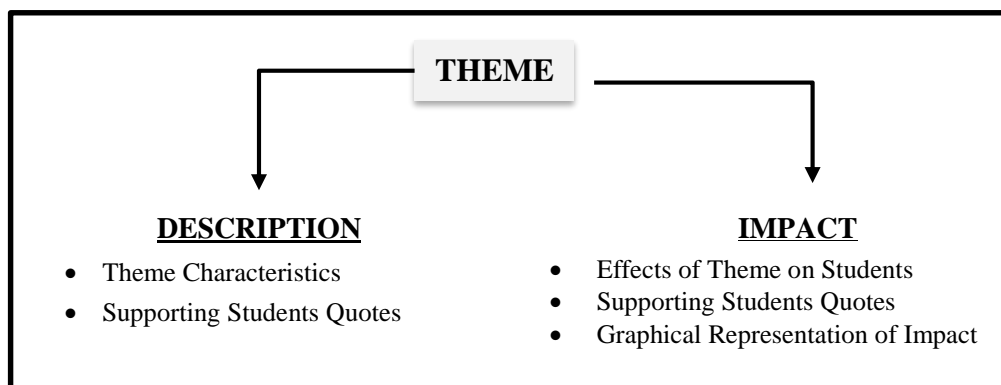


Figure 4-2: Themes Presentation Scheme

Developed by the author for the purpose of the research.

The descriptive section, as the name implies, provides an insight on the characteristics of the theme, how the students view it, and what they think has had an effect in shaping their college experience. In this section, a table containing the sample students' quotes, provides evidence from the focus group transcriptions that describe a picture of what characterises the theme. The second section, impact, focuses on what students' think of the effects of the themes on them; how it affected their studies, habits, morale, and sometimes decisions to drop out college. In this section, as in the previous section, a table presents student quotes that reflect the impact of the themes on them. Also, a drawing is developed to summarize the effects of the theme on students.

In both sections, the descriptions and the links between themes and their impacts are established by statements from students during the sessions. The researcher's role was to write as objectively as possible, using terms and words mentioned by students ultimately depicting their voice. This was facilitated by clear and direct questions about the nature and impact of each theme that students responded to with great details and personal stories.










It is worth mentioning that some themes contained greater details than others. Such themes were further divided into sections in accordance with different college Campuses. This division helps with presenting the data in an easy to read manner. Also, because of differences between colleges, such as variances in curriculum, class timings, policies, grading systems, Campus size and facilities, it was necessary to discuss some themes in separate sections for each college and college Campus. Further, this division also facilitates data convergence, by comparing views from different focus groups in the same Campus, and then comparing views from different Campuses; strengthening internal validity of the results.

4.2.2 Symbols Used in Presentation of Themes



For purposes of clarity and simplicity the researcher has designated the following symbols for terms that describe the themes:

- FESE table: the frequency, extent, specificity and emotion table, shown as Table 4-1 is associated with how often students refer to a certain issue, how many of them discuss it, how much detail they provide and how they feel when talking about it.

Table 4-1: FESE Table Designations

FESE Table Designations		
FESE Elements	Explanation	Symbol
Frequency	▪ The subject is talked about once	
	▪ The subject is talked about more frequently	
Extent	▪ Mentioned by the same student	
	▪ Mentioned by different students	
Specificity (level of details)	▪ Few details were given	
	▪ Detailed account vivid picture & evidences of themes & their impact	
Emotions (student mood while talking)	▪ Good mood: happy, funny or relaxed.	
	▪ Bad mood: Sad, angry, frustrated or sarcastic moods.	
	▪ Indifference mood: calm, cold or formal state of mind.	

Source: Developed for this research

- Impact: on some occasions, students talk about the effects, negative or positive, according to their own experience at college. These effects are mentioned in the themes and designated with a simple thumbs up for positive impact, and thumbs down for negative impact as follows:
 - Negative Impact 
 - Positive Impact 

4.3 Findings

The findings of the focus groups data analysis consist of two different components; students' background information and research themes. Each component is discussed in a separate section below.

4.3.1 Students' Background Information

Analysing the collected background information from students gave a picture of the sample biography data. It is noteworthy to mention that the research opted for students' anonymity in line with the ethical procedure and policies associated with the research as mentioned in the previous chapter. Keeping that in mind, the background information included students' nationality, city of residence (for UAE students), work status, IELTS scores, and their current level in the English foundation program at college. These elements are discussed hereafter.

4.3.1.1 Participant Students' Nationality

The nationality of the chosen sample from the student population of the three universities is displayed in Table 4-2. It is important for the research that participating students are of

UAE nationalities. However, the obtained sample included some other nationalities, Gulf Cooperation countries (GCC) nationals.

Table 4-2: Nationalities of Participating Students

Campus	Focus Group	Participants	UAE nationals	GCC Nationals		
				Saudi Arabia	Qatar	Yemen
1	FG 1	4	4	-	-	-
1	FG 2	8	8	-	-	-
1	FG 3	6	6	-	-	-
2	FG 4	4	4	-	-	-
2	FG 5	6	2	3	-	1
2	FG 6	2	2	-	-	-
3	FG 7	7	7	-	-	-
3	FG 8	8	8	-	-	-
3	FG 9	11	11	-	-	-
4	FG 10	6	6	-	-	-
4	FG 11	10	10	-	-	-
4	FG 12	5	5	-	-	-
4	FG 13	6	5	-	1	-
Total		83	78	3	1	1
Percentage			94.0	3.6	1.2	1.2

Developed by the author for the purpose of the research.

There are two focus groups with impure samples, focus groups 5 and 13. All the remaining eleven focus groups had only UAE students. The total percentage of UAE students was 94% as shown in Figure 4-3 : Percentage of participating UAE students' vs GCC students. The remaining 6% was filled by GCC nationals.

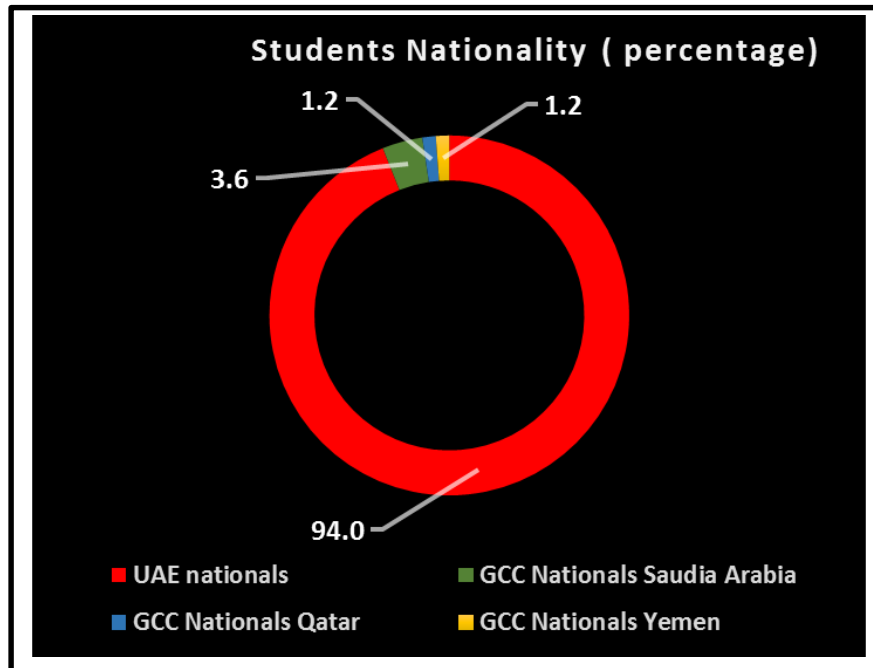


Figure 4-3 : Percentage of participating UAE students' vs GCC students

Source: Developed for this research.

The sample is representative of the actual student population, and the researcher had no control over the selection criteria in certain Campuses, such as Campus 2 where FG5 impure sample occurred, since nationality data was not provided. When students were contacted by the researcher for the first time by phone conversation, it was not possible to determine their nationalities, since they all share common accent and common family names across the GCC countries. However, the researcher asked students to identify their nationality at the time of the focus group session. It was improper to send off the students who did not fit the profile at the session time, since it is considered culturally rude and might have caused other students to leave in protest. Also, in FG5, GCC nationals were dominant in number over UAE nationals, and sending them off would mean interviewing only 2 students, which is not ideal in a focus group setting.

But most of all, GCC nationals do have common cultures and traditions shared with UAE nationals. In fact, all participating GCC students have mentioned that they were residents in the UAE and completed high school education in the country. This fact, coupled with the dominant percentage of UAE students in most focus groups means that the findings of the study are a sound representation of the UAE student populations' experience in college.

4.3.1.2 Participant Students City Distribution

The research opted for a sample that was representative of the seven emirates that constitute the UAE. There are minor differences in socioeconomic factors; Abu Dhabi and Dubai

enjoy higher income, and multi-national, and a vibrant social life. On the contrary, the Northern Emirates of Sharjah, RAK, Ajman, UAQ and Fujairah have a somewhat a more reserved culture and less wealth. These differences, albeit slowly disappearing, would mean that the sample should reflect opinions of students from the different socioeconomic backgrounds to be representative of the UAE population.

Table 4-3: Participating UAE Students Geographical Distribution

Campus	Focus Group	participants	UAE nationals	Abu Dhabi	Dubai	Northern Emirates
1	FG 1	4	4	-	-	4
1	FG 2	8	8	-	-	8
1	FG 3	6	6	-	-	6
2	FG 4	4	4	2	-	2
2	FG 5	6	2	1	-	1
2	FG 6	2	2	1	-	1
3	FG 7	7	7	7	-	-
3	FG 8	8	8	8	-	-
3	FG 9	11	11	10	-	1
4	FG 10	6	6	1	2	3
4	FG 11	10	10	-	5	4
4	FG 12	5	5	-	2	3
4	FG 13	6	5	-	5	1
Total		83	78	30	14	34
Percentage			94.0	38.5	17.9	43.6

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4-3 above shows the representation of students from different UAE cities. Northern Emirates students were the most present in all Campuses and most focus groups. Looking closely, Campus 1 students are purely from the Northern Emirate of RAK. This is a logical representation since Campus 1 is located in RAK. In Campus 3, both FG 7 and FG 8 had pure samples of students coming from Abu Dhabi. Again, this Campus is located in Abu Dhabi and it makes sense that they were the dominant participants. Campus 2 had a mixed sample from Abu Dhabi and Northern Emirates. This Campus is in the middle between Abu Dhabi and other Emirates and the only Campus having students' accommodation. Campus 4 also had a mixed sample of students from Dubai, and Northern Emirates. This is normal since Dubai is very close to the Emirates of Sharjah, Ajman and UAQ. In total, the sample was well distributed with Abu Dhabi students representing 38.5 % of students sampled, 17.9% for Dubai and 43.6 % for Northern Emirates, as shown in Figure 4-4.

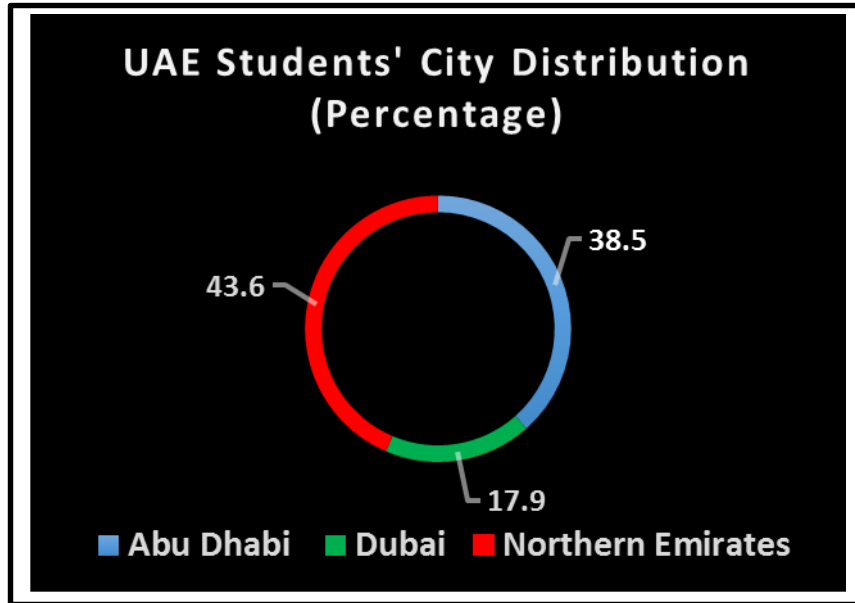


Figure 4-4: Focus-Group UAE students' City Distribution

Source: Developed for this research.

4.3.1.3 Participant Students Work Status

Students had different work status. The vast majority of students were unemployed. According to Table 4-4, 70 students out of the 83 participants are full time students with no prior or current working experience.

Table 4-4: Participants Students Work Status

Campus	Focus Group	participants	Employed	Scholarship	Unemployed
1	FG 1	4	-	-	4
1	FG 2	8	-	-	8
1	FG 3	6	-	-	6
2	FG 4	4	-	1	3
2	FG 5	6	-	0	6
2	FG 6	2	-	1	1
3	FG 7	7	-	-	7
3	FG 8	8	-	-	8
3	FG 9	11	-	-	11
4	FG 10	6	2	-	4
4	FG 11	10	2	-	8
4	FG 12	5	5	-	0
4	FG 13	6	2	-	4
Total		83	11	2	70
Percentage			13.25	2.41	84.34

Source: Developed for this research.

A total of 11 working students, who have a full time government job, with government working hours being from 7 AM until 2 PM, had to juggle through traffic to reach classes on time. Two students only were holding scholarships from government organizations. Figure 4-5 shows that unemployed students make up 84% of the participants, while employed students and students with scholarships make up 13% and 3% of the total sample respectively.

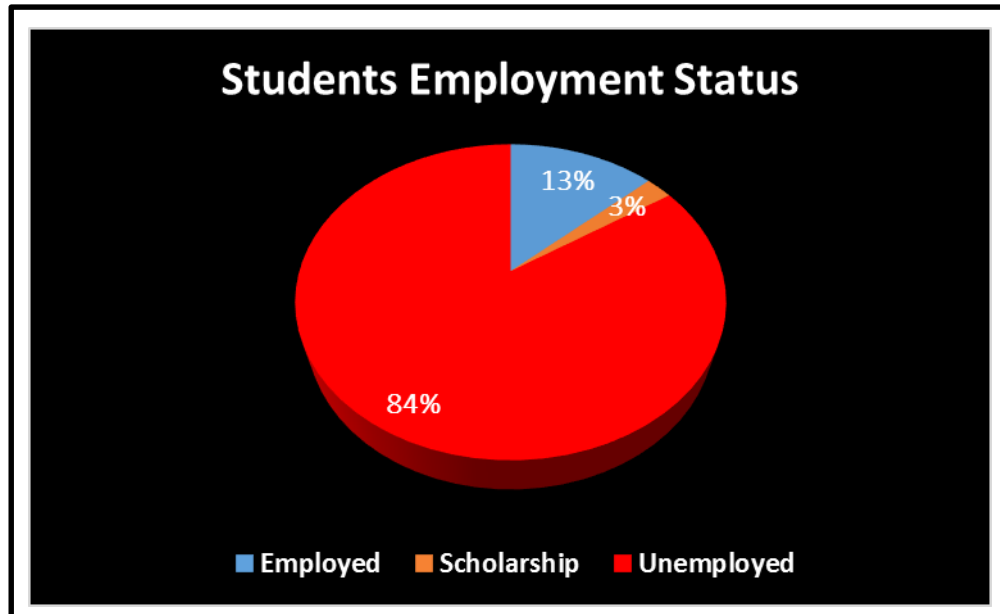


Figure 4-5: Students Work Status; (Campuses 1-4)

Source: Developed for this research.

4.3.1.4 Participants English Level

For each participating Campus, students were divided according to their standing in the English language program. The three groups devised were lower, medium and higher English level. Each group was interviewed separately. Only Campus 4 had an extra group, which was in a higher English levels. As in Table 4-5 below, of the total 83 participants, 33 students were in the lower level, 20 students in the intermediate level and 30 students in the higher levels. Figure 4-6 displays the percentage for each group with percentages of 40%, 24% and 36% for the lower, intermediate and higher English levels respectively, the sample was well distributed to get balanced opinions from each group.

Table 4-5: Participants Students English Program Levels

Campus	Focus Group	Participants	Students in Lower English Level	Students in intermediate English Level	Students in higher English Level
1	FG 1	4	-	4	-
1	FG 2	8	-	-	8
1	FG 3	6	6	-	-
2	FG 4	4	-	4	-
2	FG 5	6	6	-	-
2	FG 6	2	-	-	2
3	FG 7	7	-	7	-
3	FG 8	8	-	-	8
3	FG 9	11	11	-	-
4	FG 10	6	-	-	6
4	FG 11	10	10	-	-
4	FG 12	5	-	5	-
4	FG 13	6	-	-	6
Total		83	33	20	30
Percentage			39.8	24.1	36.1

Source: Developed for this research.

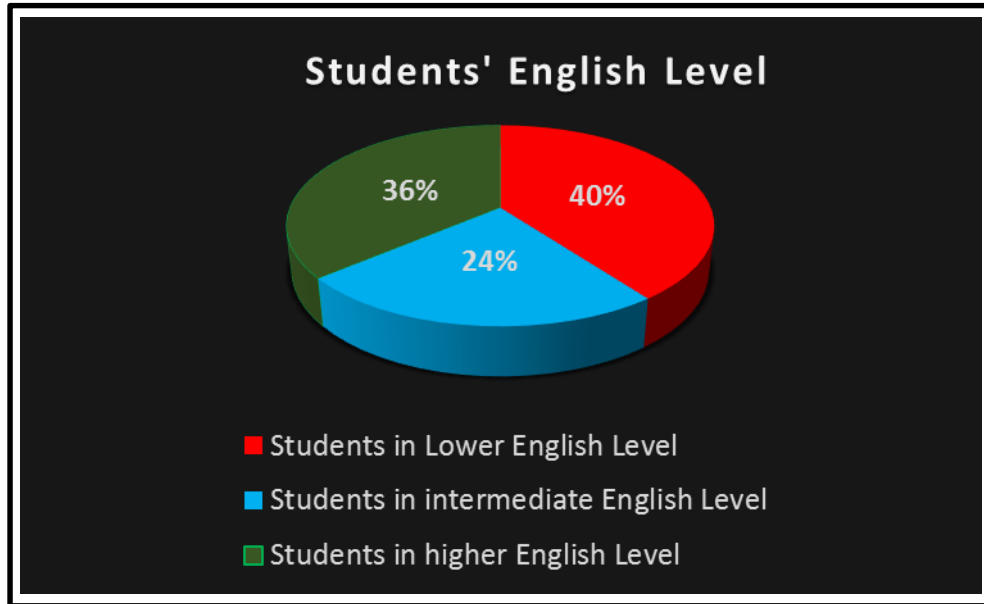


Figure 4-6: Students English Level; (Campuses 1-4)

Source: Developed for this research.

4.3.1.5 Participant Students IELTS Standing

IELTS score requirement varies from one Campus to another. Students were asked if they attempted IELTS. For students who underwent IELTS examination, some were successful in getting the required score and that helped them to start taking foundation courses in their major. The rest of the students who attempted IELTS did not get the required score, even though some of them have tried more than once. From Table 4-6, there were 17 students who possessed the required IELTS, and 66 students who do not possess the required IELTS. Figure 4-7 shows that the percentage of students who possessed the required IELTS was 20%, while students without the required IELTS constituted 80% of the focus group sample.

Table 4-6: Students IELTS Standing; (Campuses 1-4)

Campus	Focus Group	Participants	Students who possess the required IELTS	Students who do not possess the required IELTS
1	FG 1	4	-	4
1	FG 2	8	-	8
1	FG 3	6	-	6
2	FG 4	4	-	4
2	FG 5	6	1	5
2	FG 6	2	2	-
3	FG 7	7	-	7
3	FG 8	8	8	-
3	FG 9	11	-	11
4	FG 10	6	-	6
4	FG 11	10	-	10
4	FG 12	5	-	5
4	FG 13	6	6	-
Total		83	17	66
Percentage			20.5	79.5

Source: Developed for this research.

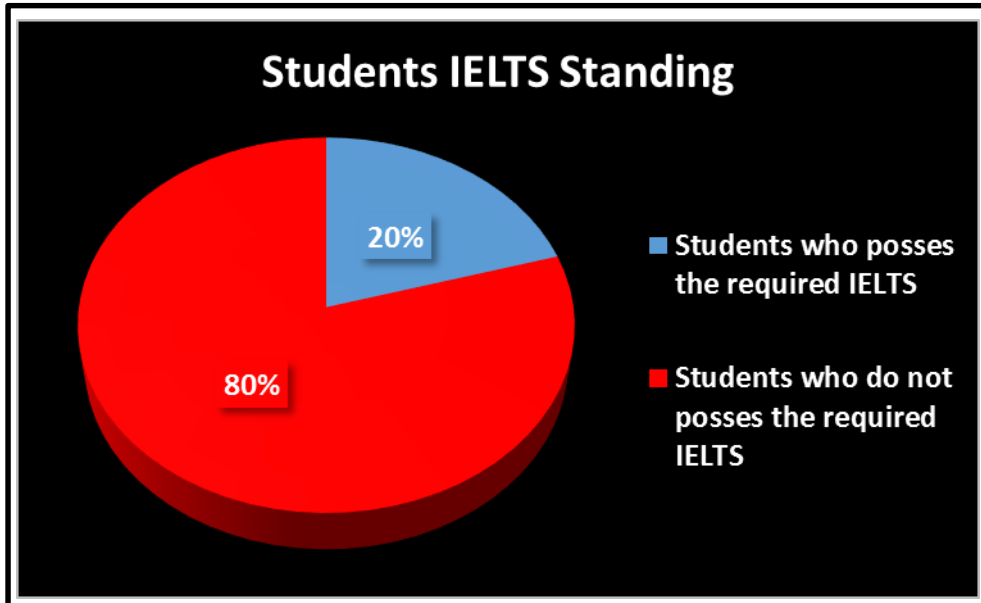


Figure 4-7: Students IELTS Standing (Percentage); (Campuses 1-4)

Source: Developed for this research.

4.3.2 Summary of Themes

A number of themes emerged from analysis of the interview data and are summarized below and then then discussed separately in the following sections. The four major theme categories of Campus, curriculum, social and personal themes are further detailed as follows:

- Campus related themes: The physical characteristics of college such as facilities and offerings that are not part of the curriculum but form an integral part of student's college experience.
- Curriculum related themes: factors related to college curriculum including pedagogy quality and fit for purpose, duration of study, exam requirements, using technology in the classroom, and online environment.
- Social related themes: College factors related to students' interactions with society in the form of family, friends, teachers, administrators and social networks. This theme is concerned with student interaction with others in their college environment and the broader social life outside college. The collected data expose how students' interactions with others have affected shaped their college experience.
- Personal: Factors related to student habits like social networks, reading, feelings like study enjoyment, experience whether it was high school related

or work experience, or personal circumstances such as work pressure that shape or impact their thinking, studying rituals, and morale in college. Social networks comprise internet-based social interactions in the form of social network applications like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and where students spend time mingling with others

The following sections will detail each category theme, for all thirteen focus groups and four college Campuses along with their impact and associated quotes. Table 4-7 resents a summary of the research themes.

Table 4-7: Summary of Generated Themes

Summary of Generated Themes			
Campus Related	Curriculum Related	Social Related	Personal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical control measures ▪ College status ▪ IT support ▪ College facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quality of curriculum ▪ IELTS ▪ Duration of study ▪ Online environment ▪ Language of instruction ▪ IPad in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher ▪ Administration ▪ Family ▪ Friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social Networks ▪ Student resilience ▪ Reading habits ▪ Goal setting ▪ High school experience ▪ Study enjoyment ▪ Work

Source: Developed for this research.

4.4 Campus Related Themes

4.4.1 Physical Control Measures

4.4.1.1 Description

In Campus 3, across the three focus groups (FG7, FG8 and FG9), students were disappointed with the physical control measures they face every day to enter college Campus. On both open-ended and list questions, students repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction with the tightly controlled Campus environment. The college, having male and female students at the same Campus but in different classes, have established access restrictions to maintain separation of male and female students at all times. This means controlling common access doors and facilities such as sports facilities by having separate access times for males and females. Security guards are present at these access points to make sure students comply with these physical restrictions.

Table 4-8: Description of Physical Control Measures @ Campus 3

Control Measures @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description		7	▪ “The parking now is far away from the entrance door. It takes around 10 minutes”
		7,9	▪ “Entry and exit on the door, with the access”
		7,9	▪ “the management have restricted the access to a faraway door”
		8	▪ “This year, there is more control. It has negative impact”
		7,9	▪ “The guards at the gate, they want to see university sticker on the car, they make us late”

Source: Developed for this research.

Table 4-8 above lists students’ complaint quotes about one or more of these types of measures or procedures:

- Main gate security check.
- Restricted Campus access to one door with access card to enter and exit.
- Car parking location.
- Guards on each exit door.

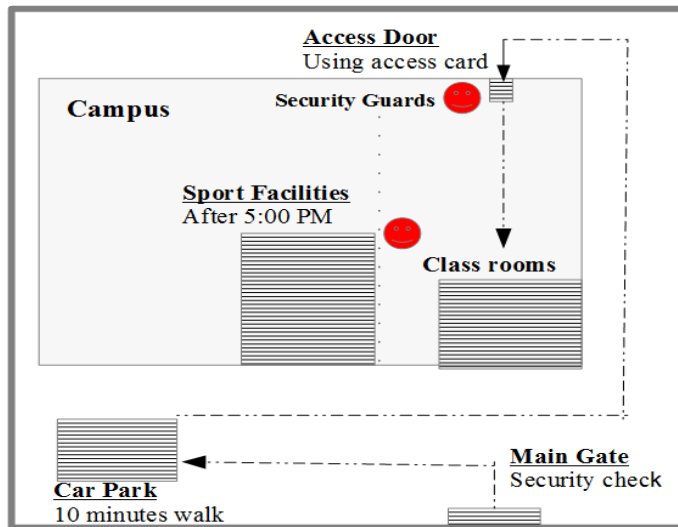


Figure 4-8: Physical Control Measures; (Campus 3)

Source: Developed for this research.

As depicted in Figure 4-8 above, a student’s daily path to their classes starts with a routine security check on the main gate. The security guard checks for a university sticker on each car before giving them access. Depending on the number of cars waiting for access, students

reported that this security procedure causes a delay of 5 to 10 minutes. On top of that, the parking is located far from the access door. Students walk 5 to 10 minutes, sometimes in the heat to reach the card-access door which itself is located far from the classrooms. If students are a few minutes late to reach the classroom, then they are noted down as absentees. As one student said: *“If you are late for 4 minutes, they account you absent”* (FG 9).

4.4.1.2 Impact

Students clearly associate these control measures to the new college administration. There is a gap between students and administration, which will be discussed under the administration theme, not the least because of these measures. Students note many negative effects of the physical control measures and restrictions. Some of them feel that they are still in high school, while others specifically say that their morale is down. One student sums it up by mentioning that he was not happy and another expressed that he hates coming to college because of these measures. Table 4-9 has a summary of the students’ quotes about physical security measures and the impact on their study and morale across the three groups.

Table 4-9 : Impact of Physical Control Measures @ Campus 3

Control Measures Impact @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Attendance		9	▪ <i>“If you are late for 4 minutes, they account you absent”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“ We don’t feel relaxed coming to school”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“Pressure and control, my morale this year is down “</i>
Morale		8	▪ <i>Every day I come here, I think about security control, security check at the gate, controlled door access, too much”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“I didn’t graduate from high school to enter another high school”</i>
Satisfaction		8	▪ <i>“Last year I was happy, this year I am not”</i>
Gender preference		9	▪ <i>“ They prefer girls over us”</i>
Transfer		8	▪ <i>“More control. This is the main reason why some students transferred to other universities this year”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-9 summarizes the effects that control measures have on students. It is evident that the strict control measures have had a negative impact on students’ morale, making them psychologically affected and growing apart from the college, its administration, and the learning environment, eventually leading some students to transfer to other colleges where they anticipate more freedom and respect.

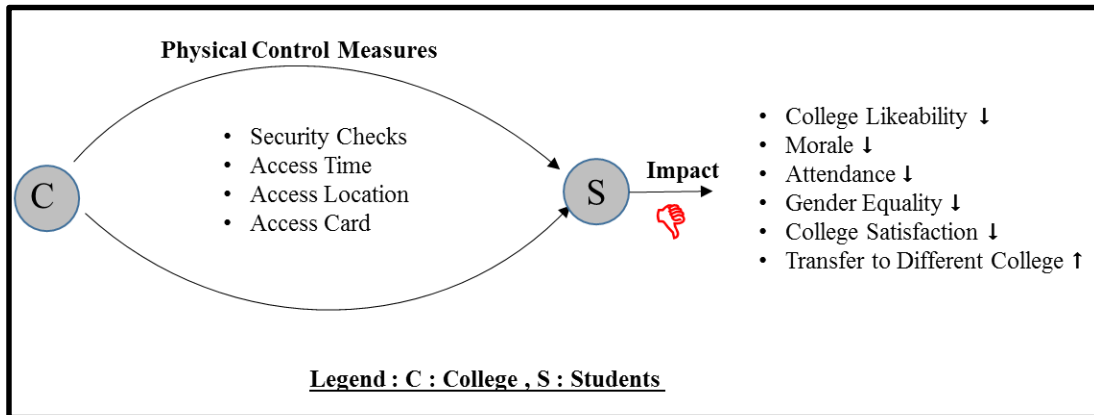


Figure 4-9: Impact of Physical Control Measures @ Campus 3

Source: Developed for this research.

4.4.2 College Status

Across Campus 1 and 3, many students have expressed the main reasons for joining a college were the importance of a college education in society and the institute’s reputation in the local work market. As depicted in Table 4-10, for example, some students in FG1, of Campus 1, acknowledge from their experience that society places a person with a college degree in a higher status than one without it. They claim that college graduates are in better working positions than non-degree holders. Those students use this factor to strengthen their aspirations to attend college and finish their degree. Another reason that students choose college education is because of its reputation in society. Some students in FG8, at Campus 3, mentioned the importance of their college reputation. For example, their parents, they say, influenced them to join this particular college because it has a good reputation in the market place. That was confirmed, according to another student in the same focus groups, by one company’s interest in students from this particular college at a recent work exhibition.

Table 4-10: Description of College Status @ Campuses 1 & 3

College Status @ Campuses 1&3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Importance of college degree)		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “There are people who found jobs, now they want to go back to college and study”.
		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “People who graduated from the college, they have a degree, and found a chance of employment, and they are now relaxed. So these factors have affected me in a positive way”
Description (Importance of college status)		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “My dad and relatives said to join the university because of its reputation”.
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the work exhibition, they ask me which university I am from, and I say (university name) university, they get interested, and they offer me a scholarship”

Source: Developed for this research.

4.4.3 IT Support

In Question 4.2 of the protocol, students were asked about their experience with IT support at college. In all different Campuses, students argued that they enjoyed good IT support. Words like ‘great’ and ‘helpful’ was repeated by most students, such as this statement “great, they are helpful and supportive” (FG 2). All their remarks were positive except for one student who had a mixed experience indicating “I had to pay for some program, my experience is mixed” (FG 13). According to the vast majority of students, IT staff were always supportive, as one student says: “They help you download all software you need. IT support is great” (FG 6). The type of support offered by IT personnel varied from fixing technical breakdowns in iPad and laptops to downloading required academic programs and sometimes, they would download Apps, that usually that cost money, to students for free as noted by a student who said “They give us free support and some apps which cost money, they give us for free” (FG 9). Students were also happy about the IT service response time, as one student mentions “they are always available, and help us in 5 to 10 minutes” (FG 5). Although students seemed generally satisfied and happy, they did not mention any impact of IT support on their motivation or learning experience.















4.4.4 Facilities

Students, as part of question 4.2 of the protocol, were asked about their opinion of the university facilities, including library, learning centres, cafeteria and sports facilities.

4.4.4.1 Campus 1

Students at Campus 1 were mostly happy with the college facilities, with some complaints about certain venues. Student quotes about Campus 1 facilities are listed in Table 4-11 below.

Table 4-11: Description of College Facilities and its Impact @ Campus 1

College Facilities @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Positive)		1	▪ <i>"It is all positive, teachers, and library. There is a librarian who helps with all your questions".</i>
	 	2	▪ <i>"It (the Campus) has new facilities."</i>
	 	3	▪ <i>"They give us freedom to leave college at break time "</i>
Description (Negative)		2	▪ <i>"I am not enthusiastic about this Campus because it does not have the sports facilities like others. Girls' Campus is much more complete, modern and new"</i>
	   	3	▪ <i>"Car park, like the summer time, it is hot and we park far"</i>
Impact	   	3	▪ <i>"Library... at our break time, we can go and watch a movie, and learn listening..."</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

In general, students appreciate the library, the freedom they have at college, and have mixed opinions about the sport facility and the parking lot. In the library, many students like the idea of watching movies during class breaks and using their time to learn English vocabulary with the support from the helpful librarian. Some dispute was present about the sport facility; appreciated by some and criticised by few students in comparison to the girls' newer sports facilities. One student complained about the parking location and the time it takes to walk to college especially under the summer sun.

4.4.4.2 Campus 2

4.4.4.2.1 Description

This is a huge university with multiple male housing locations. New intakes of male students live in housing outside the university, while more senior students live in housing attached to the main Campus. The distance between the new students' dorm, location (A) in Figure 4-10, and the university main Campus, location (C) in the figure, is 10 km and driving duration is around 15 minutes. The sports complex location (B) of the figure, of the university is located yet in another location, which is around 6 km and 10 minutes' drive from the student dormitory. Students who live in this dormitory and have no cars rely on bus services to the university main Campus and sport facilities.



Figure 4-10: College Facilities Location Map @ Campus 2

Source: Developed for this research using Google Maps

Table 4-12 has a summary of students’ comments on how they view Campus location and facility within relation of their social and academic university experience. All students were happy with the modern university facilities including the library, language learning centre, labs, sports, theatres and cafeteria. However, students’ points of view varied in their response to Campus location and facilities.

Table 4-12: Description of College Facilities @ Campus 2

College Facilities @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Description		6	▪ <i>“All facilities are first class, really great”.</i>
		5	▪ <i>“it (university facility) is all good, we love to come to university”</i>
		4	▪ <i>“It is all good, we love to come to university”.</i>
		4	▪ <i>“the parking and transportation from the dorm, the parking is far away, and in the summer time it is really, really hot”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“Transportation, the bus from the dorm sometimes comes late because of the morning rush hour”</i>
		5	▪ “Are there student clubs?” <i>“There is, but it is all in the university, and we live at the dorm. Activities are at night, and the buses stop the service at 6: PM, so it is difficult to transport.”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“I want to clarify, that some students in some dorms are far away from the university and not able to join these activities”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“Al-Ain is difficult to go out, the city has no real outlets...you feel trapped”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“nothing to do in this city, even the dorm, has no swimming pool, no gym, no playground”</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

Students who live on Campus and rely on bus services were affected by location and time of activities. They complained about the bus service schedule, which stops at night when the activities take place. Students who live on Campus and have cars focused more on parking issues, and city offerings in comparison to their home cities. A few complained that the large Campus size is un-inviting towards social life.

4.4.4.2.2 Impact

University facilities have a mixed impact on student life at college. Some students feel it they have mixed impact on attendance, a negative impact on time management and morale, and a positive impact on academic achievement. Concerning attendance, one student pointed out that they are allowed 4 pardons (absence), which might be consumed if their bus arrives late or is disrupted due to morning traffic. Those students end up coming much earlier than their classes and this disrupts their time organization. However, other students were happy to come to college.

Table 4-13: Impact of College Facilities @ Campus 2

College Facilities Impact @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Attendance		5	▪ <i>“the bus from the dorm sometimes comes late because of the morning rush hour, so I was checked absent”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“ it is all good, we love to come to university”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“Positive thing is the volunteer club, Tawajud, it is good. It gives us a social life”</i>
College Social life		5	▪ <i>“I feel here, there is no life, you go to class you leave”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“it is big and there is no support for activities, student life, students do not know each other”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“some students in some dorms are far away from the university and not able to join these activities</i>
		6	▪ <i>“The sports facility is really impressive and there are varieties of activities I can join.”</i>
Time organization		5	▪ <i>“My sleeping habits changed”, “there is no time to study... my study table was a mess, time organization”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“Al-Ain is difficult to go out, the city has no real outlets...you feel trapped...you feel not attracted to studying”.</i>
Morale		5	▪ <i>“when I go back to Abu Dhabi, on Saturday I become in a bad mood for I know I am going back to Alain, nothing to do in this city”</i>
Academic Achievement		4	▪ <i>“ speaking and writing centre to help you prepare for IELTS, and if you don't understand a class they help”, “did you go to it?”, “ me yes, I go and talk to the teacher, it helps, I go any time “, “ some students from other colleges come and use it, it is really useful, they pass IELTS”.</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

Table 4-13 above has a summary of the impact of Campus planning/location on students. Some students feel that the university is located in a city with not many attractions, which makes students hate studying or coming to classes. Social life on college is affected in both positive and negative ways. Some students find that Campus size is uninviting and the

activity time schedule inconvenient, while others find a good social life in volunteer clubs and activities. Some students praise the speaking and writing centre and find it useful. Students who have been to the speaking and writing centre on a regular basis were able to pass the IELTS exam and enter college. Figure 4-11 sums up the impact that university attributes of location, transportation, facility and size have on students' social life, attendance, and morale and time organization.

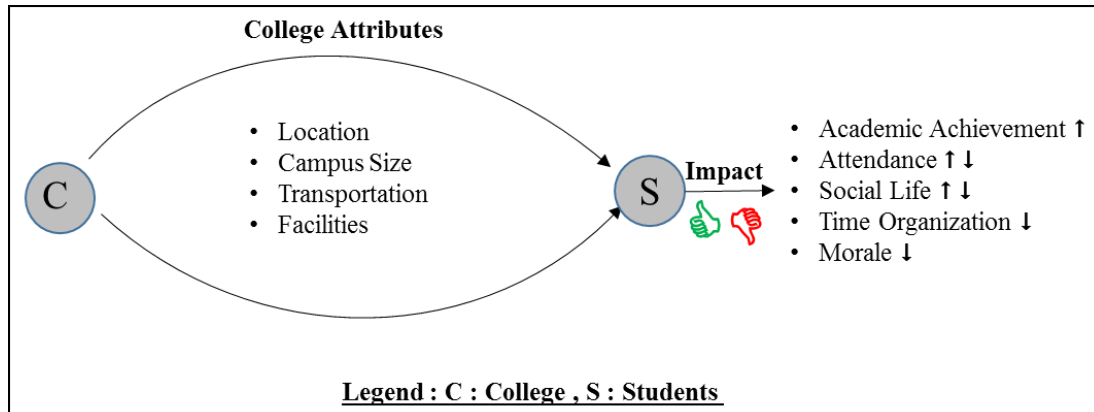


Figure 4-11: College Facilities (Impact); Campus 2

Source: Developed for this research.

4.4.4.3 Campus 3

Although most students were happy with the modern sports facilities at the college, they were unhappy with the access time. The sports facility is a shared complex between male and female students at Campus (females have a separate study and cafeteria section). Female students access these facilities in the morning and male students are allowed to access the facilities only after 5:00 PM. Most students leave Campus at that time to go home, since there is no dormitory. Also, some students complained about the prices of the cafeteria being too high. There are positive and negative impacts of the facility offerings at the Campus. One student complained about the inadequate access time of the sport facility, claiming that the university management prefers female students over males. On the other hand, some students were impressed with the modern facilities and that played a major part in their decision to join this Campus. Table 4-14 shows students opinions of college facilities and the impact it has on them.

Table 4-14: Description of College Facilities and its Impact @ Campus 3

College Facilities @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Positive views)		7	▪ <i>“All good, nice facility and restaurants and facilities”.</i>
		8	▪ <i>“All ok, library, gym, sports facilities, coffee shops, it is all great”</i>
		3	▪ <i>“they give us freedom to leave college at break time “</i>
Description (Negative Views)		7	▪ <i>“Only the cafeteria. The prices are high”, “no student discount?” “No”</i>
		9	▪ <i>“The time is not convenient; it is after 5 PM, who would want to come after 5?”</i>
Impact		7	▪ <i>“The environment here, huge modern building. That is positive on my decision to join and to study”</i>
		9	▪ <i>“ They prefer girls over us”</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.4.4.4 Campus 4

“we feel we are in a kind of a jail”

(FG 10)

This Campus, a branch of Campus 3, had male students confined in a very small section. The Campus also has a female section but theirs is larger due to their number. Access to university facilities is confined to female students during the day time until the evening. Most male students go home in the evening and are not able to use the facilities. Also, access to all university facilities such as the theatre and atrium is restricted to female students only. As a result, male students feel they are just an extra, and the real students are female students. Table 4-15 shows students’ opinions of college facilities and the impact it has on them.

Table 4-15: Description of College Facilities & its Impact @ Campus 4

College Facilities @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description		10	▪ <i>“There is a kind of prejudice here. Girls find great chances, they get to go to theatre , the atrium, lots of places on Campus, and we, we are bound to stay in wing F”</i>
		11	▪ <i>“if there is any activities or celebration in the girls section, the whole university is locked , and we only have a small corridor to walk to classes”</i>
		12	▪ <i>no interaction because the facilities are in the girls section and the timings are not suitable for us</i>
Impact		10	▪ <i>“Here we are an addition. The real students are the girls, we are just an extra”</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5 Curriculum Related Themes

4.5.1 Curriculum Quality & Fitness for Purpose

4.5.1.1 Campus 1

Most students were generally satisfied with the current curriculum except for a few issues in relation to the quality of content. Table 4-16 below includes student’s positive and negative views in their interaction with study curriculum, and the impact it has on them. Students appreciate the value of learning English and its impact on their ability to communicate, learn, and work better in the future.

Table 4-16: Description & Impact of Curriculum Quality @ Campus 1

Curriculum @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Positive Views)		1	▪ “I see that we are here are studying, and education places you well in society”
		2	▪ “The simplest thing we learn in English in the classroom we use it in the outside world.”
		3	▪ “If I go to police it might help me if I work as translator”
Description (Negative Views)		1	▪ “Most of what we study now is repeated”
		2	▪ “Electronic books, the scan is awful especially on the edges so sometimes we cannot know the page number or see a picture clearly”
Impact		1	▪ “we learn English and this facilitates our contact with the outside world”
		2	▪ “we feel that it has raised our level, in the foundation level, our English is improving”
		3	▪ The language is good it will benefit my job

Source: Developed for this research.

Most students acknowledge that the college curriculum has helped improve their English skills. Learning English, which is the main focus of the curriculum, helps students communicate with the outside world in a country where English is widely spoken. Other benefits included expanding student knowledge in learning college courses, which is an essential requirement to excel in their future careers.

Few students have complained about the quality of the digital material and that some material is repeated from high school. There is a concern that some material, which is a repeat of what students took in high school, sometimes leads students to be bored in the classroom. Some students expressed their frustration with poor electronic book scans. It is worth noting that in other themes such as social network and teacher related themes, students stated that there is a relation between boredom and increased access to social networks in classrooms.

4.5.1.2 Campus 2

Students at Campus 2 gave more detailed opinions both under questions 4.2 and under the open question of 4.1 of the protocol. Although generally satisfied about the fitness for purpose, students’ opinions included concerns about curriculum quality, usefulness of certain courses and the grading system. Table 4-17 below includes quotes on student’s

positive and negative views in their interaction with study curriculum, and the impact it has on them.

Table 4-17: Description of Curriculum Quality& its Impact @ Campus 2

Curriculum @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Positive)		4	▪ <i>"It is easy and suits the students"</i>
		4	▪ <i>"the system, they give you a chance to take exams and pass OGRO (English Foundation Program)"</i>
Description (Quality Issue)		6	▪ <i>"Some subjects are the same as high school, but the teaching method is different."</i>
		6	▪ <i>"Some books which are printed are old, the print is unclear. Some teachers say don't use it, just follow my slides, and the exam will be only from the slides"</i>
Description (Course requirements Issues)		4	▪ <i>"For the requirements to enter college, current requirements are not useful when we go to specialization and not useful for our jobs when we graduate"</i>
		4	▪ <i>"Before we enter IT, like chemistry, physics and math. I feel it has nothing to with IT"</i>
Impact (course requirement issues)		4	▪ <i>"I feel it is like a barrier, it lowers your grades and delays your graduation"</i>
		4	▪ <i>"Do you feel it has a negative impact on your study?"</i> , <i>"Frankly yes, it does."</i> <i>"how are these situations affecting you ?"</i> , <i>"Negative"</i> , <i>"our morale..."</i> , <i>" negative"</i> <i>"So did it affect your willingness to study?"</i> , <i>"yes it did."</i>
Impact (Foundation is not in GPA)		5	▪ <i>"foundation is not accounted for, so some students are careless"</i>
		5	▪ <i>"You feel you are just studying for studying only"</i>
		5	▪ <i>" yes, nothing motivates us to study"</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

Like in Campus 1, students have raised their concerns about the repeated materials, and outdated books. In response, teachers direct students to either buy newer editions, or studying from the lecture slides. Students who were in advanced English class and are currently also taking a foundation subject prior to taking courses in their major, have questioned the usefulness of certain subjects. For example, one student who was opting to major in Information Technology (IT) questioned the value of taking chemistry and physics as mandatory college requirements. Some students feel that these ‘alien’ subjects only bring their morale down.

Students also spoke of the fact that foundation program grades are not part of the overall student GPA in college. To students, it means that those who study hard and get high marks are not recognized and appear no better than those who barely get passing grades. This leads students to become careless, dragging their motivation to a low status. Figure 4-12 shows that the current course requirements and foundation program structure (grades not in the GPA) at Campus 2 are viewed by students as a negative factor on their academic results.

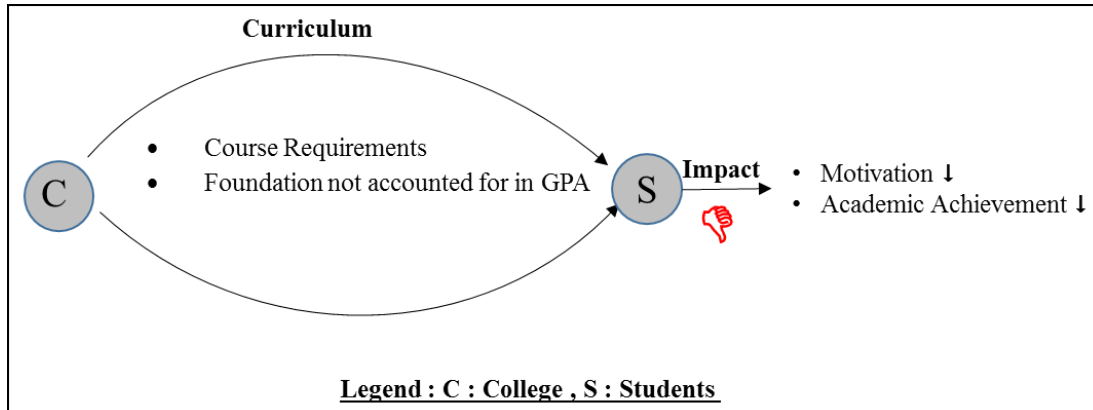


Figure 4-12: Curriculum Impact @ Campus 2

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.1.3 Campus 3

There were mixed opinions of satisfaction and concerns at Campus 3. As shown in Table 4-18 students describe the issues with, and the impact of, the college curriculum in their views during the discussion. Some students were happy with the curriculum and others had issues concerning its relevance, repetition and lack of technical training.

Table 4-18: Description of Curriculum Quality & its Impact @ Campus 3

Curriculum @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Relevance of the curriculum)		7	▪ “there are things we study that has no relation with the outside world”
		7	▪ for me , studying in English has helped me a lot in the outside world
		7	▪ “ all jobs require English, all”
		7	▪ “ with IELTS and ICDL we get more salary”
		9	▪ “Our language has improved; we can speak better English and understand better, this is great because we can apply this here in the UAE “
Description (Technical training)		9	▪ “There is no technical training like HCT, this is a drawback”
Description (Repetition Issues)		8	▪ There are subjects that are not necessary, why do we have 52 hours of study in foundation? “, “What is the use of high school then?”
		8	▪ “Are there any subjects repeated from high school?”, “Yes, a lot of the material is repeated. Math, Arabic, religion...”
Impact (Repetition issues)		8	▪ “Because of this, in the class I play on my iPad”
		8	▪ “Some say what the use of me studying for this is? So they make minimum efforts, just to pass, or pass with B average, and some want C average”

Source: Developed for this research.

Students who were satisfied with the curriculum pointed out its importance for their communication with the outside world and future jobs. Some also acknowledged that having IELTS certificates will make them earn more salary. Some students wanted more technical training to be associated with class teaching. Others had concerns of relevance of the material to the outside world and its usefulness in later courses at college. Others have issues with repeated subjects like Mathematics, Arabic and Religion. Repeated subjects are not interesting, and students get bored and start playing in the classroom. Also, since they already know the material, they make only minimum efforts to pass. Figure 4-13 below shows that some students at Campus 3 exert minimum efforts to study and lose focus in the class as a result of the repeated material in the foundation program that leads them to boredom and playing games on their iPad during lessons.

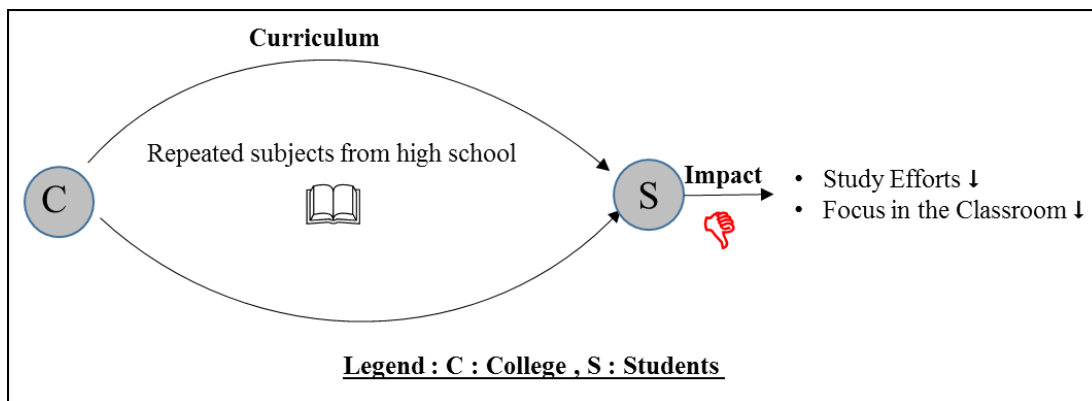


Figure 4-13: Curriculum Impact @ Campus 3

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.1.4 Campus 4

Students at Campus 4 were less critical and more satisfied with the curriculum than other Campuses, with most of the students agreeing on curriculum quality and relevance to their careers as listed in Table 4-19 below.

Table 4-19: Description of Curriculum Quality & its Impact @ Campus 4

Curriculum @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Quality and Relevance)		10	▪ “we cannot judge”,
		11	▪ “every lesson in class talks about something in the real world”
		12	▪ “we learn about other countries, their culture, their habits, the real world, it is important “
Impact		13	▪ “Like global awareness we study about China and Greece. It is related to the outside world”
		10	▪ “we benefited from language, we can communicate with the outside world
		11	▪ “the English language is important for our future”

Source: Developed for this research.

Although some students were not sure about the quality of the material, many praised learning about other cultures and countries; it helped raise their global awareness they claim. Also, among the benefits are the ability to communicate with the outside world and the importance of English for their future careers, as students from other Campuses have mentioned.

“IELTS is the main reason students leave college, the main. And then they face difficulty to find a job” (FG1)

4.5.2 IELTS

All participating universities require students to pass IELTS prior to start taking courses in their majors. Requirements vary amongst universities. An IELTS of 5.5 is accepted in both Campus 1 and 2, while students have to get an IELTS of 6 to be accepted in Campus 3 and 4. Also, students at Campus 2 are allowed, in their last year of studying English, to take foundation courses also. This is not the case for the other Campuses. Table 4-20 lists students views on issues associated with IELTS, its impact, and their suggestions for better preparation for the exam.

Table 4-20: Description of IELTS & its Impact @ Campuses 1-4

IELTS @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Description		1	▪ <i>"We take foundation for 2 years; we start learning about IELTS from level 4 only not before"</i>
		3	▪ <i>"Why IELTS cost money in college? some cannot afford, it cost money, we are affected by it"</i>
		3	▪ <i>"IELTS, if we don't make it, we are out, foundation is two years, then you are out."</i>
		5	▪ <i>"Level 3 focuses on IELTS, but the prior two levels focus only on grammar"... " and it takes one year to complete level 1 and 2 "</i>
		7	▪ <i>Now I have the last chance in level 7. I have to pass the level and then get an IELTS. If I don't, I stay home. I have to repeat the IELTS till I get it. In two months, I cannot do it. If I do not get 5.5 I will not go to level 8</i>
		9	▪ <i>"My friend wanted to go outside and get the IELTS, they said to him you are a failure, you failed before and you will not be able to pass"</i>
		10	▪ <i>"they are not flexible, when you bring IELTS of 5 or 5.5, they give you challenge test, sometimes more difficult than IELTS"</i>
Impact		1	▪ <i>"Some people take it 7 times, but fail, and then they leave college"</i>
		1	▪ <i>IELTS, I am afraid, if I cannot get 5 then I will be expelled, and some people did not get IELTS they left and started working, so they suffered from it</i>
		2	▪ "Social pressure?" ▪ <i>"IELTS failure sometime forces us to leave college".</i>
		6	▪ "Do you know any students who left college because of the IELTS?" ... <i>" yes, they went to other universities"</i>
		7	▪ What is the impact on you? , <i>"I feel down, really down..."</i> , <i>" IELTS is basically the main reason that made students move from one university to another", " do you all agree ?", " yes ", " I want to move out, just waiting for the IELTS result</i>
Suggestions		3	▪ <i>"If they shift the IELTS to the end of one's study it is better"</i>
		6	▪ <i>"we were regulars at the learning centre, and we passed the IELTS, some even got 5.5"</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

Although there was, no specific question about students' IELTS, in the focus groups the students talked about it on different occasions. IELTS was mentioned when students were given the chance to speak freely about issues of concern to them in open question 4.1 of the protocol; when they talked about the curriculum, friends, career goals and social pressure. Some students were calm, and others were emotional, in their explanations. Most students either fail IELTS or get a score that is lower than the college requirement. This impacts their morale, and led them to either transfer to other universities or drop out of college and start an early employment.

Students elaborated on the issues that are related to IELTS. One issue is the late introduction of IELTS in the curriculum. Students in Campus 1 complain that in the two years of foundation, IELTS is only introduced in level 4, usually in the second year. In Campus 2, students starting at level 1 in English program at college, study only grammar and are not introduced to IELTS until one year later, or two semesters of passing levels 1

and 2. According to students, IELTS, because of its vital importance to students' acceptance at college level, should have been introduced much earlier.

Another issue is that at certain colleges, it costs money to try the IELTS exam. At Campus 1, students complained that some are not able to pay for an IELTS trial. A third issue is the lack of standardized IELTS score requirements between universities in the UAE in general and the three universities in particular. This leads students to transfer to colleges where the lower IELTS scores are accepted. A fourth issue, is that some colleges, even if students bring an IELTS score that is accepted, will give them a challenge test, deemed more difficult by students, and they end up studying English instead of studying their major. The fifth issue is administration encouragement. One student claimed that, when students fail IELTS and opt for a retry, administration put their morale down, labelling them as 'failure' students. Lastly, students struggle with failure to achieve the required scores, and leave the university.

Some students though, have come up with certain suggestions to improve students' standing on IELTS. A student in Campus 1 suggested that IELTS should be moved towards the end of student study at the college. Another student, in Campus 2, suggested that the Learning and Speaking Centre on the Campus should be utilised more by students, because it has helped other students pass IELTS with the required scores to enter college.

Figure 4-14 below represents a graphical summary of the issues students encounter with IELTS, and the impact these issues have on their study career. IELTS issues can be summed into three categories: curriculum, administration and student related. Curriculum issues relate to late introduction of IELTS in the course; students being given a one-time free trial and the subsequent IELTS attempts are not free; IELTS being a must for students to pass foundation and, in some colleges, the extra challenge test given to students who possess the required IELTS.

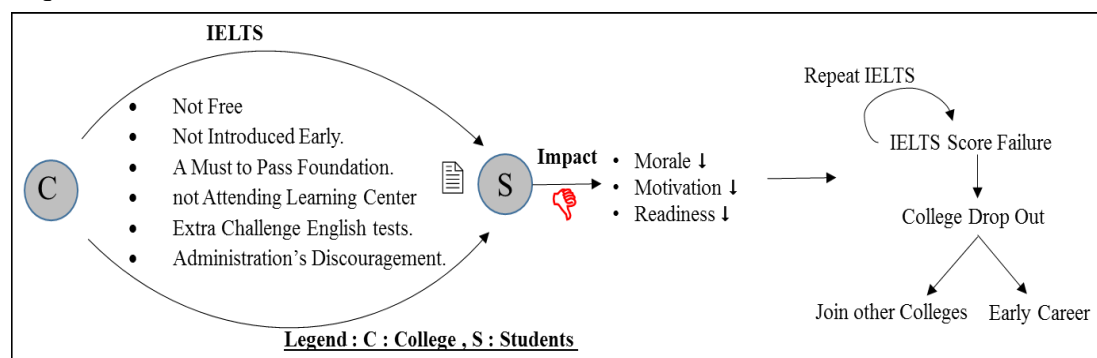


Figure 4-14: Description of IELTS and its Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research.

The second issue is that some students do not attend the college learning centre to improve their English skills. And lastly, some administrative staff were not encouraging students to retake IELTS, labelling them as failures. These issues lead to lower students' morale and

motivation to study for IELTS, resulting in a score that is less than required to pass foundation courses. Ultimately students drop out to start an early employment or simply transfer to other colleges.

4.5.3 Duration of Study

“the time it takes, 7 years, it’s too long, this is not encouraging to study”
(FG 11)

Students across the four Campuses complained about the study duration, especially the English foundation levels. Table 4-21 below lists students’ views on the duration of the study. Students can finish their study in Campus 1 in four years, while it takes at least 5 years for their counterparts in Campus 2. In Campuses 3 and 4, it could take up to 7 years to finish.

Table 4-21: Description of Study Duration & its Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Study Duration @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description		1	▪ <i>“I know some students who passed the foundation level, and went to specialization, and then after they left, they started looking for jobs and said: study is taking lots time.”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“but other students who don’t have a scholarship, they are like 5 years is a lot, and after that where will I work, so they sometimes leave after one year”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“Levels are taking too much, they are not worth this time”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“They say we have a job, you don’t. you will still be here for 7 years “</i>
		10	▪ <i>“when he found out it will take him two years to finish foundation, he left “</i>
		11	▪ <i>“The duration is long, and the grades were low. If you get under 70%, you fail.”</i>
		Impact	
12	▪ <i>“I will leave...because of the time duration...I don’t want to waste two years of my life on English</i>		
12	▪ <i>“I am old, I want to work, depend on myself, and start a family”</i>		

Source: Developed for this research.

Many students at the latter Campus expressed their frustration towards foundation study duration with some students thinking about transferring to other colleges. Students used words like ‘waste’, ‘not worth it’, ‘a lot’, ‘suffer’, and ‘too much’ to describe their frustration towards the long duration. Others wished to drop out and start a career to support their family or because of the social pressure from their employed friends. Mostly, students felt the duration could be shorter. Figure 4-15 below shows the impact of study duration on students at Campuses 1-4.

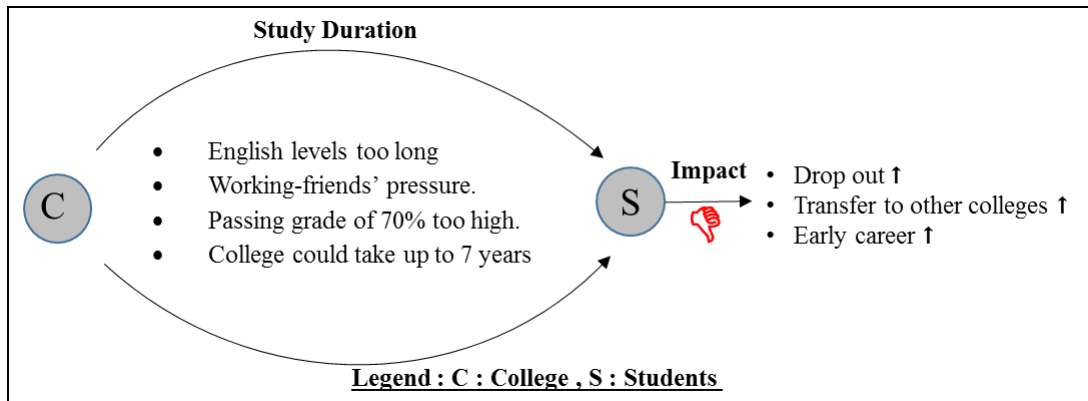


Figure 4-15: Description of Study Duration & its Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.4 Online Environment

“No interaction on the Blackboard system”
(FG 7)

Students were asked, as part of Question 4.2 of the protocol, to talk about the online environment part of their study; the Blackboard or Moodle learning management system (LMS) was used for the course in particular. Some students did not understand the meaning of the question, because they simply do not use Blackboard as they were in the lower English levels. Therefore, some understood it as online communication. Students get regular emails for class instructions, university news and policies. Mostly, they use emails to communicate online with the teachers. While students at Campus 1 do not utilise an online environment in their classes, most students in the upper English levels at Campuses 2, 3 and 4 do have an online environment in the form of Blackboard.

Table 4-22: Description of Online Environment @ Campuses 1-4

Online Environment @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Use)		4	▪ <i>“Any chat?” “The option is there, but no one does...”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“yes but it is only to email, download homework and assignment”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“Not a lot, we use emails for communicating with teachers”</i>
		10	▪ <i>“we check our grades, attendance sheet, that sort of things”</i>
		11	▪ <i>We have a Blackboard. it is used for grades, attendance, class timetable”</i>
		12	▪ <i>“we use some websites, but no discussion or communication through it, we download from it</i>
		13	▪ <i>“we use some websites, but we interact with the content only, books, marks, presentation, assignment”</i>
Description (Issues)		6	▪ <i>“Most students don’t use it or don’t know how to use it.....No one taught us how to use it”</i>



10

▪ “Blackboard is available, but teachers don’t encourage it”

Source: Developed for this research.

Interaction through Blackboard is mainly focused on the content but there was no evidence of online communication with teachers or other students. Students’ views on online environment, shown in Table 4-22, reveal that Student-content interaction includes downloading class lecture, taking online tests, checking attendance, class time table and grades. When students were asked if they interact with the course teacher through Blackboard, they said that the chat option is there but not utilised by students or teachers. Some students simply do not use it because they do not know how to use it; others claim that the teacher does not encourage them to use it.

4.5.5 Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction in all Campuses. This has caused concerns with some students in Campuses 2 and 3, as shown in Table 4-23. Some students expressed their frustration with using English as a means of teaching and learning. They expressed their wish to study in Arabic. A few students have issues understanding lectures because they have to translate what the teacher is saying, and their English level is weak. On the other hand some students who graduated from private high schools, where they utilise more robust English curriculum, said they have minor issues but generally they understand the lectures.

Table 4-23: Language of Instruction & its Impact @ Campuses 2-3

Language of instruction @ Campuses 2-3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description		8	▪ <i>I was in private school, so our study was in English, it was easy for me to understand about 85% of what is said, I suffer a little, not too much</i>
		4	▪ <i>I wish we had more than one language, for example, to study law in Arabic, much easier, understandable...”</i>
Impact		4	▪ <i>“The teacher explains and sometimes we don’t understand because of our level of English”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“Before, when we use to study in Arabic, we use to understand, now in English, it is difficult, because we have to translate”</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6 iPad in the Classroom

4.5.6.1 Campus 1

4.5.6.1.1 Description

Students shared their own experience on using an iPad in the classroom. They kept coming back to this point and talking about it on several occasions and they started their discussion with the iPad as in FG3. iPad is used in the classroom as a substitute for books. Mostly, students were happy about the idea of not carrying books. Many students, across the focus groups, view the iPad as a paradoxical tool; difficult to cope with for learning, easy to play with, and shared some of its use in the classroom as listed in Table 4-24.

Table 4-24: Description of iPad use & its Impact @ Campus 1

iPad @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Academic use)		3	▪ <i>"We don't have books, all our material is on the iPad"</i> ,
		1	▪ <i>"Instead of you losing papers...everything is on the iPad, and saved"</i>
		1	▪ <i>"In my opinion iPad made studying easy"</i>
Description (Leisure use)		2	▪ <i>"students check websites, chat, or play games with one another"</i>
		3	▪ <i>"when the teacher is busy writing on the board, most of the students open Instagram, twitter, and the likes"</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.1.2 Impact

The iPad is not necessarily viewed as a study aid only, but rather as a complex tool used for both learning and non-learning depending on student mood, their interest, and the instructor personality. The views of students on iPad impact include both positive and negative reviews, as listed in Table 4-25. On the positive side, students acknowledged that using the iPad in the classroom has made studying easier, and listed some of its advantages as:

- Virtual books,
- Paperless environment, and
- Easy net browsing helps learning English.

At the same time, they focused on the negative student use of the iPad in the classroom involving off task behaviours such as interacting with social networks to chat or play games and watching YouTube. Many students struggle with using the iPad as a learning tool. Specifically, some claim it is still difficult for them to get used to writing on the iPad without a stylus or a keyboard. Others complained that it has technical issues that makes learning more difficult. Interestingly, instructors' mixed messages on iPad-use in the classroom have confused students on its adoption with a few students complaining that although studying is mostly done on the iPad, the exams are taken on printed paper, not an

iPad. Many students said that they prefer books over iPad because books have no adaptation or technical issue like the iPad they claimed.

Table 4-25: Impact of using iPad @ Campus 1

iPad Impact @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Learning		1	▪ <i>"And if you want to learn other languages you search easily using iPad the net, internet, any word you know in any other language it will give it you, it teaches you English"</i>
		2	▪ <i>"iPad, the use is difficult, but it had positive impact that student can study and entertain himself at the same time"</i>
Inconsistency of use		2	▪ <i>" and maybe there is a distraction on the use of the iPad, the whole semester we focus on the use of iPad, then at the end of the term we do IELTS exam on a paper"</i>
Social-networks tool		2	▪ <i>" . iPad makes it easy, students open two pages , one translation and another for social networks , so the students swipes to the translation page when the teacher comes"</i>
		2	▪ <i>"and now iPad facilitates it (social network access)"</i>
Distraction		2	▪ <i>"technology, like the iPad, we use it , it is good for studying, but it distracts students"</i>
Writing Difficulties		2	▪ <i>"Most reasons, are difficult writing on the iPad, it makes you not with the teacher"</i>
Technical issues		3	▪ <i>"Some technical problems"</i>
Students preference		3	▪ <i>I prefer the book on the iPad, because there are some problems in the iPad and so on"</i>
		3	▪ <i>"Like for example ...Some programs...and the book, its faster using the book"</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.2 Campus 2

4.5.6.2.1 Description

Campus 2 students' opinion on the iPad was very similar to Campus 1 students, with some detailed personal stories on their interaction with iPad in the classroom. In this Campus, again, students talked about iPad as a learning tool and a leisure tool. In FG6, students mentioned iPad interaction in both open ended and list-type questions. Mostly, they praised its lightness and portability over heavy books as listed in Table 4-26. However, most students focused on explaining its impact.

Table 4-26: Description of iPad use @ Campus 2

iPad @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Academic use)		4	▪ <i>"Positive side, all books are in the iPad"</i>
		6	▪ <i>"Positive... All the books and material is on the iPad"</i>
Description (Leisure use)		4	▪ <i>" teacher is busy writing on the board, and students would start playing games on the iPad, or chatting"</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.2.2 Impact

Among the focus groups, students expressed their opinion, as shown in Table 4-27 below, that the iPad had changed the way they learn with positive and negative impact.

Table 4-27: Impact of using iPad @ Campus 2

iPad Impact @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	F G	Quote(s)
Adaptation		4	▪ "we spent 12 to 13 years of our life using a book, now it is difficult, we have not yet adapted to use the iPad"
		6	▪ "Before, we use to use books, now we use iPads, it was a sudden change. We use to write, when we write we understand and use more senses, but using the iPad, it's like it is negative, passive."
Reason for Improper use		6	▪ "No control on the iPad. I can play games and when the teacher asks me what I am doing, I would say I am doing the homework, by sliding to the homework screen."
		6	▪ "I know the teacher will not catch me."
		6	▪ "sometimes I am bored in the class, so I play...since I have an unrestricted iPad, I tend to play"
Social-networks tool		5	▪ "Positive for studying...negative for social network"
		6	▪ "Also, today, I was at the class, I understand the material, so I was on YouTube the whole time. Even students next to me"
		6	▪ "I had a really bad experience with social networks, so I deleted these applications completely from the iPad. Instagram twitter, Facebook. I have my friend in class, he is addicted to Facebook, so much. He wastes time"
Distraction		6	▪ "so it has a negative impact?", "yes, very much, you don't pay attention"
Writing Difficulties		6	▪ "Our law book now is on the iPad, not good. No one pays attention"
		5	▪ "some difficulties, when I want to write a note on the iPad, it is slow"
Technical issues		5	▪ "solving a homework by hand is way faster than doing it on the iPad"
		4	▪ "In the negative side, the program crash, deletes what we wrote..."
		4	▪ "On the iPad, when we exit the program, it deletes all that we wrote..."
Students preference		5	▪ "we depend on iPad, it is positive, but the negative, sometimes the book page does not open, some technical problems sometimes"
		6	▪ "Sometimes, in the software on the iPad, we answer some questions and it tells us the answer is wrong. But the answer is right. We feel frustrated. So now the teacher tells us to print and solve on paper"
		4	▪ "I think using a book, and writing is better, you can highlight and summarise faster...while the iPad...the better choice is the book, with the book the information is stuck to the mind..."
		4	▪ "Book is better than iPad, with the iPad you get bored, and then you start playing games".
		6	▪ "had I had only a book, I will not be able to play"

Source: Developed for this research.

Most students agree that the iPad's lightness and technical characteristics enabled them to:

- Access information easier than the books, Or ;
- Take photos of teacher instruction on the board instead of writing notes, and

- Access internet simultaneously with book material for education and learning.

On the other hand, most students expressed their worries about iPad usage in the classroom. There were many issues discussed that students feel have negative influence on their education. Among these issues are the following:

- Technical issues: students mentioned that sometimes book pages would not open, class educational software tended to crash and saving student work sometimes causes program crash and exit without saving. As a result, students are forced to use multiple software programs to finish, save and send their assignment through.
- Writing difficulties: many students expressed that it was difficult to write notes and highlight texts (annotation) on the iPad, therefore solving assignment takes a longer time than using printed books.

These difficulties lead to less understanding and distracted attention. Many students see the iPad as a distraction to their study because it acts as a facilitator to accessing games and social networks in the classroom. When students explained why they use iPad for other than educational purposes in the classroom, they gave many reasons including:

- Using iPad for learning is frustrating, because of the technical and writing difficulties mentioned above, but using it for social networks is easier
- Boredom (I know the lecture, so I watch YouTube)
- No site restriction on the iPad (no control)
- Teacher not able to catch students
- Student addiction to social networks.

Many students expressed that they prefer books or laptop to overcome iPad use issues. Also, many students expressed that they prefer books because it is faster to annotate and to focus than on the iPad and in some cases students felt that the iPad made their learning harder and wished they could revert back to using printed books in the classroom.

4.5.6.3 Campus 3

4.5.6.3.1 Description

Campus 3 students agreed with the two previous Campuses regarding the iPad's use as educational tool and also as a distraction. The difference here was that students did not give a lot of details or description of their personal experience due to time restrictions. Many students expressed their views, as listed in Table 4-28 that the iPad is lighter than books and a relief from carrying school bags. One student in FG9 mentioned he had difficulties using it first, but over time, he got used to it and thinks it is a good educational tool.

Table 4-28: Description of iPad use @ Campus 3

iPad @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Academic use)		8	▪ <i>"It is really good for me I use to have back pain from carrying books and laptop, now, I have everything on the iPad."</i>
		7	▪ <i>"It's great, it's a relief from heavy bags"</i>
Description (Leisure use)		7	▪ <i>" games, we play games, and teacher does not catch us... ", " when he comes we swipe to the class page"</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.3.2 Impact

Some students, especially in FG8 were anti-iPad users, mentioning more than once that it is useless as educational tool, with one student replacing it with laptop. As can be seen in Table 4-29, students in FG7 were more elaborate in their description of iPad impact. Mostly, they pointed to its light weight as the main positive impact, and are weary of the slow and tiring writing on it. Some of them mentioned they use it to play games. They preferred using books over iPad because it consumes less time to highlight and finish assignment tasks.

Table 4-29: Impact of using iPad @ Campus 3

iPad Impact @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Adaptation		9	▪ <i>"Positive...typing was difficult but now we got used to it"</i>
		8	▪ <i>"I use the iPad, it is both positive and negative"</i>
		7	▪ <i>" writing is slow, difficult"</i>
Writing Difficulties		7	▪ <i>" typing is tiring on the iPad "</i>
		7	▪ <i>" well it is easier to highlight on a book, its faster"</i>
Students preference		7	▪ <i>"A teacher asked us to write an essay on a paper, we did. Then he asked us to write on the iPad and send it. It was tiring."</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.4 Campus 4

4.5.6.4.1 Description

At Campus 4, students focused more on the impact of using iPads in class. From Table 4-30 one can notice that in FG 10, students discussed the impact of iPad in both open and list-type questions. With the exception of one student from FG 13, most other students felt that iPad implementation as part of the curriculum was too fast for them to get used to.

Table 4-30: Description of iPad use @ Campus 4

iPad @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Description (Academic use)	👍👎📖🤔	13	▪ <i>“iPad was good, to study, to write, to search, it was easier than the laptop”</i>
Description (Leisure use)	👍👎📖🤔	11	▪ <i>“It is negative. Students play with the iPad. Most of them play.”</i>

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.4.2 Impact

Some students felt that the iPad takes time to get used to as an educational tool, while many other students struggle to adapt to using the iPad as part of their learning process. Students in FG10 showed their frustration when reflecting their personal stories using iPads and consider it a demotivating factor. Probably the most memorable quote that depicts the impact of iPad use in the classroom and links its adoption issues effects over student motivation and academic achievement is the following comment from a student in FG10:

“I failed because of it, in levels 5 and 6 I studied using normal book. In level 7, all of a sudden iPad was introduced to me. Although I have an iPad at home for a long time, but studying using the iPad proved to be difficult for the reasons mentioned earlier. When I go home, the minute I see the iPad I feel nervous. I don’t feel motivated to study. I see the iPad, I throw it away. The result; well, I failed the level” (FG10)

It can be seen from Table 4-31 below that most students agree that the technical and writing difficulties have made students frustrated using the iPad as a study medium; they feel it made their learning harder. Therefore, most students use it for playing games and accessing social networks, which has distracted their attention, and in some cases led to student failure.

Table 4-31: Impact of using iPad @ Campus 4

iPad Impact @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	F G	Quote(s)
Adaptation		13	▪ " iPad was good, to study, to write, to search, it was easier than the laptop"
		10	▪ "Before, in high school, we used books and pens, and in the exams we use pen and paper. Now it's all technology, technology. Technology is new for us. Overusing technology is a negative point here"
		13	▪ "I don't like to use the iPad. I use the laptop. I am always frustrated using the iPad, I am still suffering from the iPad"
		12	▪ " 2 years, but we still don't adapt...we use the book more than the iPad"
Distraction		10	▪ "The minute I open the iPad, I start playing, I don't pay attention in class, it is definitely negative."
Writing Difficulties		13	▪ "We used it last semester to study excel on iPad. It was difficult to adapt to iPad it was a technical course I needed a keyboard and a mouse"
		12	▪ "it's slow to use the iPad, and does not help in memorization"
Technical issues		10	▪ " Some applications crash, because it has lots of applications"
		10	▪ "because of the crash, I have to leave the class an miss the lecture to go fix the problem with the IT"
		12	▪ "some programs or applications don't work on some iPads"
Learning		10	▪ "When you write on the iPad , things like answers and notes, it does not stick in your mind"
Motivation		10	▪ "What is the Impact of using the iPad on your motivation to study? Frankly, I see it as a negative", "Negative", "Negative".
		10	▪ "When they give us some technology we don't know how to use, we feel demotivated to learn. I open the iPad, and play, just play. Nothing motivates me to study. I see this as a negative point".
		10	▪ "When I go home, the minute I see the iPad I feel nervous. I don't feel motivated to study".
Failure		10	▪ "The minute I see the iPad I feel nervous. I don't feel motivated to study. I see the iPad, I threw it away. The result; well, I failed the level".

Source: Developed for this research.

4.5.6.5 Summary of iPad use in the Classroom

A graphical representation of iPad intended and actual use by students at the four Campuses is depicted in Figure 4-16. In the figure, iPad was intended to replace books as a hub for studying, taking note during class and doing assignments and exams for students in the English foundation programs. Students had other perspectives when assessing their experience using the iPad. In their views, the use of the iPad is plagued with learning difficulties and technical issues. Further, because of repeated materials, or/and the teaching style, many students were bored in the classroom. Many students also confessed to being social networks addicts; playing online games, chatting, watching movies or browsing social websites like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. All these elements played a significant impact in altering the intended use of the iPad in the classroom. Students not only use it for learning, but also use it as a social network hub. This has had a negative

impact on their study motivation and focus in the class, leading some students to academic failure.

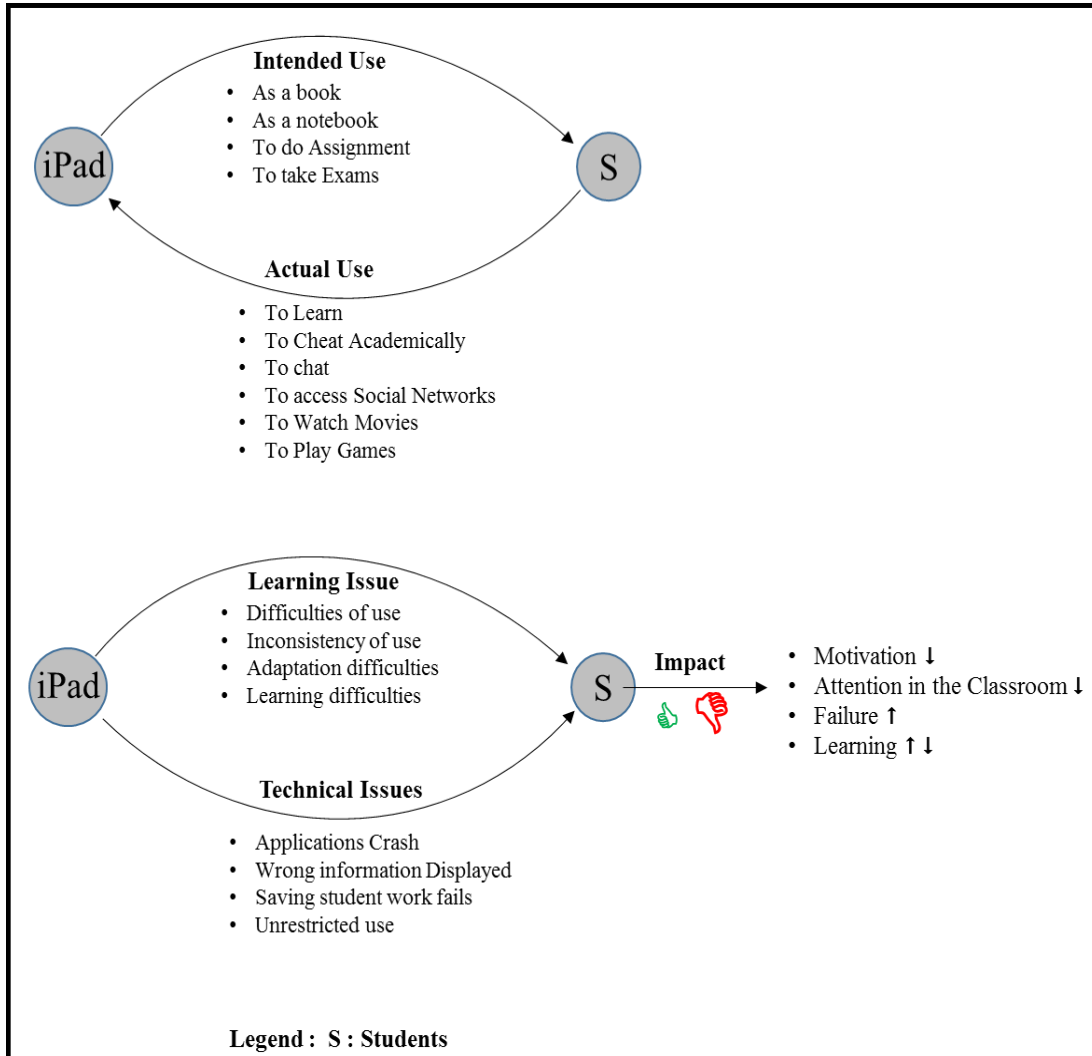


Figure 4-16: Description of iPad use & its Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research.

4.6 Social Related Themes

4.6.1 Teacher

4.6.1.1 Campus 1

4.6.1.1.1 Description

Teachers were mentioned by students in both open-ended and list-type questions in the three focus groups. While all the students agree that teachers at college are qualified to teach the subjects, some students from FG 2 had concerns about teachers’ style and classroom management.

Table 4-32: Teacher Description @ Campus 1

Teacher @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Qualification		1, 3	▪ “They are qualified”
		2	▪ “They are qualified to teach, it’s the style of teaching that is a problem”
		1	▪ “Mostly positive, teachers help, and they tell us to come to their offices for help”
Care		3	▪ “Teachers are hard on us, so that we focus on our study, they care”.
		2	▪ “Teacher gets frustrated, stops the lesson sometimes to tell us to shut up, “silence, silence” he says “some students have to leave the class so they will not disturb others”. I feel two third of the classroom is lost in these interruptions...”
		2	▪ “There are some teachers who just give the lesson and leave.”
Interaction		1, 2,3	▪ “We prefer class interaction , and electronically it is mostly done by emails”

Source: Developed for this research

As can be concluded from their quotes in Table 4-32 above, students claim that some teachers just give the lesson and leave, while others get frustrated with the large number of students in the classroom and are unable to control the class. However, most students across the other two focus groups praised the teachers’ care, responsiveness and support. They mentioned that some teachers provide help beyond the classroom and some encourage them to study. When asked which form of interaction they prefer, most students replied that they prefer class interaction, although they were happy with teachers’ response through emails.

4.6.1.1.2 Impact

Most students had positive engagement with the teachers and think that it has positive impact on their motivation to study. Also, they acknowledge that student-teacher interaction helps in developing student language and building vocabulary. However, some point out that teachers who show uncaring behaviour have a negative impact on students’ morale and focus on the classroom. Table 4-33 details students’ opinions on how teachers affected their morale, motivation and language development.

Table 4-33: Impact of Teacher @ Campus 1

Teacher's Impact @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Morale	👍👎📄👎	2	▪ "Our teacher (Name removed) is caring, but the second teacher is always yelling at us, he puts our morals down,...always"
Motivation	👍👎📄👎	3	▪ "Teachers, they encourage, motivate the student"
Language Development	👍👎📄👎	3	▪ "Before we were not able to write 5 sentences in English, now we write, we are improving..."
		2	▪ "I am learning English; every time I communicate with him I develop my language."

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-17 shows the relationship, viewed by students at Campus 1, between students and their teachers. Teacher qualification and positive and negative impact on students is depicted.

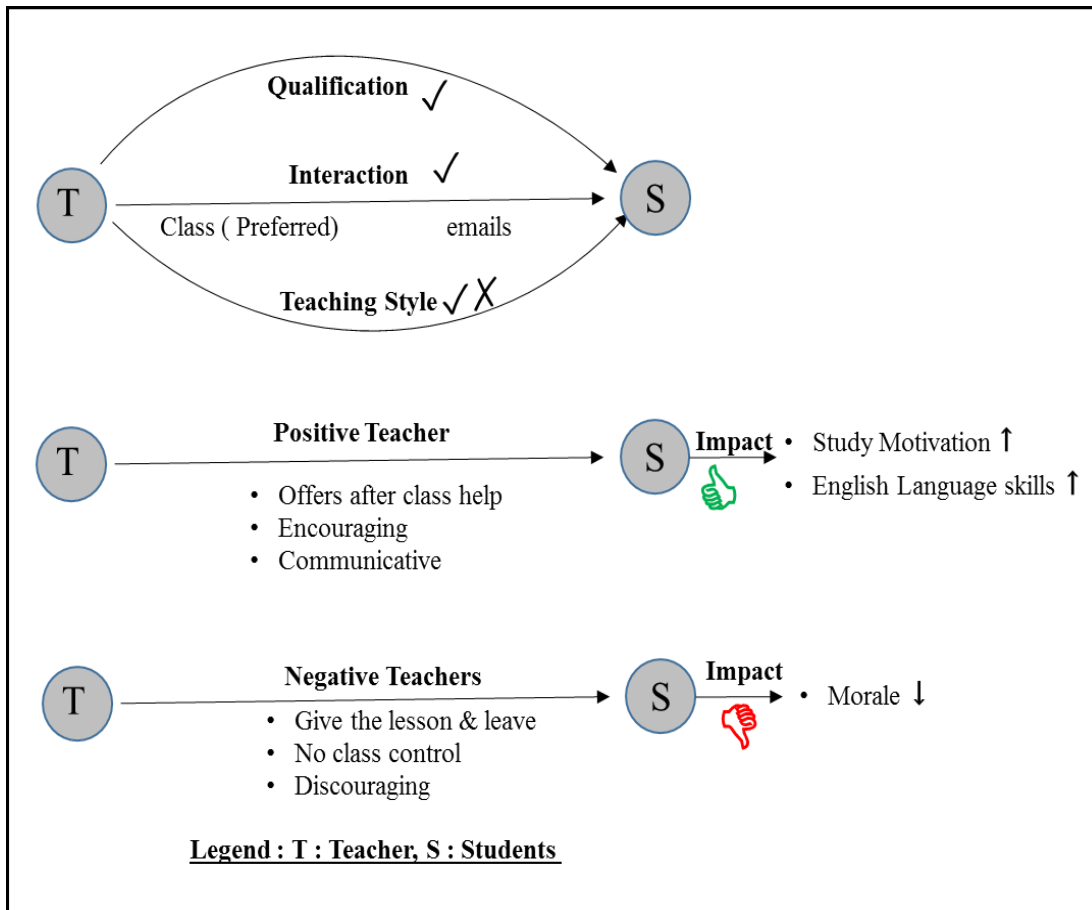


Figure 4-17: Teacher Description & Impact @ Campus 1

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.1.2 Campus 2

4.6.1.2.1 Description

As is the case in the previous groups, students expressed mixed opinions on university teachers in open ended (two focus groups) and list-type questions. Again, there is a near majority agreement that teachers are qualified for the subjects, with a few students noting that teachers differ in their characteristics and teaching style. Students were divided on how they view teachers’ care in the classroom. While most students in FG4 and some students in FG 5 and FG 6 consider their teachers to be caring, many students in FG 5 and FG 6 were frustrated with teachers of Arabic backgrounds in comparison to teachers of foreign (Western) backgrounds. Teachers of foreign origins were considered more caring and fair in student treatment and making students understand material while always praising students’ efforts.

Table 4-34: Teacher Description @ Campus 2

Teacher @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Qualification		4	▪ <i>“they are all qualified ...the best”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“As qualification, they know, but as humans they differ than each other”.</i>
Care		4	▪ <i>“They care, if your grades are low, they motivate you.”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“teacher used to come to us without us asking him, and he would explain, because he cares”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“Some teachers are not fair to students.”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“we had an exam, I got a good grade, next day the teacher came and asked me about my grade, I felt special, I felt he really does care about me”</i>
Interaction		6	▪ <i>“I prefer electronic communication so that I don’t cause friction with him in the classroom”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“ we prefer the classroom, we get instant replay”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“The teacher did not add to my understanding anything more than the book...Sadly, this is a problem I face with Arabic teachers, I feel they are not qualified.”</i>
Background		5	▪ <i>“I had an Arabic teacher, he opens the book and just reads, he doesn’t explain, we don’t understand”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“This one Arabic teacher acts as if he knows everything, when someone asks, he says your role is to listen, just follow my guide and you will succeed.”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

On the other hand, many students feel that teachers of Arabic origins are less caring and unfair in their teaching. From the point of view of students, as shown in Table 4-34 above, the latter type of teachers have the following characteristics:

- Bad interaction: some do not interact or communicate with certain students.
- Control: some teachers show too much control (ex. no questions, follow my lead, don’t ask about your grade or I will lower it)

- Ego: the teacher considers himself right even though they are wrong.
- Bias: some have ‘preferred’ students whom they select to participate or answer questions in the classroom.

Students had different opinions on interaction with teachers with some preferring in class interaction and some preferring online interaction, mainly in the form of emails. In FG 4, most students were satisfied with their interaction with teachers both in class and electronically, while in FG 5, many students preferred class interaction because some teachers do not reply online. In FG 6, both students felt that class and online interaction with teachers are of equal status, but one of them preferred emails to avoid friction.

4.6.1.2.2 Impact

Most students agree on the importance of the teacher towards their motivation and achievement, but differ on how they view this impact due to their own experiences. Students’ opinions on the teachers’ impact on their morale, motivation, class likeability, and teacher preference is listed in Table 4-35 below.

Table 4-35: Teacher Impact @ Campus 2

Teacher’s Impact @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Morale		4	▪ <i>“they come in person and talk to you and encourage you”</i> ,
		5	▪ <i>“Emotionally I am affected. I feel isolated, no relation with the teacher.”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“I try to participate in class; he does not give me a chance. He always chooses certain students to participate. So I give up”</i>
Motivation		4	▪ <i>“They care, if your grades are low, they motivate you.”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“some praise you in front of the class, this motivates me”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“I felt he really does care about me. So from that day I was doing my best to study even harder and get perfect grades.”</i>
Teacher preference		5	▪ <i>“I guess the foreigners are better qualified than the Arab ones”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“I feel that only foreigners should teach the English courses, it comes naturally”</i> .
Class likeability		5	▪ <i>“I didn’t like to go to class....and when I entered the class, I fell asleep”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“so what was his impact on you?”, “ I hate the subject, hate the teacher,”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Almost all students in FG 4 consider that teachers are caring and this motivates them to study, while most students of FG 5 and FG 6 have mixed feelings. Students in FG 5 recall that caring instructors (mostly teachers of Western background) always praise their efforts and motivate them to get good grades and understand the material, while uncaring teachers (mostly of Arabic origins) have negative impact on their motivation. This resulted in them getting lower grades, hating going to class and falling asleep in the lecture. Students of FG

6 agree with those of FG 5 and add to the negative impact of uncaring teachers the following:

- Emotional impact: Disliking the subject and the teacher.
- Avoidance: Avoiding taking more classes with the same teacher.
- Isolation: Not participating in the classroom.

Figure 4-18 shows the relationship, viewed by students at Campus 2, between students and their teachers. Teacher qualification and positive and negative impact on students is depicted.

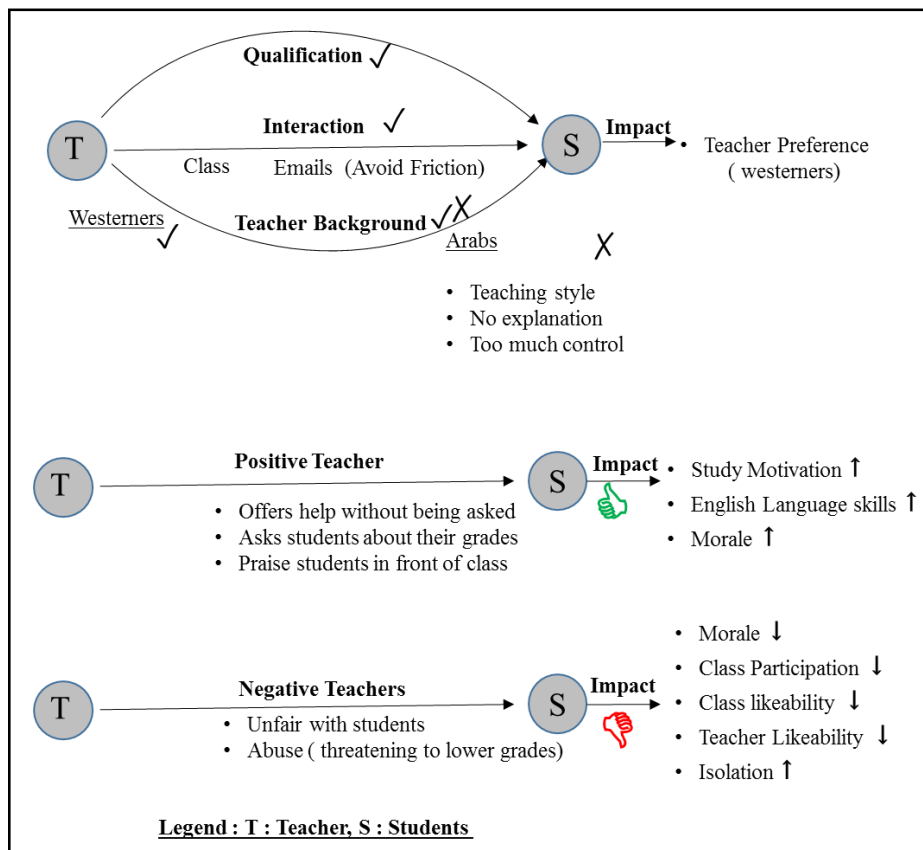


Figure 4-18: Teacher Description & Impact @ Campus 2

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.1.3 Campus 3

4.6.1.3.1 Description

Across the three groups, students had a common opinion that most teachers were qualified and some were not qualified to teach. A student in FG 7 associated teacher responses with lack of knowledge and therefore ruled him unqualified while another student in FG 8 questioned the rationale behind choosing an IT teacher to teach English. In Table 4-36,

students share their views on teacher’s qualification, care and interaction. Students’ rationale for teacher’s attitude is also included in the table.

Table 4-36: Teacher Description @ Campus 3

Teacher @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Qualification		7	▪ “Some are qualified and some are not. Some when I ask a question, they say find it through google.”
		8	▪ “Sometimes they bring an IT teacher to teach us Math, he doesn’t know, so he doesn’t fail students”.
Care		7	▪ “Some teachers care. When your grade is down, they ask you to give in some extra homework, or a research project, and so on, to increase your grades”
		8	▪ “I interact with one teacher and she is great, but my other teacher, I try to interact, and he just ignore me”
		9	▪ “I wrote an essay and he was not impressed. Some care more about; another teacher saw it and was impressed.”
		7	▪ “We have a teacher, when he explains, he seems that he needs someone else to assist him explain. “
Interaction		8	▪ “Some teachers I send emails, they don’t reply”
		9	▪ “ which mode you prefer ? ”, “ class interaction, we feel we get an instant answer”
		8	▪ “I interact with one teacher and she is great, but my other teacher, I try to interact, and he just ignore me”
Students’ rationale for teacher’s attitude		7	▪ “We had a teacher he was good. But when student number increased, he changed. We noticed he was failing many students, he wanted them out”
		8	▪ “ Anyone feels the same? ” “Some teacher they don’t care, they are not flexible. This is because the university administration has more control this year, they pressure teachers, and teachers pressure us”

Source: Developed for this research

In line with other groups, most students in this Campus have also come across caring and uncaring teachers. Across the three focus groups, they mentioned examples, sometimes in a frustrated tone of voice, of both types of teachers in their interaction, praise and interest in students’ academic achievement. Students also note that some teachers changed from being caring last year to being less and less caring this year.
















In both FG 7 and FG 8 some students do associate teachers changing behaviour towards them with either class increase in students’ number or policy changes by the new university management. Most students interact constantly with their teachers in class and by email. However they prefer in-class interaction over online interaction because they get an immediate feedback, and sometimes, some teachers do not respond via email.

4.6.1.3.2 Impact

Although they elaborated on teachers’ characteristics in the class, only students from FG 7 have talked about the direct impact teachers have on them. A few of them spoke with intense and angry tone about how they are bored with the teacher style, and one student

directly blamed the teacher for his failure last semester. On the other hand most students praised many of their teachers' efforts that had contributed to their academic success and engagement in the classroom. In Table 4-37, students reveal the impact of teachers on their morale leading them to boredom and eventually academic failure in some cases.

Table 4-37: Teacher Impact @ Campus 3

Teacher's Impact @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	F G	Quote(s)
Morale		7	▪ <i>"sure, I felt she didn't want me to succeed"</i>
	  	7	▪ <i>"he talks to me, jokes with me, encourages me, gives me empowerment to leave the class room"</i>
	  	7	▪ <i>"Some teachers, I feel they don't want me to succeed..."</i>
Failure	   	7	▪ <i>"I am repeating level 7. The reason because of the teacher."</i>
Boredoms		7	▪ <i>" I get bored with the teacher"</i>
	  	7	▪ <i>"You get bored, from him, from his style",</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-19 shows the relationship, viewed by students at Campus 3, between students and their teachers. Teacher qualification and positive and negative impact on students is depicted.

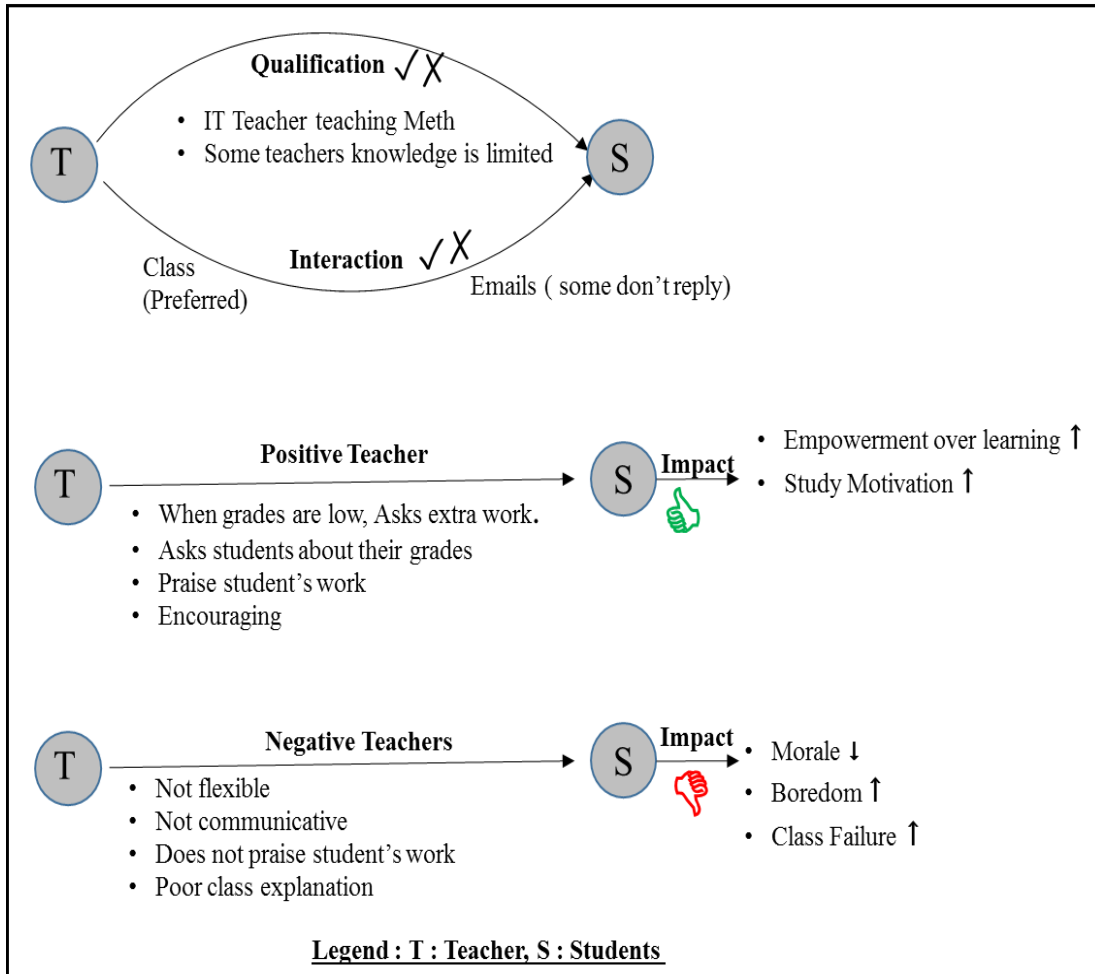


Figure 4-19: Teacher (Description & Impact); Campus 3

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.1.4 Campus 4

4.6.1.4.1 Description

Across the three groups, most students feel that teachers are qualified, and many think they are caring, with few who disagree. Those who disagreed gave their account of examples on how teachers didn't care. As can be seen from Table 4-38, one example was that a teacher did not show sympathy when a student was sick. Other students gave examples of teachers not allowing them to pray or threatening them that if they do not pay attention to their studies then the teacher will not care about them. Although students differ on teacher's care, most of them prefer class interaction with teachers but use emails sometimes as a complementary communication means.

Table 4-38: Teacher Description @ Campus 4

Teacher @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Qualification		12	▪ <i>“qualified, although some teachers they just want to finish the lecture fast”</i>
		11	▪ <i>“some good and some are not”</i>
Care		11	▪ <i>“we have a positive experience with them”</i>
		12	▪ <i>“they really care about us”,</i>
		10	▪ <i>“Some say if you don’t care about your study, I don’t care about you, how does he know if I care or not?”</i>
		11	▪ <i>“Some teacher do not allow us to pray...”</i>
Interaction		13	▪ <i>“I was sick also, no teacher cared”</i>
		10	▪ <i>“we prefer in class interaction over emails”</i>
		11	▪ <i>“but if I am sick I send her an email, she sends me back the assignment”</i>
		13	▪ <i>“the class room is better, I hear the answer, I understand better”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.1.4.2 Impact

Mostly students in FG 10 and FG 13 mentioned direct impact of teachers on their understanding, motivation and academic achievement as mentioned in Table 4-39. Students in FG 12 were short in their answers and did not elaborate on the impact of teachers much but were generally happy with their experience with college teachers.

Table 4-39: Teacher Impact @ Campus 4

Teacher’s Impact @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Understanding		13	▪ <i>“Last semester our English teacher was Chinese. It was difficult to understand”</i>
		13	▪ <i>“they help me when I don’t understand”</i>
Motivation		10	▪ <i>“Some teachers, I feel motivated to come to their class.”</i>
Academic Achievement		10	▪ <i>“Some teacher made me a binder with all important practices on day one of the course. I knew he cared, so I did my best in class”</i>
		11	▪ <i>“I tried, my first semester, I had a teacher with bad style. Many students failed”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-20 shows the relationship, viewed by students at Campus 4, between students and their teachers. Teacher qualification and positive and negative impact on students is depicted.

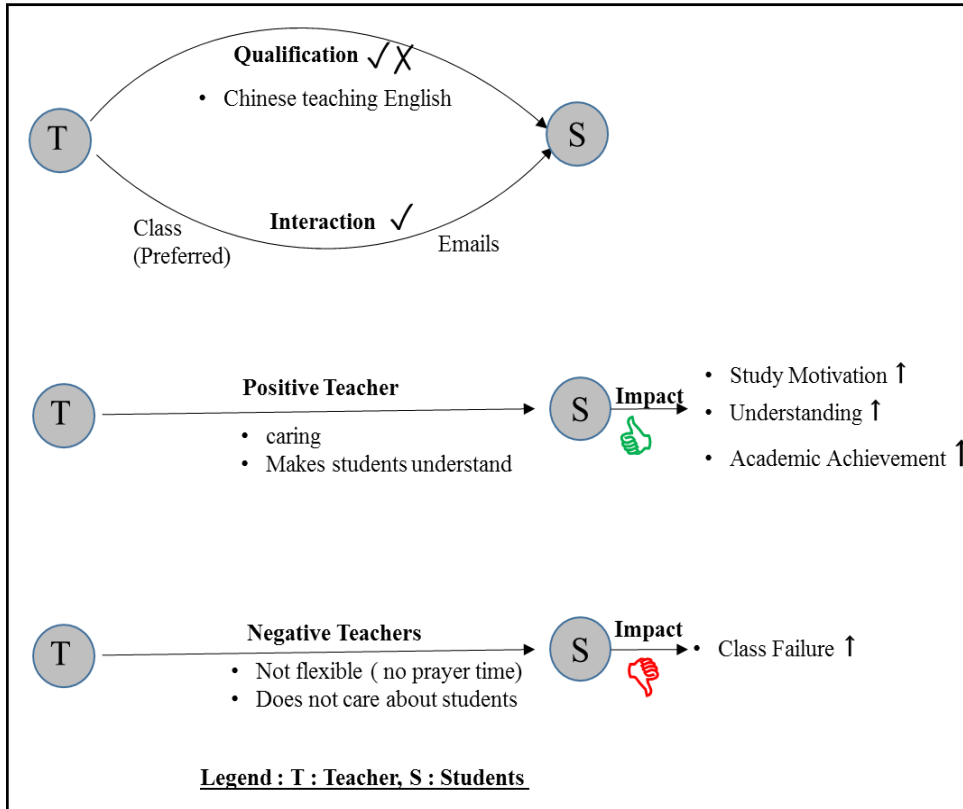


Figure 4-20: Teacher (Description & Impact); Campus 4

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.1.5 Teacher Impact Summary

Figure 4-21 shows a depiction of the impact of teachers’ characteristics including qualification, interaction, care and background on students at all four Campuses.

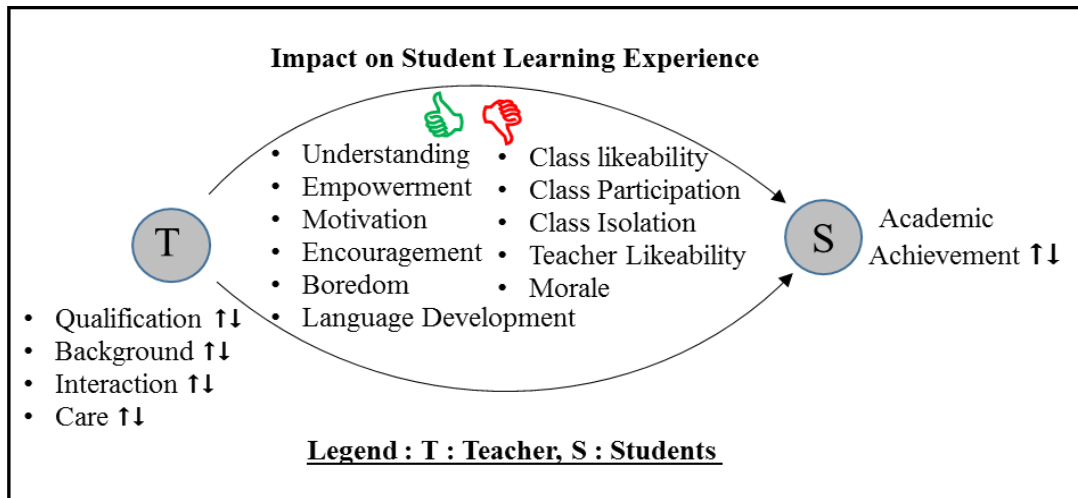


Figure 4-21: Teacher Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research

Students distinguish between teacher qualifications and their teaching style and care. Although most students feel that their teachers have the required qualification for the job, they point out that teachers' care is what sets them apart. Students find that many teachers from western backgrounds to be more caring and have better interaction both in class and online.

As a result, students feel encouraged to study, love coming to class, interact and ask questions, develop their English and achieve good grades. On the contrary, with teachers who are uncaring, students feel demotivated to study and discouraged to ask questions or interact in the class. In some cases, students end up hating the subject, the teacher and coming to class altogether. And when they do come to class, they feel isolated and bored and end up sleeping during lectures or accessing social networks sites. As a result, they get low grades and sometimes fail their classes.

4.6.2 Administration

In Question 4.2 of the protocol, students were asked about college administration, including lower and higher management, and if there were any impact on student motivation. The answers varied in depth of details and emotions shown by students. In both Campus 1 and Campus 2, students gave brief answers while in Campus 3 and Campus 4, where the upper management is the same, students were in an emotional state talking about their experience with the administration and how that has affected them.

4.6.2.1 Campus 1

Most students in Campus 1 complained about administration's lack of interaction and care. As mentioned in Table 4-40, students claim that the only time they get contacted by the

administration is when they are absent. However, a student mentioned that the college has a designated social affairs officer who helps students in case of financial problems. Students did not talk about the impact of administration on their motivation.

Table 4-40: Administration Description @ Campus 1

Administration @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Positive interaction	👍👎👏	1	▪ “Social affairs officer, if you have some financial problems, he helps you”.
Negative interaction	👎	2	▪ “They don’t communicate, they don’t come visit, they don’t ask how our study is going...only absence, and they send letters when absence...”
	👍👎👏	3	▪ “yea with absent, they personally get in contact with us”

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-22 shows the nature of student-administration relationship at Campus 1.

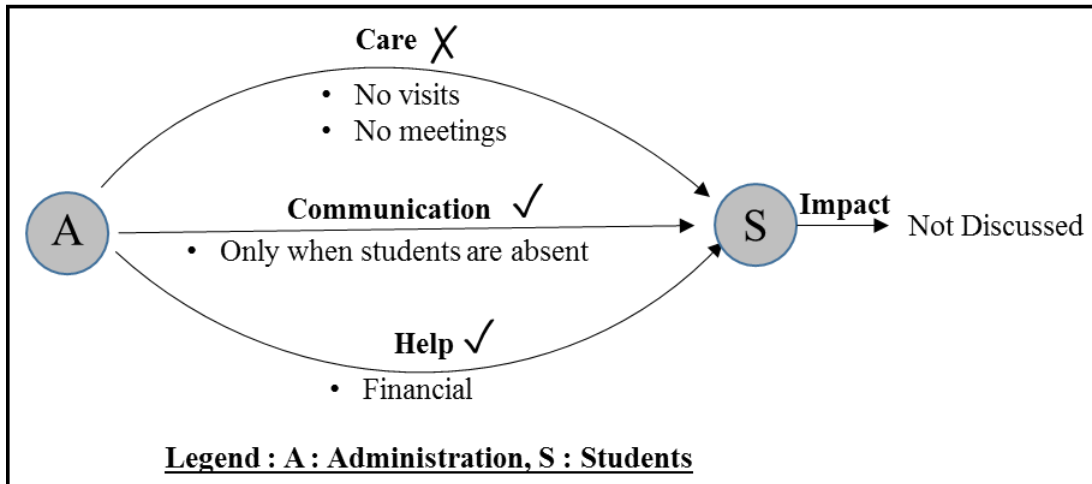


Figure 4-22: Administration Description & Impact @ Campus 1

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.2.2 Campus 2

In Campus 2, students have positive and negative interaction with administration as well as the previous Campus. Accounts of these interactions are mentioned in Table 4-41 below.

Table 4-41: Administration Description @ Campus 2

Administration @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Positive Interaction		5	▪ <i>“When we have a problem they help us “.</i>
		5	▪ <i>“The vice chancellor sometimes have lunch with us, and a weekly meeting on Mondays.”</i>
Negative Interaction		4	▪ <i>“we are only with the teacher “</i>
		4	▪ <i>“We don’t interact with administration.”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“We try to avoid them. The only time we communicate with them, it means we are absent or GPA is low.”</i>
		6	▪ <i>“Nobody visit you from the administration in class?” “No ... “no”.</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Here, some students, in FG 4, communicated their administration request through their teachers. Other students, in FG 6, clearly said that they try to avoid administration, who, to them, play a reactive role only and are in contact with the students only if they have low grades or are absent. This is contrary to what many students in FG 5 think about administration. They think that the management cares and show it. Students of this focus group praise the help they get from administration when they have problems, the Monday meetings they have with the Vice-Chancellor, and appreciate the fact that he sometimes would drop by and have lunch with them. Although students in Campus 2 were more elaborate on their interaction with the administration, they also, like Campus 1 students, did not mention any impact on their motivation as a result of those interactions. Figure 4-23 shows the nature of student-administration relationship and the impact it has on their study at Campus 2.

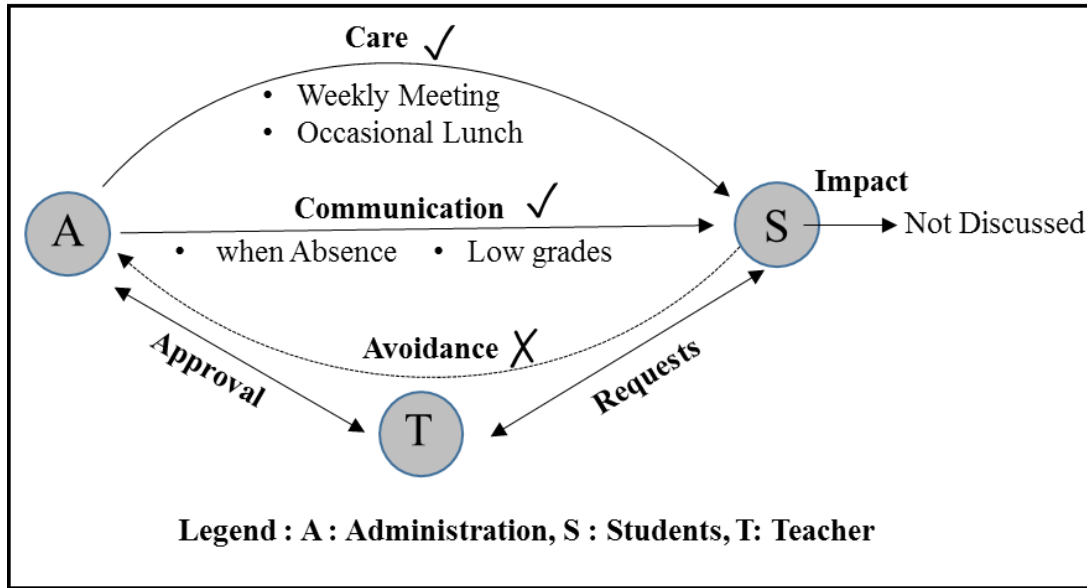


Figure 4-23: Administration Description & Impact @ Campus 2

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.2.3 Campus 3

“Administration only cares about absence and warning. Rules, rules, more rules”
(FG 8)

The scene at Campus 3 was different in the intensity of emotions and the descriptive details that went into it, in comparison to both Campus 1 and Campus 2. Here, students were frustrated, sometimes angry and most of the time saddened by the role of the university administration. They discussed in response to the open ended questions of the protocol and added more details when asked again about the administration in question 4.2 of the protocol. With the exception of one student in FG 9 who mentioned that the administration was helpful in solving problems, all other students across the three focus groups were in complaint mode. Most students were comparing current administration, which was recently appointed with a new chancellor, with the old administration of last year when they described their interaction issues with the administration. Table 4-42 has a specific list of items students have mentioned when comparing the two administrations.

Table 4-42: Old and New Administration Comparison @ Campus 3

Old and New Administration Comparison		
	New administration	Old administration
Students meeting the chancellor	No	Yes
Chancellor visiting students	No	Yes
Accepted absence excuses	1	3
Flexibility in class timing	No	Yes
Use access card to enter	Yes	No
Student car Parking location	Far	Near

Source: Developed for this research

As seen in the table, students had multiple issues with administration. They complained about not being able to see the chancellor either in her office or on Campus. This is in contrast to the old Chancellor who was seen from time to time walking around and visiting students. Many students also complained about new laws and regulations set in place by the new administration. These new policies included changing the accepted absence excuses from 3 under previous administration to only one. Also, in the past, employed students were able to shift class timing to balance between work and college, but not anymore under the new administration, which has fixed class timing.

In Table 4-43, students shared their recollected experience and interaction with the old and new administration from personal experience, and some of them mentioned how the new administration's behaviour impacted them emotionally and academically.

Table 4-43: Administration Description & Impact @ Campus 3

Administration @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Old administration		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The previous chancellor he used to walk around and we would see him a lot”.
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The old administration accepted three excuses”
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Last year, we had flexible administration” “How?” “When a student was working, they gave him the choice to change his class schedule to take classes in the afternoon, because he works in the morning “
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A student from my class wanted to see the chancellor, went to the office, and they said it is not allowed for a student to see her”
New administration		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Now, we never see the new chancellor” “did you try email?” “they say, but we never try””
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The new administration only one excuse, but mostly denied”.
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are certain entry doors, not conveniently located “, “did you talk to administration?” they are the ones who came up with this idea”
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “The parking now are far away from the entrance door
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I joined 2011; I passed the first and second year. Had a failure in level 6, but passed, then had some medical circumstances, and went through surgery, and I gave them the medical excuse, they said no, you have passed the absence limits”.
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “This year they say you cannot change your class schedule, no excuse even if you are sick. More control”
Impact on students		9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “They care...when problems happen they help”
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “We don’t feel relaxed coming to school ”.
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Another guy, had an eye operation, and he gave them the medical excuse, they refused. So he had to repeat the whole course”
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “This is the main reason why some students transferred to other universities this year”

Source: Developed for this research

New policies had imposed a stricter college access via an access card and moved student parking further away from the main Campus. Some students explicitly think the new administration cares only about rules and policies but not students. As a result of these issues many students do not feel relaxed coming to college, some failed classes and some of them have transferred to other universities. Figure 4-24 below shows the nature of student-administration relationship and the impact it has on their study at Campus 3.

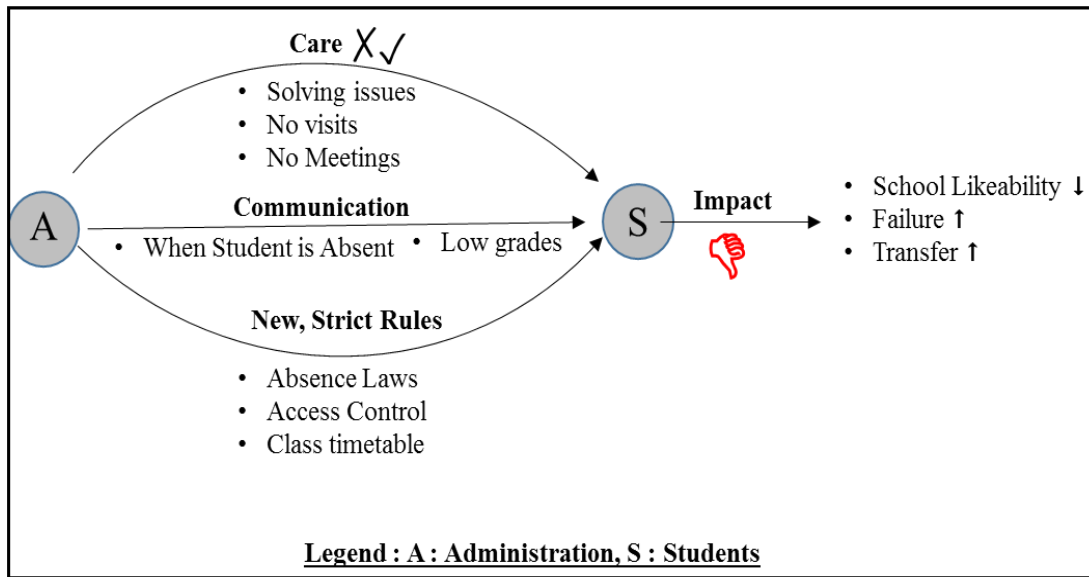


Figure 4-24: Administration Description & Impact @ Campus 3

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.2.4 Campus 4

"I am now sick, I gave them medical excuse, they didn't accept it" (FG 12)

That student certainly looked pale, yellow and tired in the focus group session. Even though it is customary in the UAE to sit in a formal position when talking to strangers, which the researcher was, this student could not keep his head straight. His eyes were open, but at times they looked widely shut, as he struggled to utter the words and cast his opinion, in dissatisfaction, about though being faint, fully sick and still, the administration thought he must attend as his medical excuse was dismissed. The students' mood in Campus 4 was even more furious as more and more students explicitly revealed their intentions to leave college.

In continuation to Campus 3 students' complaints, and giving the fact that both Campuses are under the same management, and hence the same rules and regulations, students in Campus 4 repeated some of the previous Campus complaint issues. They blamed administration for not caring enough, lack of communication and visits, refusal to see students and, most importantly, their tendency to 'suddenly' announce new laws for absence, class time schedules and exam timetable. A few employed students, who needed letters from university so they get out of work early to come to class on time, did not get those letters. They blamed the university administration for causing problems for them at their work.

Table 4-44: Administration Description & Impact @ Campus 4

Admin@ Campus 4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Interaction		10	▪ <i>"They don't care"</i>
		11	▪ <i>"Look, the upper management, no one can see them."</i>
		11	▪ <i>"we only communicate when problems happen"</i>
		12	▪ <i>"new laws, like absence laws, time schedule changes, exams, it comes all of sudden"</i>
		13	▪ <i>"I see admission staff as good and caring. But the policy is not on students' best interest"</i>
		13	▪ <i>"do they come and visit?", "no they don't, even when I ask them to give me letters for my work, they complain and complain"</i>
How students feel		11	▪ <i>"students fear to contact the administration to complain about the teacher"</i>
		12	▪ <i>"always pressuring us, always new stuff"</i>
		12	▪ <i>"we feel like high school students"</i>
Impact on students		12	▪ <i>"students leave because of the increasing laws, pressure, and control"</i>
		13	▪ <i>"I am thinking of leaving the university because of the administration. ...my old university had respect for me. Here, too much pressure. What do they want from me? Not be sick?"</i>
		12	▪ <i>"Attendance and absence, when we reach 10% it affects our exam status"</i>
		13	▪ <i>"I am also leaving, even one of my friends has already left. They cause me problems with my work."</i>
		13	▪ <i>"I also want to leave... Too much control, and less empowerment on my education"</i>

Source: Developed for this research

In Table 4-44 above, students described their shaky relationship with college management with tense words like 'complain', 'fear', 'pressure' and 'control'. Some students have friends who had already left the university, while others mentioned leaving because of control, pressure and lack of proper communication and care for students' needs, leaving them with less empowerment about their education as one student in FG 13 claimed. Figure 4-25 below shows the nature of student-administration relationship and the impact it has on their study at Campus 4.

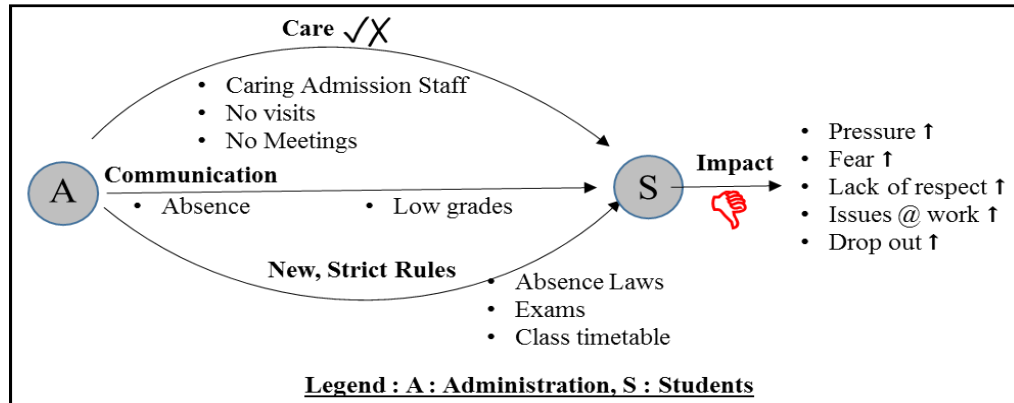


Figure 4-25: Administration Description & Impact @ Campus 4

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.3 Family

The majority of participating students felt that their families were supportive towards their academic achievements, with the exception of a few cases where the family was a distraction. On one hand, most students, across all Campuses, assured that their family played a major role on their decision to enter college, major and course choices, study habits and academic achievement.

Table 4-45: Family Positive Description & Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Family (+) @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Positive Family role		3	▪ “Yes, sometimes when we don’t understand something, they say come, then they show us how solve it or how to do our assignment...and so on..?”
		4	▪ “Positive. They encourage you, help you, no negative”
		4	▪ “Our families relieved us from any duties”.
		6	▪ “my family follow my achievement all the time ”
		7	▪ “my parents know I study so they don’t bother me with responsibilities”
The Father as a motivator		12	▪ “they are always following us and asking us what we are doing at school
		2	▪ “My dad motivates me.”
		3	▪ “Like when I say I don’t want to study, my dad tells me to study, and do good, and I will be rewarded by a good job when done.”
		5	▪ “my dad was following my progress, my learning”
Positive Family Impact		6	▪ “Does your father follow up your study?”, “yes, what courses I took, am I ready or not for the exams, what is my study schedule?All these encourage me to study and bond more with my dad?”
		7	▪ “Family is positive, they motivate us to study”
			▪ “The family expectation boost our well to study”

Source: Developed for this research

Families, according to many students, as listed in Table 4-45 above, showed their care by follow students' progress regularly, relieve them from responsibilities in the house and, in some cases, offer tutoring to explain difficult material. The father was mentioned specifically when many students were referring to family as a source of motivation, encouragement, and mentoring. Figure 4-26 below shows the relation between positive family support and higher student motivation to continue their courses at college.

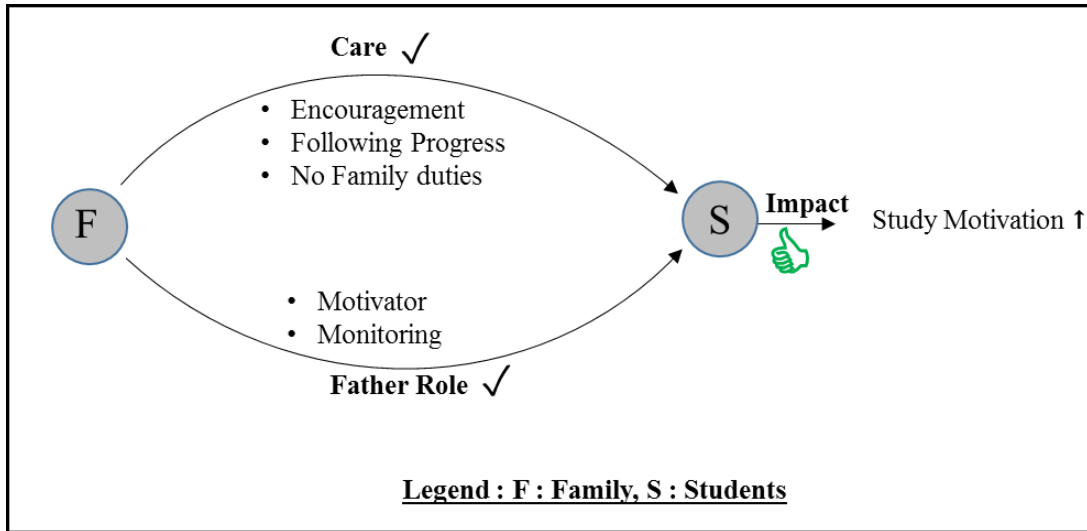


Figure 4-26: Family Positive Support @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research

On the other hand, some negative cases were present where students mentioned the negative role their families were exerting on them. Mainly in FG 9 and FG 10 in Campus 3 and Campus 4, where a few students shared their negative experiences with their families. Instances of negative opinions on family role are collected in Table 4-46

Table 4-46: Family Description with Negative Impact @ Campuses 3-4

Family (-) @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Negative Family role		9	▪ "For me, not my friends, not my family, no one was supportive that I join Zayed University", "Why?", "They say it is difficult, but now they changed their mind and said if you finish you will have a strong degree"
		10	▪ "some people I know have family responsibility and it is a distraction sometimes"
Impact		9	▪ "My cousin, he was the youngest in his family and had all the family responsibilities, so he left the university"
		9	▪ "They don't give me a chance sometimes to study, It affected my study"
		10	▪ "sometimes, family responsibilities makes people leave, but this factor is very rare"

Source: Developed for this research

In one case, a student mentioned that his family was not supportive to his decision to enter a specific college however, they supported him later on. In another case, family was a source of distraction to the student’s study schedule. In a few cases, family responsibilities were deemed both a distraction and a reason why, some students left college. Figure 4-27 shows the relation between negative family support and higher student motivation to continue their courses at college.

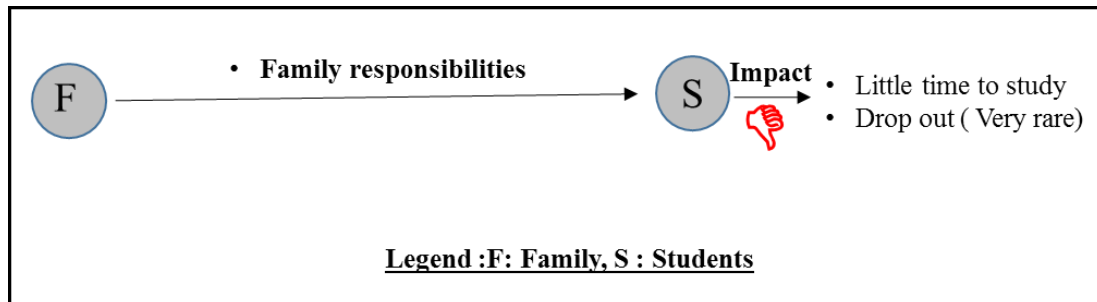


Figure 4-27: Family Negative Support @ Campuses 3-4

Source: Developed for this research

4.6.4 Friends

The researcher divided friends into two groups: college friends, and non-college friends. This was an intentional separation to give students a chance to reflect on the importance and impact of each group of friends on their study. There is a clearer picture of how friends act in academic settings, and how they act in social settings. As a result, students were more focused and gave more details of their encounters and experiences when talking about each group separately.

4.6.4.1 College Friends

“It depends on you; there is the good and there is the bad” (FG 10)

In Question 4.2 of the protocol, students were asked what they think of college friends and their impact on them. Also, they were asked about the nature of their interaction with college friends, and if they preferred one method over the other.

Most students have mixed opinions about college friends. Many students have positive experiences with their college friends. They work collaboratively on class projects, in the class and online; email each other class lecture slides and teacher notes if a student is absent; and encourage each other, to study and take the IELTS exam so they can study the next level and take college courses.

This is not always the case, with many students having negative experiences with college friends. Some students criticise the disruptive behaviour of others, especially new entrants, towards the teacher in the classroom. This behaviour, according to some students in FG 2, causes them to be distracted and the teacher angry. A few students, who live in the college dormitory, as is the case in Campus 2, complained about their roommates, who have different class schedules as explained in students' quotes in Table 4-47 below.

Table 4-47: College Friends Description & Impact @ Campuses 1-4

College friends @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Classroom and online Interaction		1	▪ "Both are easy, in class and electronically, BBM and chat"
		7	▪ "But we prefer class interaction more".
		12	▪ "in class and electronically"
Positive Impact		1	▪ "I was working with my friend on a project, and we were sending it back and forth through emails"
		4	▪ "Some take the IELTS and encourage us to do so"
		5	▪ "Some take pictures and send the material to us when we are absent, by email."
Negative Impact		2	▪ "You cannot control, especially the new students, they don't know how to treat the teacher."
		3	▪ "We made a group on twitter, so students help each other", " Do you use it communicating, cheating? ", "both", "from both sides", "cheating", "cheating, it is most important"
		5	▪ "yes, they play a role, they have nothing to do or study, so they always say let's go out lets go out"
		11	▪ "Negative.... I chat with them on BBM "

Source: Developed for this research

Because of their different classes and exams, those friends, sometimes, push them to go out and not study. Some students chat or play with their classmate friends; distracting their attention. Not all collaborative work amongst students is constructive, with some students using it to cheat, as described under social network sections and also stressed here again.

As for student interaction, students interact in the classroom, at Campus, through emails and social networks. Some consider classroom interaction more important than online, while others think both modes of interaction complement each other. Figure 4-28 shows the type of interaction between students and their college friends and the positive and negative impact these interactions have.

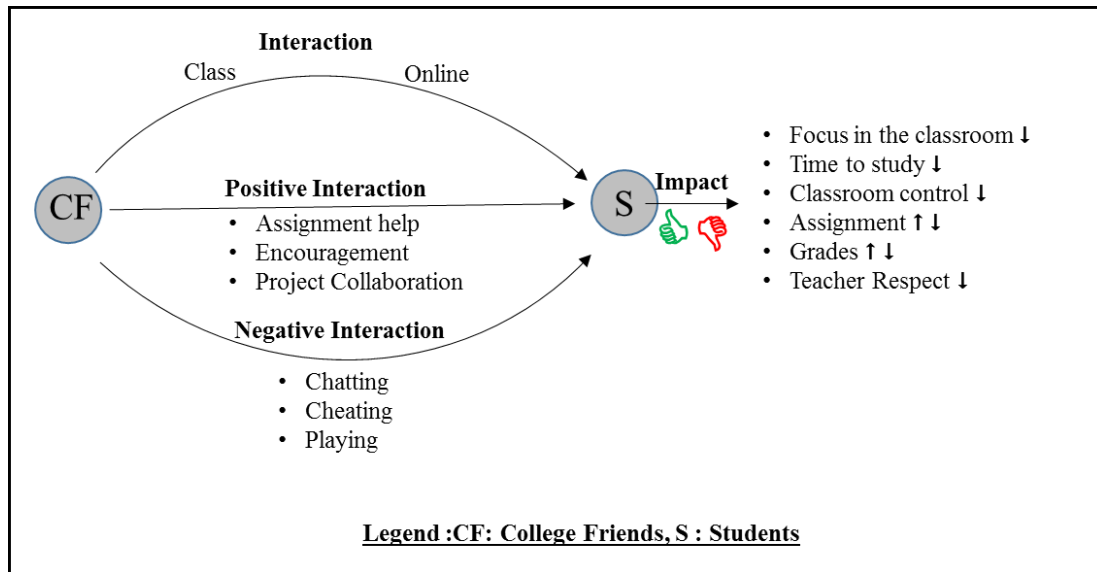


Figure 4-28: College Friends Description & Impact @ Campuses 1-4



Source: Developed for this research

4.6.4.2 Non-College Friends

In Question 3.2 of the protocol, students were asked what they think of non-college friends and their impact on their motivation and academic achievement. It is worth noting that students talked about three types of non-college friends and their influences: employed and unemployed friends and friends who are also students but in different universities. The vast majority of students think that non-college friends have a negative influence on them. All students in Campuses 3 and 4 talked about the negative experience they are having with non-college friends. The same was true with most students at Campus 1 except for one. At Campus 2, students had more positive views of their non-college friends than most other Campuses.

There were many reasons for the negative encounters with non-college friends. Friends from other universities try, and succeed sometimes, to lure their friends into transferring to their 'easier' colleges. Some students have friends who do not work and those push them to stay out at night camping or playing, and as result they are late to their classes. Others have friends who work, and try to influence them to drop out of college, work in the police or army, get an income, and get married. This kind of social pressure increases, especially when the study duration is too long at certain Campuses compared to other universities, or when students fail classes or are unable to pass IELTS exam. In some instances, students feel socially embarrassed when their non-college friends tease them because they are still studying English and have not entered their major at the university.

Table 4-48: Non-College Friends Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Non-College friends @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Positive Impact		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "I am at the opposite, my friends tell me to always try for the IELTS, and when I express to them I want to leave (college), they say why? Where will you go? Military and Police without a degree is not good"
		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "They say get a degree, no one can work in a good job without a degree".
		5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "my friends graduated 2010, and now they help me, they became unofficial advisors and assistance"
Negative Impact		1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Some students, who, if they fail once, their friends impact them, they say to them:" it is over, what you benefit from studying? You failed, it is better you go work, so they trick them and then they leave".
		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "they are always trying to tell me to go out, go camping in the desert, and they stay out late at night, and in the morning I have school, so I am late"
		2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "all of them are negative....they tell me to go out, go out why you want to continue, IELTS is difficult, studying 4 years, go work in the police."
		6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "they talk about the duration of the study, they say UAEU takes a very long time, or sometimes they tell you to just start work right away"
		7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Some from outside always ask the same question: you still in the levels? it is embarrassing "
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "They encourage you to get a job. Work and get married. That's it. Studying is not worth it"
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends from other universities, it is easy to pass. Here it is hard and students study hard to get good grades
		8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Has any one of you thought about leaving the university because of what his friends have said?", "No ", "No", "No not me, but I know some people who left and joined easier universities"
		9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "everyone says this university; students take more time to finish English"
		10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "negative impact, especially the ones in military and police"
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "some students left the university for other colleges,_especially HCT" 		

Source: Developed for this research

As can be seen in Table 4-48 above, not all the non-college friends are negative. Some students have supportive ones. At Campus 1 and 2, some students shared their positive experience with their friends. Supportive examples of non-college friends included encouragement to study; changing their minds about deciding to leave college by stressing the importance of college education in getting a better position when they finish college as opposed to the ones who have no degree; and in some instances, friends who graduated from the same university were acting as private tutors to help them with their assignments and understandings. Figure 4-29 below shows the type of interaction between students and their college friends and the positive and negative impact these interactions have.

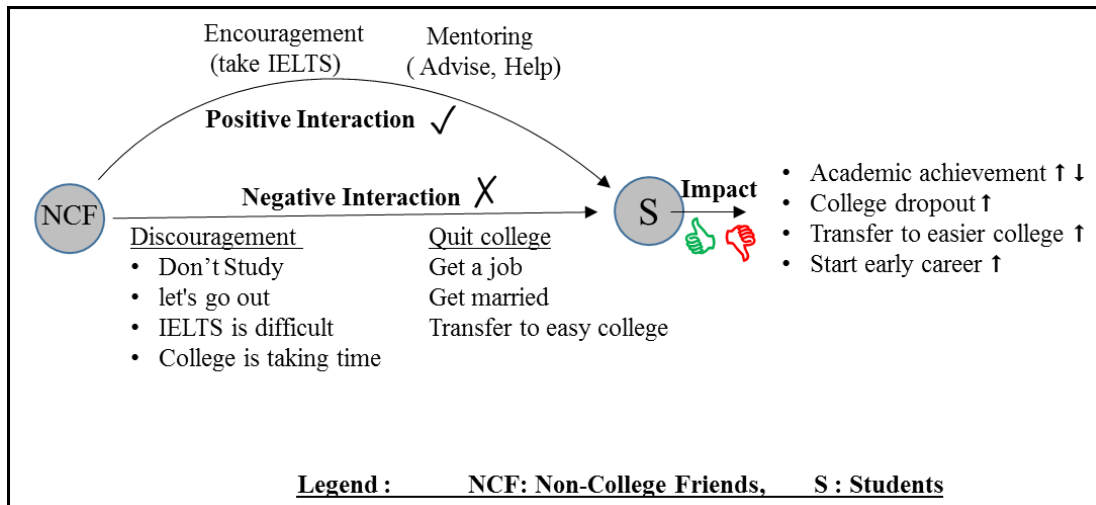


Figure 4-29: Non-College Friends Description & Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research

4.7 Personal Related Themes

4.7.1 Social Networks (SN)



4.7.1.1 Campus 1

4.7.1.1.1 Description

Students were asked about the impact of social networks on their motivation to study, in both university and non-university settings. Even though the questions were asked separately, students mainly focused on the impact of social networks in a university setting. In all three focus groups, students explained their habits about accessing social network sites during classes. Across the three groups, most students agreed that social networks are accessed both for educational purposes and for fun.

As can be noticed in Table 4-49 below, most students think that social networks are accessed in class for various reasons ranging from accessing an online dictionary to boredom, defying sleep, annoying the teacher or, in some cases, because they are hooked to social networks to the point of addiction. Most students think that this form of addiction is on the rise and forms a trend as they encounter it every day in the classroom and beyond. Typical social networks accessed by students are: chat programs like BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) and WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Keek and social games like Subway Surf.

Table 4-49: Social Networks Description @ Campus 1

Social networks @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Purpose for access		1	▪ <i>“some students play while teacher explain, and others try to find a translation to a word, so it has a positive negative impact in class”</i>
		2	▪ <i>“When the teacher is busy writing on the board, most of the students open Instagram, twitter, and the like.”</i>
		3	▪ <i>“There are programs that facilitate us writing and sending to our teacher... And negative...you care about it more than studying”</i>
Examples of social networks accessed		2	▪ <i>“I don’t use in class, but if the teacher does not teach, I pull my phone and start BBM chatting ”</i>
		3	▪ <i>“negative like games, now we have Instagram and Keek, and you can access any time, and these things affect studying, now for example you , the teacher is explaining and you play subway surf , the latest game, and it affects”</i>
		1	▪ <i>“Chatting about news, some people like to read on twitter, we made Instagram (account), we cannot. 24 hours we have to look, check, or on twitter, what is new news, or talking to another person”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.1.1.2 Impact

With the exception of a few students, the participants emphasised the negative impact that social networking has on them during their lectures. Some students see benefits of social networks including learning new words, accessing news and entertainment like jokes and funny videos. The majority of students feel that social networks have had severe negative impacts on their study experience. Some students pointed out that they themselves suffer from social network addiction. The negative impact of social networks, which are listed in Table 4-50, on students included:

- Not being able to complete assignment
- Direct impact on student motivation to study
- Not being able to focus in the classroom
- Getting low grades in exams.
- Failing classes, and failing IELTS tests.
- Ultimately, class failure lead to school dropout

Table 4-50: Social Networks Impact @ Campus 1

Social Networks Impact @ Campus 1	FESE Rating	F G	Quote(s)
Addiction		2	▪ <i>"For me It is negative...all the times, even when I am driving sometimes, I play with my Blackberry"</i>
		1	▪ <i>"I see that addiction on social networks has a negative impact on students in the class room, students take their phones out during class, chat, use Instagram, "Do you see this as a trend? At large, Trend. Trend", "yes , it is very common now, a lot"</i>
		3	▪ <i>"And negative...you care about it more than studying,"</i>
Motivation		1	▪ <i>"From my point of view I see that social networks have a negative impact on students; student's motivation to learn. Especially if he was studying, he has an exam, If he was addicted on social networks, anything like WhatsApp or similar, every little while he will go and check it,"</i>
Focus		2	▪ <i>"negative I lose my focus with the teacher"</i>
		2	▪ <i>"What is the negative side?", "Focus.", "Focus, fatigue in the classroom, you can't focus with the teacher..."</i>
Grades		1	▪ <i>" yes, for example, you get a message, you start talking and talking with his pal, talking and talking, time passes, so when he wants to do his assignment he says another day, another day, and so on". "did this happen to you personally or some other students that you know?", "with us", "and what is the impact on your study?" " I get low grades in the exams, it all depends on one's desire, some use it for chatting, and others to learn"</i>
Failure		1	▪ <i>" some students they get distracted, they focus on Instagram and then they fail IELTS and then they say : why I failed ?", you did not focus"</i>
Drop out		1	▪ <i>"Did some students leave college because of their addiction on social networks?" " there were 2 students in my class that failed and left college, I see them in the classroom, they did not care, and they failed, and left, they failed for two years, because of their addiction on social networks and not caring"</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-30 below shows students various use of social networks, their rational behind it, and the impact social networks have on them at Campus 1.

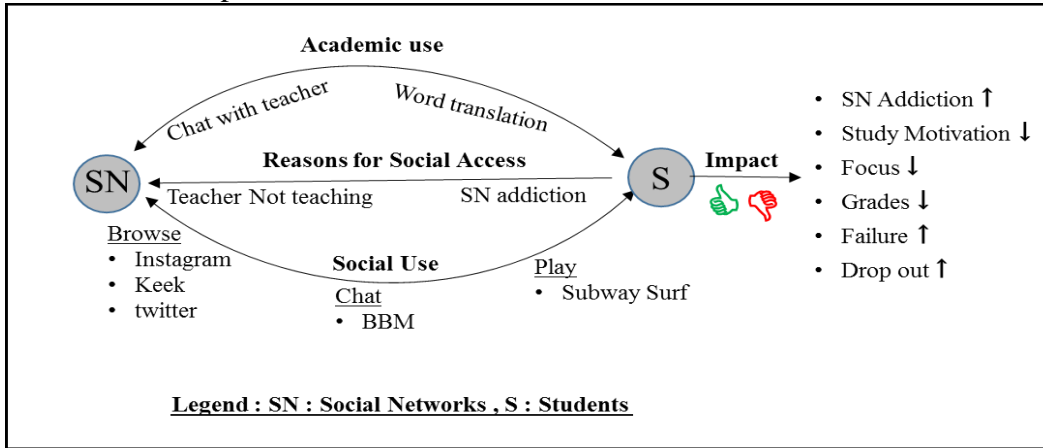


Figure 4-30: Social Networks (Description & Impact) @ Campus 1

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.1.2 Campus 2

4.7.1.2.1 Description

Most students discussed the social (like in FG 5 and FG 6) and academic (all three focus groups) perspectives of their experiences with social networks. Students were open in sharing and discussing their own experience. Most students agreed that social networks are accessed in class for educational, chatting and cheating purposes. Some students use social networks to communicate with their families and others use it to learn.

Table 4-51: Social Networks Description @ Campus 2

Social Networks @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Social use		5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “WhatsApp, I use it always to chat with my family”
		5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Sometimes I stay late, chatting and Youtubing from video to video and time is gone, all night. From football to cars”.
Academic use		5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Teacher sometimes explains, and students are busy with social networks on their iPads, Instagram, and twitter. Some students, in the same class, they send each other pictures on Instagram while teacher is explaining the lesson”
		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Using Instagram, some students would take pictures and post it to help others...”, “to help others understand or cheat?”, “both ways,”
Social Networks accessed		4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “What’s the most social networks you guys use in class?”, “Instagram, BBM”, “Facebook, twitter”

Source: Developed for this research

Social and academic use of social networks, as well as the types of social networks accessed by students is listed in Table 4-51 above. There are varieties of social networks most students are members of. The main social network sites accessed by students in both academic and social settings are: Instagram, BBM (downloaded on iPad), Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WeChat, Keek and Skype. Of all social networks, Instagram was the most frequently accessed.

4.7.1.2.2 Impact

There are both social and academic implications of using social networks, according to students. Among the positive impacts are gaining academic knowledge and communicating with family members. Most students agree that negative impacts of social networks outweigh the positive ones. Some negative impacts on students of accessing social networks include:

- Addiction.
- Improper Time organization.
- Academic Cheating
- Distraction

Table 4-52: Social Networks Impact @ Campus 2

Social Networks Impact @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
Academic cheating		6	▪ “There was an exam using iPad, so all students were social-networking the solution. All got full marks. It was social networking cheating.”
		6	▪ “Students cheat using all sorts of social networks. I don’t deny it, I cheat. I even taught others how to cheat using iPhone. Instead of studying vocabulary of 10 pages or 360 words, I take a picture of the pages on the iPhone, in the exam, I keep a phone on the table so the teacher thinks I don’t use a phone. But the other phone which has the picture is in my lap, I open it and cheat. And solve. The teacher did not see me. I got full marks” “Is this a trend?” , “Yes, it is a social trend that will not stop.”
Addiction		4	▪ “some use it all the times, get addicted”
Distraction		4	▪ “Distraction “ it distracts your attention “
Time Organization		5	▪ “Yes, my sleeping and studying time. It affects time organization””

Source: Developed for this research

Of particular interest, some students shared their personal stories with social networks, as mentioned in Table 4-52 above. In one instance, a student in FG 5 shared his social-network addiction experience in which he reached a point where his focus and attention outside and inside the classroom was solely on social networks. At the end, he deleted all the social network sites. Some students refer to social network cheating as a new trend that is only growing amongst themselves and their peers. As an example, a student, in FG 5 admitted calmly that he uses social networks to cheat. Not only that, he went on explaining how he

also taught other students how to cheat using Instagram. Some students refer to it as social network cheating. Figure 4-31 shows a depiction of the impact of social networks on students in Campus 2.

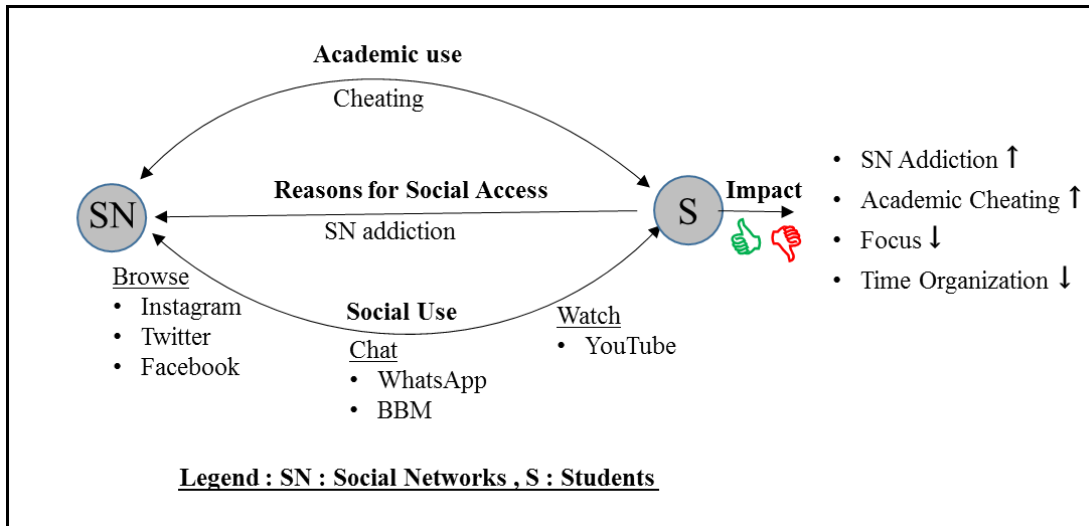


Figure 4-31: Social Networks Description & Impact @ Campus 2

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.1.3 Campus 3

4.7.1.3.1 Description

Students discussed social networks they accessed and their preferred activities when online. Social networks accessed by students include Tumbler, Twitter, Instagram and BBM. Across the focus groups, students gave examples of what activities they engage in on social networks. These activities include: chatting with both male friends and girls, checking pictures on Instagram and also learning new words. Some students refer to boredom as the main reason they would access social networks in the classroom. Student’s descriptions of their encounters with social networks are listed in Table 4-53 below.

Table 4-53: Social Networks Description@ Campus 3

Social Networks @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
social use		7	▪ <i>“What about social networking in class?” “ some..”, “ mostly games...some check Instagram”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“I have friends online, we chat, then I waste my time”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“Mostly chat with girls”</i>
Academic use		9	▪ <i>“Sometimes we look up a word on the net, to know the meaning”</i>
		9	▪ <i>“you can learn from it, check spellings and stuff”</i>
Reason students use it		8	▪ <i>“We use it a lot because we get bored in class”</i>
Social Networks accessed		8	▪ <i>“Even in class, they open social networks and chat. Tumblr, twitter”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“Sometimes I see people putting pictures on Instagram”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.1.3.2 Impact

The impact of social networks on students varied according to groups from minimum in FG 9, to moderate in FG 7 to severe in FG 8. In FG 9, many students think social networks have positive effect on them learning correct spelling of words in English and minimum negative impact because their phones are taken away when they enter the classroom.

Table 4-54: Social Networks Impact @ Campus 3

Social Networks Impact @ Campus 3	FESE Rating	F G	Quote(s)
Addiction		8	▪ <i>“Are there social networks addicts amongst students?” “Oh yes ...”, “Can we say it is a phenomena?” “Yes. It affects their study achievement, and their life even.”</i>
Social Isolation		8	▪ <i>“They stay home, isolated, just at home. Or when they go out with us, they are mentally not with us, only their body”</i>
Distraction		7	▪ <i>“Does it distract your attention?” “ sometimes “</i>
Time Organization		9	▪ <i>“we all feel that sometimes we get into it so much that it leaves little time to do assignment or study”</i>
		8	▪ <i>“this (social network activity) takes me away from studying”</i>
Learning		9	▪ <i>“Positive effect. Sometimes we look up a word on the net, to know the meaning”</i>
		9	▪ <i>“It is positive in the sense you can learn from it, check spellings and stuff”</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4-54 above details the impact of social networks as mentioned by students. For example, in FG 7, some students claim that they access social networks in classroom but it does not have a major impact on them except that it distracts their attention. On the contrary, all students in FG 8 agree and acknowledge that social-networks addiction is a phenomenon amongst students that has affected them negatively both on academic and social levels.

These negative effects include: social isolation, distraction and improper time organization. Figure 4-32 below shows a depiction of the impact of social networks on students in Campus 3.

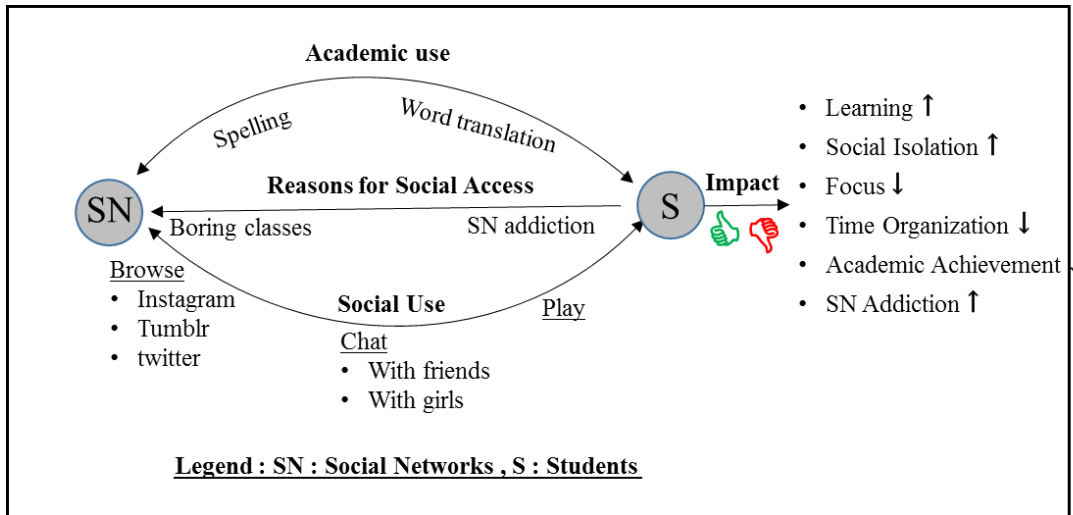


Figure 4-32: Social Networks Description & Impact @ Campus 3

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.1.4 Campus 4

4.7.1.4.1 Description

Most students acknowledged that social networks are not accessed that much in the classroom. The reason behind that is mainly the teacher strictness. In FG 13, when students were asked about their use of social networks in the classroom, they said that they rarely use it.

Table 4-55: Social Networks Description @ Campus 4

Social Networks @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
social use	☹️ 🗑️ 😞	10 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “we play games”, “ I check out new cars”
Reason students use it	☹️ 🗑️ 😞	11 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Sometimes, frankly, I get bored in class, I watch English movies on You Tube during class” “ If I am bored, I go on social networks”
Teacher Policy towards Social Networks access	☹️ 🗑️ 😞	10 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “we don’t access it , our teacher does not allow us, even the phone, she asks us to hide” “ the teacher is very strict, look behind you, he put my phone up”

Source: Developed for this research

As mentioned in Table 4-55 above, when the reason was probed, a student redirected attention towards the board where there was a smart phone on top of the board. He mentioned that the teacher ordered him to put his phone there. This was an example of strict teacher policy, but other students still use social networks in the classroom if the teacher is not very strict. When online, mostly, they chat, play games, check new cars or simply watch YouTube movies. In most cases, students refer to boredom and addiction as the reason behind accessing social networks in the classroom.

4.7.1.4.2 Impact

Across the four focus groups, most students agreed that social network access in the classroom forms a negative trend and distracts their concentration and focus. Most of the students who use social networks in the classroom use it for leisure purposes but a few claim it does not affect them.

Table 4-56: Social Networks Impact @ Campus 4

Social Networks Impact @ Campus 4	FESE Rating	FG	Quote(s)
No Impact	👍 😊 📄 😊	11	▪ <i>"it did not impact me"</i>
Addiction	👍 😊 📄 😊	10	▪ <i>"many students use BBM a lot, it is a trend, a phenomena"</i>
Motivation	👍 😊 📄 😊	13	▪ <i>"I waste a lot of time, I am distracted, I enter another world. I think it is demotivating, I do not know what the teacher said in the class."</i>
Distraction	👍 😊 📄 😊	11	▪ <i>"Does it form a negative trend?" " for sure", " it is negative, it distracts you from concentration"</i>
		13	▪ <i>"I watch you Tube... it distract me a little"</i>
Time Organization	👍 😊 📄 😊	12	▪ <i>"mostly negative...I lose precious study time"</i>
		10	▪ <i>"I, sometimes, forget about time when I am on social networks,</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4-56 above mentions Campus 4 students' quotes on the impact of social networks. Most students were concerned that social network addiction is a trend and it has negative impact on student motivation, concentration and time organization. Figure 4-33 shows a depiction of the impact social networks on students in Campus 4.

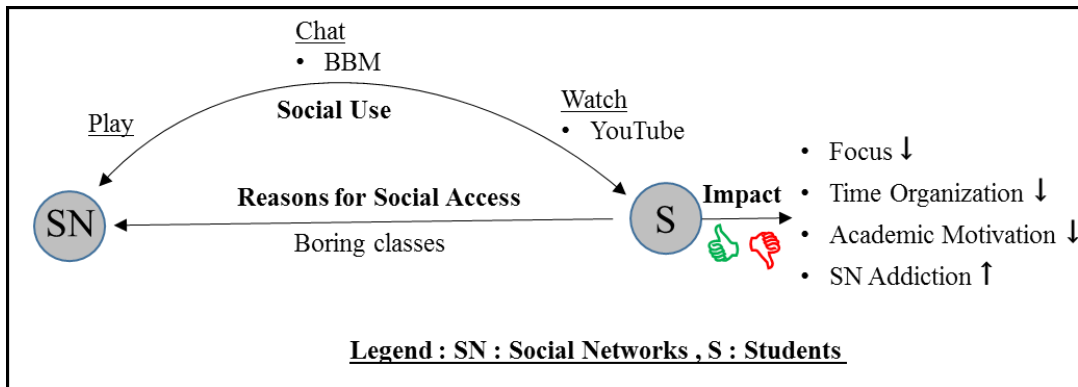


Figure 4-33: Social Networks Description & Impact @ Campus 4

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.2 Student Resilience

Both students in FG 6, considered their bad experience with uncaring teachers as a challenge to prove themselves and achieve higher grades. When asked how their negative encounter with some teachers has affected their morale, one student answered: *“When the doctor is negative, I take it as a challenge, I go home, study more, and try to achieve higher grades”* (FG 6). After a short pause, he continued with a confident voice: *“I study myself, teach myself by myself. In the quizzes my marks are high.”* The other student was nodding his head in agreement and quickly commented: *“I was forced to teach myself, pay more attention, make summary, read the book. I try harder”* (FG 6).

4.7.3 Reading

“In general?”

“Reading ...is weak “ (FG 9)

Across all focus groups, although students’ reading habits were varied, most agreed that reading has become a weak skill. While most students access the Internet for reading, a few of them still use books for reading. Most students, when they look for information, use Google, Wikipedia and social networks. They read printed material only as part of their class reading exercise. Their rationale for not reading books includes:

- Social media have changed their reading habits from books to online.
- Society does not encourage reading
- A person who reads (books) is considered psychologically deficient.

However, there were those who read. They get encouraged by their parents to read, and some have a private library. The impact of reading on those students includes improved

reading and speaking skills. Table 4-57 includes students' quotes, from all four Campuses, on their reading habits, and the impact of reading on them.

Table 4-57: Reading Description & Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Reading @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Online Reading Examples		4	▪ "Electronic news reading "".
		5	▪ "I don't read. Only the internet".
		7	▪ "I read the subtitles of the movie...not books"
		10	▪ " I read on the net only, like Wikipedia",
		10	▪ "I use Google, only to translate
Why Students don't Read Books		11	▪ " online books ""
		1	▪ "I use to read , but now we have internet, the net is easier"
		1	▪ "social networks, you read news as it happens, but newspapers tell you about it a day later"
		6	▪ "In the society there is no encouragement to read. Back in my city they don't read"
		7	▪ "we think that if someone reads a book , he is psychologically messed up"
Why Students Still Read Books		8	▪ "In high school I use to read, now with social networks I don't read at all"
		5	▪ "I love to read, my dad encourages me to read."
Impact of Reading Books		6	▪ "I read. I have a private library"
		3	▪ "We read, it makes us stronger and able to speak better"
		8	▪ "I read stories, science fiction", " Does it have a positive effect on you? ", "It improves my reading skills "

Source: Developed for this research

Figure 4-34 shows students' online and offline reading habits and the impact it has on them.

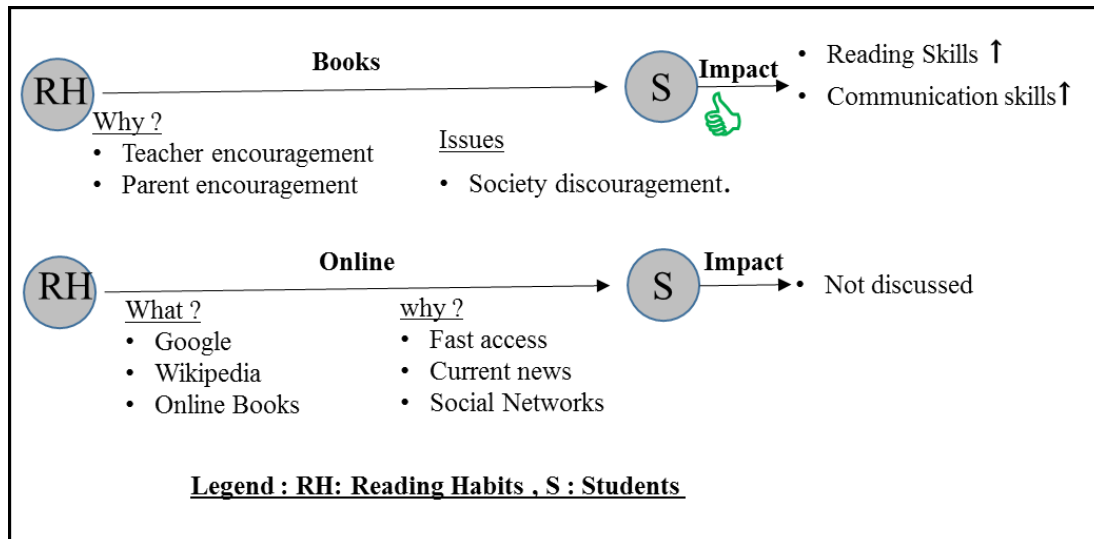


Figure 4-34: Reading Description & Impact @ Campuses 1-4

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.4 Goals

“I want to be famous”, “Anything specific?”, “ No”
(FG 7)

“I want to become an artist, not like Picasso, but game developer”
(FG 8)

In Question 3.2 of the protocol, students were asked if they have set themselves any future goals, specifically career related goals. Probing questions included asking each student what they want to become when they graduate or where they want to work at, how thinking about career goals impacts their motivation and challenging questions for students with uncertain goals.

Table 4-58: Goals Description & Impact@ Campuses 1-4

Goals @ Campuses 1-4	FESE Rating	F G	Sample Quote(s)
Students with Concrete Goals		1	▪ <i>“Career goal is the most important point, because when one is coming to study, first goal is his career goal”.</i>
		2	▪ <i>ADNOC(Oil-company), they want engineers, and it motivates us to study</i>
		5	▪ <i>“I want to study law, to be a lawyer, like my dad “</i>
		6	▪ <i>“I searched the market for a sustainable profession that is always in demand</i>
		6	▪ <i>“I like chemistry, so I searched the market for a scholarship in this field, and I found this scholarship</i>
		8	▪ <i>“I was thinking games for PlayStation and Xbox</i>
		8	▪ <i>“Abu Dhabi investment authority, a place where money is. I want to manage the country investment inside the UAE</i>
Students with no Concrete Goals		11	▪ <i>“I am working now, maybe to be promoted”</i>
		2	▪ <i>“for me , no specific goal, for now only the degree”</i>
		3	▪ <i>“Nothing specific so far now, but later, when I finish foundation, then I will think about it”</i>
		4	▪ <i>“It seems that most of you are not thinking so much about your career goals at the moment?”, “No, only the certificate, the degree.”, “nothing specific”.</i>
Impact on Motivation		7	▪ <i>Right now, we only think about passing the levels “, “guys, what you think?”, “we agree...stage by stage....”</i>
		1	▪ <i>“We entered here, to get a higher degree so that we go to work in the place we choose, for example to be a manager and thinking of it motivates you to study”.</i>
		8	▪ <i>““Does your thinking of your future job, affects your motivation to study?”, “For sure, it is always a motivation for me to study, to do better, most important, high grades will make my career possible, so I always think of it”.</i> ”
		10	▪ <i>“Do you feel that thinking about your career makes you motivated to study?”, “sure yes, it motivates me”, “It boosts my ambition”.</i>
		9	▪ <i>“Do you feel that thinking about your career makes you motivated to study?”, “I think only about the next level...”, “And the rest of you? “, “The same “</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4-58 above lists many of the students’ responses on their future goals and the impact, if any, it has on their motivation. In some focus groups, students did not have clear goals in their mind, such as the case in FG 3, FG 4 and FG 7. On the other hand, students in FG 1, FG 6, FG 8 and FG 10 all had concrete career goals, while students in FG 2, FG 5, FG 9, FG 11 and FG 12 had mixed opinions when it came to their future goals.

Students with concrete career goals chose their future career for various reasons. These reasons included doing market research on needed jobs in the government sector like the oil industry; seeking a career in a subject they love like chemistry or game developing; being inspired by their parents, especially the job of the father and wanting to be like him; and for students who are employed, to be promoted into a better position. Many students relate the concrete goals to having positive impact on their motivation to study and achieve good grades. On the other hand, some students did not have concrete goals. They also explained the reason why, currently, they did not set a future goal. Some of these reasons included that they are focused on the current level, their study, and how to pass their exams, while others just simply did not think about a career goal.

4.7.5 High School Experience

Many students in Campus 2 and Campus 3 talked about their past experience in high school and the impact that experience had on their current academic standing at college. There were two main concerns that students focused on: adaptability from high school environment to college environment and the quality of teaching in high schools. Students complained about their weak English skills as a product of the high school teaching system including teachers and curriculum changes in high school. These two issues and their impact on students were dealt with in two separate sections called adaptability in student practice and high school teachers for clarity purposes.

4.7.5.1 Adaptability in Student Practice

In FG4, students focused on issues of adaptability and practices that were accepted in high school but deemed not suitable for college. In particular, students at high school were used to finding and copying their research assignment from the Internet. Once submitted, they would get full grades. This practice is not treated in the same manner by college standards. At college, doing research in such manner is considered academic cheating and students get a failing mark. As listed in Table 4-59 below, another issue students had was the difference in presentation practice. In high school, students used to send their presentation directly to the teacher and get full marks.

Table 4-59: high school Vs College practices@ Campus 2

Students Practices (High school versus college)		
System/ student practice	High school	College
Education type	Teacher-centric	Student-centric
Presentation in front of students	Not implemented	Required
Research copied from the net	Accepted	Not accepted

Source: Developed for this research

At college, though, they had to present in front of a class full of students, sometimes reaching 60 students. Once at college, students realised that they have to depend on themselves more as they move from a teacher-centric education of high schools to an environment where students are supposed to actually find the information, read, prepare, and write their own words to submit their assignments, research and presentation.

When students were asked about the impact of adapting to college practice they mentioned it was difficult in the beginning but gradually they adapted. They acknowledge the change took time, but it made them more self-sufficient and experienced in finding information on their own. Table 4-60 below shows how student practices changed from high school to college and the impact it had on their motivation.

Table 4-60: Students' Adaptability issues @ Campus 2

Adaptability in Student practice @ Campus 2	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Students Practices High School		4	▪ <i>"Like before, we use to submit a presentation in high school to our teachers and get full marks".</i>
		4	▪ <i>"In high school it was easy, find a research from the net and submit it."</i>
Students Practices At College		4	▪ <i>"Now, we have to present in front of 60 students"</i>
		4	▪ <i>"Here if they find out you took it (research) from the net, you get zero." "</i>
Impact on Students		4	▪ <i>"Here they want you to depend on yourself, they want you to graduate knowing and able, so they let you depend on yourself in finding information"</i>
		4	▪ <i>"I have never done it (presentation in front of other students) before, so you feel shy"</i>
		4	▪ <i>"It was difficult for you in the beginning?"</i> "yes, very much" ▪ <i>"So you got used to it now?"</i> , "yes, now we benefit from it, if you need to find information, you know where to look." ▪ <i>"So your study experience in university started negative, and now it is positive?"</i> , "yes", "sure", "sure".

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.5.2 High School Teachers

Many students acknowledge the fact that they have weak English skills including writing, reading and listening that they acquired in high school. In particular, students have witnessed a change in the high school education curriculum due to education referendum in the region where some of the students from FG 5 graduated. Due to these changes, teachers, according to students, became careless and were passive in teaching.

Table 4-61: perceptions of High School teachers @ Campuses 2-3

High School Teachers @ Campuses 2-3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
From the New System		5	▪ <i>“Another point, it has to do with High school, now the Abu Dhabi education council (ADEC), made a new system, brought foreigners, teachers. They are bad. The ones before them were better”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“In English, now in high school it is a foreigner teacher, they don't teach from a curriculum.”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“Some teachers, under ADEC, they would come, write some sentences on the board, then ask us to write it for the whole period, then they set down, careless, playing on their iPad “</i>
From the Classical System		5	▪ <i>“I am from Fujairah, our teachers were not foreigners, so they explained everything in Arabic, so we became weak, no development in listening, speaking, just understanding”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“Me too, my English level was weak in high school “ “ why do you think it was weak ?”, “ Arabic teachers, they didn't care”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“Mostly from teachers. I was in government school, the Arabic teacher was teaching English in Arabic”</i>
		7	▪ <i>“I was in private school and the teacher and me we were careless”</i>
Impact on Students		4	▪ <i>“In high school, if we were taught properly, we would not have suffered...”</i>
		4	▪ <i>“Entered university, they gave us a test, we ended up all in level one, so now we are moving, but slowly”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“This does not help build your English ability, so you are forced to take foundation courses (at university) in English.”</i>
		5	▪ <i>“We are now weak in speaking, listening, so it takes longer to develop our English skills “</i>
		7	▪ <i>“Our English level in high school was weak, but watching movies and listening to music helped improve my English</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4-61 above shows a comparison between high school teachers from the old system on one hand and those teachers from the new educational system on the other hand and the impact both types of teachers had on students. For example, some teachers, would come and write a sentence on the board, then ask students to repeatedly write the sentence for the whole duration of the class, during which, the teacher is playing on the iPad.

Others note that high school teachers would come to the classroom and either chat or put on a movie for students; no books were used and no learning was acquired. Other students who came from schools using the old educational system also complained about high school teachers' style.

Some students complained that although their English teachers were using a book and teaching them in a classical way, they ended up with weak English skills especially in speaking and listening. They blame those teachers for teaching English in Arabic language. As a result, both types of students end up in low foundation level at the university after taking the entrance exams and have to start from the beginning to build their academic writing, listening and speaking skills. Figure 4-35 shows the issues and impact student had

with their high school teachers from both the old and the new educational system in the UAE.

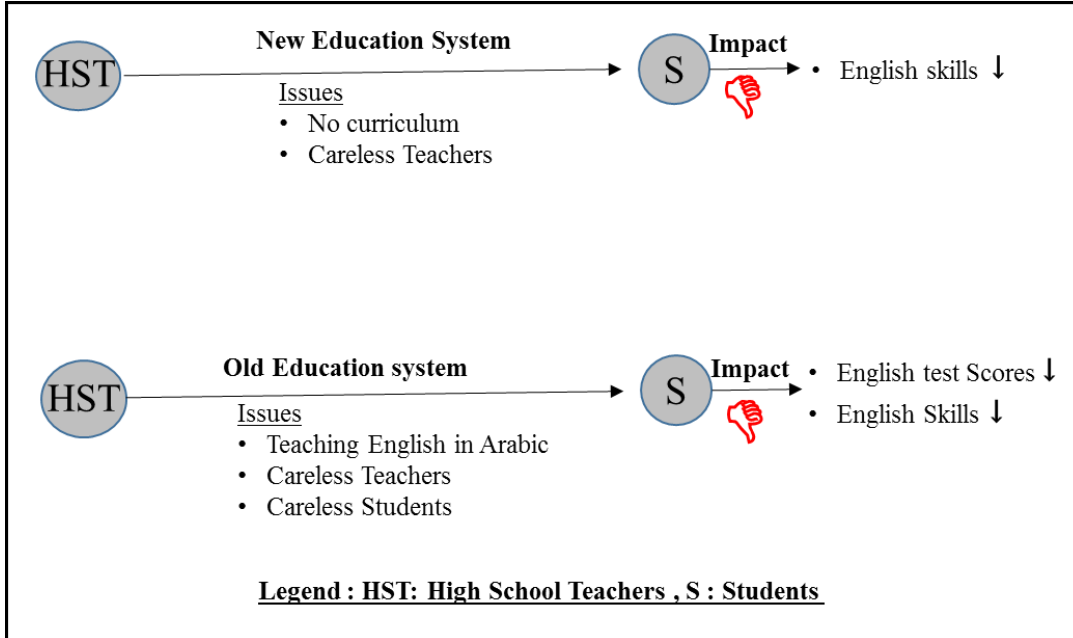




Figure 4-35: Perceptions of High School Teacher @ Campuses 2-3

Source: Developed for this research

4.7.6 Study Enjoyment

In Question 2 of the protocol, students were asked if they enjoyed their studies, as a transition question leading to the main questions of the protocol. Table 4-62 below includes statements on study enjoyment by students from Campuses 1 and 3. Many of the students who responded, were enjoying their studies for different reasons ranging from the caring environment, the friends they make, the skills they acquire or simply enjoying the academic challenges. For some students, they mentioned that they would have enjoyed their experience more if they possessed stronger English language skills.

Table 4-62: Perceptions on Enjoyment @ Campuses 1& 3

Enjoyment @ Campuses 1& 3	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Enjoying		1	▪ <i>"I am enjoying and because studying here especially is better than high school in timing, treatment and education".</i>
		2	▪ <i>"Timing of classes, from 9 to 11 is great compared to what we use to study before in high school that is a positive side".</i>
		2	▪ <i>"We enjoy making friends, but we are not enjoying because of English."</i>
		3	▪ <i>"Frankly I benefited a lot from HCT, my writing, speaking and listening "</i>
		8	▪ <i>"Yes, very much. Frankly, it is more demanding than high school, but we are enjoying it</i>
Not Enjoying		2	▪ <i>"Our English is weak, we need some time to get used to English"</i>
		2	▪ <i>" We are not enjoying because of English"</i>
		9	▪ <i>"They give us a break of 2 hours. If they made it one hour it would have been better. Now, I go home tired, I just want to sleep"</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Other students enjoy the college atmosphere, the care and respect they get from their teachers, and this makes them want to come to college and study. Some students pointed to class timing as a positive factor for their college satisfaction in comparison to high school. Other students enjoy learning English and like their experience in the college. On the other hand one student complained about class breaks duration being too long, finishing school late and having little time to study. Students did not mention any impact of enjoyment on their motivation as it was not expected from them to do so.

4.7.7 Work

Amongst the groups, there were two types of students: employed students (working or on study scholarship), and unemployed students. All students in Campus 1 and 3 do not work, while some students in Campus 2 have, or have applied for a scholarship, and many students in Campus 4 are working. Work, including students on scholarship, was viewed by students has both positive and negative impacts.

A student in FG 5, with a past work experience (currently unemployed), uses education as a motivation to get a degree and a better position. Also, many students across Campus 2 consider a study scholarship as a big motivation for them study. On the other hand there were discussions of the negative impacts associated with work. A student who did not work, in FG3, expressed that unemployed students tend to think about getting a job, and some end up leaving college to start an early career.

Table 4-63: Work Impact @ Campuses 1, 2 & 4

Work Impact @ Campuses 1,2 &4	FESE Rating	FG	Sample Quote(s)
Positive Impact		4	▪ <i>"I am employed by the army... to study IT, so this gives me a push, to study, and finish"</i>
		5	▪ <i>"I was in small position, now if I get my degree I will be in a higher position, this motivates me to study"</i>
		6	▪ <i>"My goal is to get a very high GPA, because I will soon have a scholarship"</i>
Negative Impact		3	▪ <i>"A negative side is the salary, we study, but we get no salary, it affects, students psychological state, and some stop studying, they get a job, you know "</i>
		10	▪ <i>"When we move to general, we start at 2:00 PM, this is difficult. Cause I leave work at 1:30 PM"</i>
		10	▪ <i>"Work pressure....also the time it takes for the foundation program". "Do you know anyone who decided to leave because of this?", "A lot...a lot, a lot, a lot"</i>
		11	▪ <i>"I leave work at 2: PM and come here. I sit in the classroom, tired, exhausted. I cannot concentrate"</i>
		11	▪ <i>"Time. There is no time to study. In the morning I am at work. In the afternoon I am at school."</i>
		11	▪ <i>"Some leave their work late so they come like 10 or 15 minutes after class start, teachers put them down as absent. So if they continue that way they will ultimately be kicked out of college. So , they simply leave"</i>
		12	▪ <i>"It is difficult to adjust to long hours of work and study"</i>

Source: Developed for this research

Table 4-63 above shows impact of work on employed students. For many employed students in Campus 4, they struggle with attendance and time organization. Sometimes they leave work late and are not able to reach the university in time for classes. Most of them are not able to concentrate during the class and feel exhausted and weary by the end of the class. They end up not being able to study in the evening. As a result of not being able to adjust between work and study, some of those employed students leave the university. Figure 4-36 below shows the positive and negative influence of students' job status on their study at Campuses 1, 2 and 4.

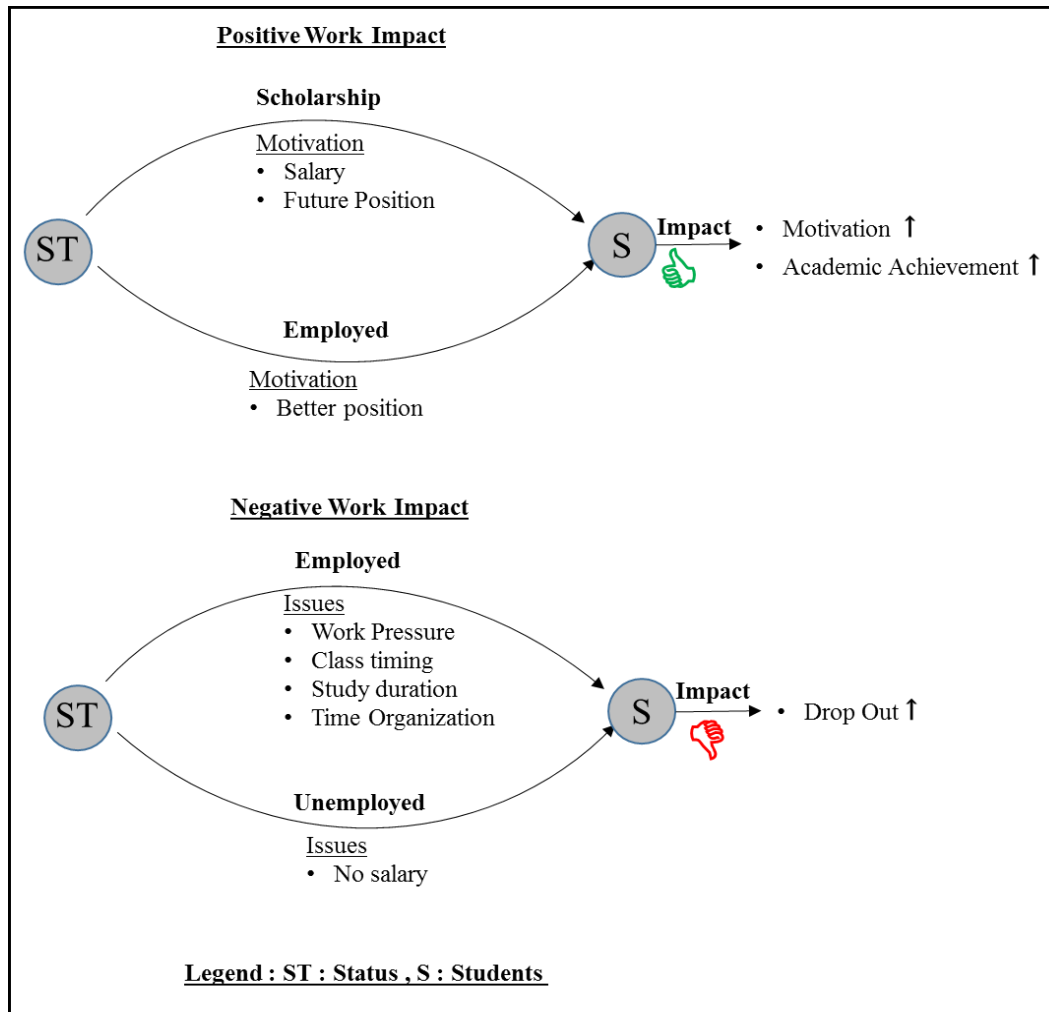


Figure 4-36: Work Description & Impact @ Campuses 1, 2 & 4

Source: Developed for this research

4.8 Chapter Summary

Four groups of themes were identified by students that are related to their study experience. These themes were extracted from thirteen focus groups of first year students in the three government universities within the UAE. Raw data were transcribed then translated from Arabic to English, after which the analysis began by using a long table approach. Iteration of the analysis process helped group the results under Campus, curriculum, social and personal themes.

Students' views and discussions revealed, not only the themes, but their level of impact. Some themes were briefly discussed because their impact or was limited. Such themes include college status, IT support, reading habits, online environment, resilience, and study

enjoyment. As their impact is limited, the aforementioned themes will not be discussed further. Other themes had both positive and negative impacts. These themes include college facilities, curriculum, and high school experience, language of instruction, family, reading and goals. Some themes had more intense impact, especially on students' academic achievement.

These themes, as viewed by students, had direct impact on their failure and their decisions to drop out and start an early career or transfer to other colleges. The list of themes with severe negative impact included physical control measures, study duration, IELTS, non-college friends, social networks, iPad, teachers, administration and work. All themes and their associated impact figures and tables of student quotes were verified through the chapter where applicable. The findings in this chapter have answered the research question and the themes generated will be discussed in the next chapter, discussion of the results.

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5 Chapter 5 Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction to the research in Chapter 1, this study investigated the factors that impact male UAE undergraduates' motivation in their first year of college within the three public higher education institutes in the UAE. There was a need to undertake the current research because of the high dropout rate amongst UAE students in their first year of college; coupled with the fact that research on UAE male undergraduates' perceptions of their motivation in higher education have been limited both in scope and comprehensiveness as shown in the literature review. This lack created a gap that needed to be investigated. This driver has fuelled the current research to focus on students' experiences, views, and perceptions of their motivations, experiences and discussions on their academic quest at college. Carefully designed qualitative descriptive methodology approaches have been deemed suitable to uncover and closely describe these experiences in a non-threatening environment.

Thirteen session interviews were conducted within the three colleges and in four different Campuses. Data was collected in Arabic, translated to English, transcribed and then coded for thematic analysis. A long table approach was adapted as the analysis technique. This manual analysis technique required repeating reading-coding-segmenting data for proper thematic grouping. The resultant themes were divided into four groups for clarity of presentation: Campus related themes including physical control measures, college status, IT support, College facilities; curriculum related themes, including quality of curriculum, IELTS, duration of study, online environment, language of instruction, iPad in the classroom; Social related themes, including teacher, administration, family, friends, and social networks; personal themes, including student resilience, reading habits, goal setting, high school experience, study enjoyment, and work. These groups were then combined under the umbrella of motivational themes of social, personal, curriculum, and Campus

Presentation of the results achieved the goal of answering the research question “*What is the perception of first-year UAE male undergraduates of the factors that impact their motivation at UAE public higher education institutes?*”

The sections of this chapter are organized and presented in a manner similar to that of the results chapter but with a focus on the impact of the findings and the supporting literature. This organization helps with answering the research question in a systemic method. Therefore, the discussion offers a view on the following items:

- The determinants that impact UAE students' motivation with evidence from the literature where applicable, and recommendation on each determinant when appropriate;
- The positive and negative impacts of these determinants;
- Additional or side findings of the research;
- Recommendations for UAE universities administration and instructors in terms of policies, curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment and intervention programs are enclosed at the end of each theme discussion and in the recommendation section;

- The research contribution, for both theory and practice is presented. The implications of the research within the context of UAE male undergraduate motivation is one of the main focal points of the research discussion;
- A discussion of the current research limitations; and
- Suggestions for future research efforts.
- Research conclusion.

5.1 Determinants That Impact Motivation: Social Themes

This research demonstrates that student social belonging impacts the sense of belonging to a tertiary institution. Belonging is a term used to describe the extent to which the student identifies with and feels part of the institution. Important players in student belonging are the family, college and social friends, teachers and school administrators. There are many terms used, sometimes interchangeably, for belonging such as connectedness, attachment, bonding, emotional engagement, and satisfaction (Libbey, 2004). Belonging or connectedness means an environment where students “believe that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals” (Blum, 2005, p. 16). Therefore, caring is a core element of belonging and will be the focus of the findings in this section. This is especially true considering that in the UAE culture personal relations with teachers and administration are deemed an integral part of UAE students’ college experience as they “value personal relationships and human interaction above all else in their education, with one study citing the latter as a motivational factor in the learning process” (Freimuth, 2014, p. 38).

5.1.1 Instructor Care

Students in the current study were almost all in agreement that most instructors were qualified as teachers but differed in teaching style. When asked about which mode of interaction students preferred, most of them expressed that they preferred class interaction, because of the instant feedback, over online interaction which was usually via emails. Students considered that teachers play an important role in their academic outcome. The most important finding was that all students in this study divided instructors into two categories, caring and uncaring instructors. Students used different terms to describe teachers’ care. Terms like ‘style of teaching’ (FG 2), ‘as humans they (teachers) differ’ (FG 6), ‘some are good and some are not’ (FG 11), and direct terms like ‘some teachers care’ (FG 7) and ‘some teachers they don’t care’ (FG 8) were frequently used. When students gave examples, most accounts focused on a teacher’s care. Following is a description of the two categories of instructors and their associated traits, teaching styles, and academic outcomes as mentioned by students in this research.

5.1.1.1 Caring Instructors

In this research, as listed in Table 5-1, all students agreed that caring teachers motivate them, especially when students’ grades are low. Many students recalled that caring teachers also encourage them to study, empower them over their learning, and communicate often

with them. Further, students describe the teaching style of caring teachers as a sign of their care.

Table 5-1: Impact of caring Instructors

		Impact of Caring Instructors			
Area of Impact	Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Care	Teacher cares about students	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Motivation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interaction	Encouragement	✓	✓	✓	
	Empowerment			✓	
	Good communication	✓		✓	
	After class help	✓			
Teaching Style	Wants us to learn	✓			
	Asks about grades		✓	✓	
	Offers help without asking		✓		
	Praise student work		✓	✓	
	Emails assignment to sick students				✓
	Makes a class binder for students				✓
	Improved speaking skills	✓			
Academic outcome	Improved writing skills	✓			
	Improved grades		✓	✓	✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

Examples of positive teaching style included asking students about their grades, offering to help them without being asked, availability after class, emailing sick students with class lectures and assignments and making a binder of class lectures for new students. Also, students noted that caring teachers show their interest in students’ learning and often praise their work in the classroom. As a result of teachers’ care, many students reported improved speaking and writing skills and class grades.

Evidence from the Literature: Caring Instructors

Research has supported the notion that “attitudes the students in the UAE hold towards their teachers can affect their academic performance” (Freimuth, 2014, p. 37). The findings in this study are consistent with recent research findings on the importance of teacher academic and personal caring on student motivation (Cooper & Miness, 2014; Federici & Skaalvik, 2013; Jones, Osborne, Paretto, & Matusovich, 2014; Komarraju, 2013; McGinley & Jones, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013).

Other studies support the current research finding that positive teacher interaction, care, and teaching style are important to students and “correlates positively with academic achievement in reading and English courses” (Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012, p. 629). In their study they found that quality teacher-student interactions “lead to students’ motivation increases for school in general and for reading” (Guthrie et al., 2012, p. 625).

In another example, a study that was conducted on the quality of teaching at a British university in the UAE confirmed that teaching quality contributed to students’ satisfaction

and loyalty (Fernandes, Ross, & Meraj, 2013). In their study, Fernandes et al. (2013) identified that students who were satisfied with their program of study and loyal to the college attributed their satisfaction and loyalty to teachers who were “good at explaining things, were enthusiastic, made the subject interesting and were intellectually stimulating” (Fernandes et al., 2013, p. 623).

According to Jones et al. (2014), academic caring consists of two elements, students’ belief that teachers care about them achieving the course’s objectives, and teachers’ care about the students’ wellbeing. In addition, when testing the MUSIC model (Jones, 2010) of motivation in their research about an early intervention program on undergraduate students, Students’ motivation for the rest of the course increased due to “more support from their instructor” (McGinley & Jones, 2014, p. 161).

Students’ descriptions of positive teacher care are consistent with a learning goal structure where teachers “emphasize understanding, recognize student effort, value improvement, and recognize mistakes as being a natural part of the learning process” (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013, p. 12). As a result of their quantitative survey study of 8971 students’ perceptions of learning goal structure, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2013) found that students related the emotional support from teachers to the increase in their study motivation. In their case study of factors impacting first year undergraduates’ engagement, Groves, Sellars, Smith, and Barber (2015) showed that the most important factor in student engagement was the “quality of student relationships with their teachers” (Groves et al., 2015, p. 27). Research reveals that teachers’ care influences students’ academic outcomes in the sense that “students of the view that their teacher cares for them report learning more” (Zandvliet, den Brok, Mainhard, & van Tartwijk, 2014, p. 9).

5.1.1.2 Uncaring Instructors

Many students described their interaction with uncaring instructors as a negative influence. These interactions, as described in Table 5-2 below, include discouraging attitude, poor communication skills and a tendency to exert pressure on students. Also, some instructors had short tempers and yelled in the class while others were not flexible, not fair to students and sounded boring in class.

Table 5-2: Impact of uncaring Instructors

Impact of uncaring instructors					
Area of Impact	Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Care	Teacher does not care about student	✓		✓	✓
Interaction	Bad communication		✓	✓	
	Discouraging	✓			
	Frustrated and yells	✓			
	Threatens to lower grades		✓		
	Not fair with students		✓		
	Not flexible			✓	
	Pressures students			✓	
	Boring			✓	
Teaching Style	Authoritarian (Arabic teachers)		✓		
	Bad explanation		✓	✓	✓
	Does not answer questions			✓	
	Gives lesson & leaves	✓			
Academic outcome	No class control	✓			
	Only lets certain students answer		✓		
	Low understanding		✓		✓
Other outcomes	Class Failure			✓	✓
	Low student-class participation		✓		
	Low student Morale	✓	✓		
	Students hate teacher & subject		✓		
	Students use email to avoid friction		✓		
	Students feel teacher wants to fail them				✓
	Arabic teachers not qualified		✓		

Source: Developed by the researcher

Another finding was that some students in Campus 2 related teachers’ care to perceived teacher background. They considered teachers from Arabic origins as authoritarian, likely to lower their grades if they attempted to discuss their exam score, and prone to telling students that they should just sit and listen without asking questions in the classroom. Students also described the teaching styles of uncaring instructors negatively, citing their inability to control the classroom, poor explanation techniques and a tendency to read the lecture slides and leave the classroom without explaining them.

Also, some students mentioned that uncaring instructors do not answer students’ inquiries in the classroom and favour certain students to answer their questions without giving other students the chance to participate. As a result, some students felt their instructors did not want them to succeed and others ceased their efforts to participate in the class or limited their interaction with those instructors to emails only, while a few students ended up hating the subject and the teacher. As a result of uncaring instructors’ interactions and teaching style, many students reported low understanding of the class material, while some students said that they failed the class altogether due to the instructor’s lack of care.

Evidence from the Literature: Uncaring Instructors

Within the UAE context Khamis, Dukmak, and Elhoweris (2008) conducted a study on what factors contribute to UAE students' motivation in learning. The result of the quantitative survey showed that 275 participating students of the study related teacher-student interaction to be one of three elements that played a role in their learning motivation. They recommended that UAE Education should explore this factor, and focus more on, "supportive teacher-student relationship" (Khamis et al., 2008, p. 199) to foster positive students' motivation to learn.

Tripathy and Dudani (2013) conducted a student-perception study of college experience on new college intakes of 256 male and female students. In the study, students claimed that although teachers were qualified to be teachers, it was the style of teaching that impacted on them the most. Their discussion revealed that students suffered from authoritarian teachers who "often ridiculed the students" (Tripathy & Dudani, 2013, p. 390). This led male students, in comparison to female students, to report that they were "more stressed, were unable to concentrate well and also felt that there was a lack of any support system" to help them cope with stress (Tripathy & Dudani, 2013, p. 390).

Romi et al. (2011) conducted a cross-cultural study of students' reaction to teacher aggression in the classrooms of three different countries. The researchers found that students had negative ideas about their aggressive teachers and considered their actions, including deliberate embarrassment, unjustified. The study concluded that those actions could lead students to "developing a dislike for teachers, becoming mad at their teachers, fearing teachers' actions, and developing negative self-concepts" (Romi et al., 2011, p. 238). Similar research revealed that when teachers show bad communication signs like yelling and screaming, it resulted in "low student motivation, and harsh judgments" (Kelsey, Kearney, Plax, Allen, & Ritter, 2004, p. 53).

In the current study, uncaring instructors caused some students to dislike the subject, the teacher and coming to class. This effect is a natural response of students and is supported by Hallinan's (2008) research in which students revealed that they end up hating school if they perceive that the teacher shows no sign of respect, praise or care about them.

Recommendation for better Instructors' Care

Using inquiry based learning strategies helps teachers better engage their students as "many teachers found that such strategies increased student enjoyment in learning and yielded more rewarding teacher-student relationships" (Koh & Ho, 2013, p. 79). Needless to say, one remedy to have better instructor-student relations is to follow the practices of positive instructors described by students in previous sections of this research.

Another approach is for instructors to adopt the warm demandingness technique first noted by Kleinfeld (1975) and used for more effective instructor-student relationships in recent research (Dever & Karabenick, 2011; Hatherley-Greene, 2012; Thomas, 2011). This technique distinguished effective teachers by two measures: their ability to form "a climate of emotional warmth" (Kleinfeld, 1975, p. 318) ; and only after that "demand a high level of academic work" (Kleinfeld, 1975, p. 326).

Hatherley-Greene (2014) described the journey of a UAE male student over the course of his first year at the foundation program in a rural federal college. The student experienced a transition or border crossing from a dominant Arabic culture in high school to a dominant western culture at the college foundation program. The researcher noticed that “students who are already pre-disposed to leaving college may quickly reach their individual ‘tipping points’ due to failure to bond with their peer group, their teachers, and the college” (Hatherley-Greene, 2014, p. 16). The research concluded that instructor care and use of the warm demandingness technique “positively impact both the student and faculty classroom experience” (Hatherley-Greene, 2014, p. 1) and help the “social integration of students into college life” (Hatherley-Greene, 2014, p. 16). Indeed, research confirms that students who are exposed to positive teacher interactions such as “rewarding, encouraging participation in class, and providing emotional support, had higher levels of motivation to learn” (Khamis et al., 2008, p. 198).

5.1.2 Administration Care

The term the students used when talking about administration that is closely related to motivation was ‘care’. Care is a factor that impacts motivation. Terms like ‘they don’t care about us’ (FG 10), ‘They care only about rules’ (FG 9), “Administration only cares about absence and warning” (FG 8) were mentioned when students were asked how they feel about administration at their Campus. A review of the data revealed that students in Campuses 1, 3 and 4 described administration as uncaring while students at Campus 2 considered administration to be caring. Students did not mention the word motivation explicitly, but they have mentioned the word ‘morale’ when talking about administration. A student, in his description of administration impact, said: ‘my morale is down this year’ (FG 8). Morale is an expansive conceptualization of motivation; it is “an extension of the concept motivation which also includes attitudes and feelings” (Steyn, 2002, p. 86). Following is a discussion of both types of administration.

5.1.2.1 Caring Administration

In some Campuses, as shown in Table 5-3 below, students have expressed that administration care has been mostly limited to being reactive when issues arise rather than being proactive by building a closer relationship with students. Examples include calling students when they are absent, or sending letters to them when they get low grades, and resolving on Campus conflicts. Students at Campus 2 gave examples of actions of caring administration through weekly meetings and having lunch with them.

Table 5-3: Impact of Caring Administration

Impact of Caring Administration					
Area of Impact	Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Care	Administration care about student		✓		
Interaction	Lunch with students		✓		
	Weekly meetings		✓		
Support	Provide help when students have problems		✓	✓	
	Financial help by Social affair officer	✓			

Source: Developed by the researcher

At Campuses 1 and 2, although students did not discuss the impact of administration care on them, and although in general they considered administration as ‘caring’ they tried to avoid communicating with them. Their main contact was with the teachers when they had any administration requests.

5.1.2.2 Uncaring Administration

Administration-student interaction was criticised by students for lack of communication and class-visits from the administration, even in Campus 2 where the administration was considered caring. As shown in Table 5-4 below, most criticism came from students at Campuses 3 and 4, while students at Campuses 1 and 2 did not discuss the impact administration had on them or their academic outcomes.

Students at Campuses 3 and 4 were upset over their inability to meet with the chancellor on numerous occasion to solve their issues. As shown in Table 5-4 below Administration support was also criticized heavily in Campuses 3 and 4. Students complained about administration control of Campus access, class timings, absence and grades laws, and car park location. Students felt disrespected, under pressure and controlled. Male students felt that female students were preferred over them, which made them uncomfortable coming to college. Students at Campuses 1 and 2 adopted an avoidance relationship with the administration, while students at Campuses 3 and 4 not only avoided but also feared contacting the administration.

Table 5-4: Impact of Uncaring Administration

Impact of Uncaring Administration					
Area of Impact	Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Care	Administration does not care about students	✓		✓	✓
Interaction	Limited communication (absence, grades)	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Not visiting students in class	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Students can't meet chancellor			✓	✓
Support	Attendance policy implementation issues			✓	✓
	Strict access measures (Doors, times)			✓	
	Weak support for employed students				✓
	Relocating student car park far away			✓	
	Dismissal of student medical excuse			✓	
Impact on students	Rigid class schedules			✓	
	Don't feel relaxed coming to Campus			✓	
	Fear/avoid/don't contact administration		✓		✓
	Feel pressured/ lack of respect/controlled				✓
	Problems at work for employed students				✓
Academic outcome	Administration prefers female students			✓	
	Repeating the course			✓	
	Students intend to leave				✓
	Student drop out/ Transfer to other colleges			✓	✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

For employed students, administration support was weak in terms of changing class timings to suit their work demands or giving them required letters for the workplace, which caused them problems at their jobs. The impact of uncaring administration extended to academic output, where students felt disconnected from the college environment and that contributed to their lower motivation to study, academic failure, intentions to drop out, and transfer to other universities.

Evidence from the literature

Students at Campuses 3 and 4 complained about strict physical control measures as a result of strict, controlling administration. One explanation of administration's stricter control at Campuses 3 & 4 was that Campuses 1 and 2 were male-only Campuses, while Campuses 3 and 4 were mixed gender Campuses. Although Campuses 3 and 4 had male and female students, physical classes and food courts were separate for the genders. In a conservative culture like the UAE, college administration exerted more access rules in the latter Campuses to maintain separation of the genders at all times and all locations such as entry gates, car parking, door access, and sport centre access times. From the male students' point of view, this had led to administration giving female students better access hours, closer parking locations, and more space to roam in the Campus than male students. In fact, one student clearly stated this point of view at FG 9 by saying "they prefer girls over us".

Student-administration relationships impacted the students' sense of belonging or connectedness to the school (Libbey, 2004). Constructs of school connectedness include

respect, fairness, caring, warmth, belonging, and support for autonomy (Mcneely, 2013). Students' considered that school administration showed lack of respect and fairness, and uncaring practices that made student-administration relationships unsupportive and made them feel disconnected from their college community. This negative association impacted students' academic engagement and motivation.

Literature indicates that student-school disconnection has a negative impact on attendance, grades, and wellbeing, and is related to increased student drop out from school (Allen & Wolfe, 2010; Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009; Barrett, 2014; Peguero & Bracy, 2014; Saathoff, 2014; Wang & Holcombe, 2010; Wang & Fredricks, 2014). Blum (2005) suggested that weaker school connectedness has a role in increasing student absenteeism and decreasing school completion rate. Allen et al. (2008) studied, amongst other variables, the impact of student connectedness on 14,464 students in their third year of study at 48 colleges. Their results showed that connectedness was both directly and indirectly related to students' retention, transfer and drop out.

In his research on institutional characteristics and student dropout rate, Chen (2012) investigated which type of colleges have the lowest dropout rate. The result indicated that "what institutions do affects student outcomes more than what those institutions are" (Chen, 2012, p. 501) as students in the study were more concerned by what services were offered to them from faculty and administration than the status of the college itself.

The current research showed that students thought that stricter policies in attendance and time and location limitations on them were imposed by the college administration and had contributed to their dislike of the college environment, an issue further complicated by poor lines of communication with male students. College policies and communication with students is part of the services higher education institutions offer to students, and thus students, as confirmed in Chen's (2012) research, grew distant as a consequence of the actions of the administration towards them. The result at hand also fills a gap into research that Chen (2012) identified, namely what institutional characteristics and administration culture influence students' college experience.

Recommendation for better Administration-to-student communication

In his research on student-university relationships, McCulloch (2009) points out that a good relationships between students and faculty, including administration, is important as it can "result in a type of motivation and a set of strategies to generate learning outcomes" (McCulloch, 2009, p. 179). Technology can be used by administration to foster better student engagement and motivation. Currently, this technology has only been utilized by administration in the form of one-way emails to inform students about their grades and absence. The challenge of the technology divide between students and administration provides an explanation of the current use of social media networks, on the part of administration as a one-way communication means for information purposes (Davis, Deil-Amen, Rios-Aguilar, & Gonzalez Canche, 2012). The Administration can utilise social media to become closer to students and increase their connectedness and belonging to

college. This can be accomplished by using social networks, not only as educational platforms but also in other fields such as student support, community building and expanding connections (Davis et al., 2012). Table 5-5 details the practices that 226 colleges in the US see as advantages of social networks that administrations should apply in order to make students have a better Campus experience and bond.

Table 5-5: Administration use of Social Networks in College

Administrative use of Social Networks in College		
Student support	Community building	Expanding connections
Provide student support	Build and strengthen Campus community	Connect students with alumni
Offer workshops on financial aid	Increase sense of belonging for students taking online courses	Conduct outreach to community
Resolve issues and allow students and the community to provide feedback to the college	Actively encourage and facilitate student involvement and participation in activities	
Offer orientation	Invite participation in Campus-wide blogs (i.e., student blogs, president's blog,).	
Provide mentoring to students		
Help to navigate the registration process		
Aid in improving student retention		

Source: (Davis et al., 2012)

There are several important suggestions that college administration can use for more intimate administration-student relationships, for example: personal interactions with students (Schmitt, Duggan, Williams, & McMillan, 2014), academic support for all students (DeShields Jr, Kara, & Kaynak, 2005; Mcneely, 2013), supporting teachers to support their students (Blum, 2005), and fair and collectively agreed upon college policies (Blum & Libbey, 2004). Scales that measure students' sense of college community in relation to their attitude and motivation (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995) can be used to determine students' relationship with college administration and teachers.

In their qualitative multi-case study of staff-student interaction in a large college with 6 Campuses, Schmitt et al. (2014) concluded that administration support to students had contributed to their academic success. Their study presented evidence that college staff care in "maintaining personal interactions [was] essential to student success, especially in an increasingly technological world" (Schmitt et al., 2014, p. 109).

5.1.3 Family Support

Most students agreed that family support was mainly positive towards their studies. In addition, most students agreed that the father was the most important family figure that played a role in their achievement. However, students gave rare examples of others who

left because of increased family responsibilities. In this study, there are three main sub-findings under the family theme which include the following:

- In rare cases increased family responsibilities led students to drop out of college.
- In most cases, the family role was positive in encouraging and supporting students in their studies, college choice and resilience.
- Male students see the father as a mentor and a role model for their motivation and study aspirations.

Evidence from the literature

Prior research reveals that both family support and family responsibilities do impact college student motivation, persistence and dropout rates (Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, McKeown, & Zaabi, 2015; Dennis et al., 2005; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005; Leppel, 2002; Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996). In their longitudinal study of personal motivational characteristics and environmental social supports impact on college outcome of 100 students, Dennis, Phinney and Chuateco (2005) showed that family support, as part of personal motivation, was related to college outcomes. Specifically, lack of family support was related to “lower college GPA, adjustment, and commitment” (Dennis et al., 2005, p. 233). Furthermore, parental support had a positive impact on students’ perceived control and competence, school-connectedness and internalization of educational values (Gonzalez-DeHass et al., 2005). In their study on student persistence in college, Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn and Pascarella found that family responsibilities was one of two main factors that had “the biggest detrimental effects on drop out behaviour” (Nora et al., 1996, p. 427) amongst students.

In a study by Brannan, Biswas-Diener, Mohr, Mortazavi, and Stein (2013), a student wellbeing survey was administered to 317 students from two Middle Eastern countries: Iran and Jordan, who share a similar collectivist society with the UAE. The measurement was focused on the relationship between social support and student subjective well-being, including life satisfaction and moods. Their results showed a strong link between social support and student well-being where “family support not only increased life satisfaction but also bolstered positive mood and alleviated negative moods” (Brannan et al., 2013, p. 71).

Within the UAE context, a recent study was conducted by Daleure et al. (2015) to better understand influences, engagement and support of UAE families towards their siblings’ college education. The study surveyed the opinions of 1173 male and female students and 30 parents using a 4 point Likert scale. The study found that family engagement differs between male and female students. Another finding was that although families had good intentions to support their children at college, “parents did not necessarily understand the commitment of time and effort needed to succeed” (Daleure et al., 2015, p. 77). This in turn might be an explanation of current research findings of some families placing increased responsibilities on their male college students.

Researchers have studied the impact of being married, as a family responsibility, on college students. Although married students have more responsibilities, Thomas, Raynor, and Al-Marzooqi (2012) in their survey of 3676 UAE students of Campuses 3 and 4 pointed out that married students, both females and males, outperform unmarried students. The study concludes that married students, although burdened with more responsibilities, were more organized and mature in comparison to their unmarried peers. Since the participants of this research are mostly unmarried students, further research on single-students' maturity and time-organization could explain why some students dropped out of college when faced with increased family responsibilities.

Although the father is seen to be more influential on the male students in this study, another study, conducted by Ausman et al. (2013) on social influences on career choice of males and females in a UAE college, indicated that “mothers are identified as being more influential than fathers in the choice of institution, and this was found to be higher for both male and female students” (2013, p. 15). One reason to explain this contradiction is that most parents of the Ausman et al. (2013) study were from southeast Asia, where the mother has a higher stature in the family compared to the UAE culture of the current study where the father has a more dominant role in the family structure (Daleure, G. et al., 2015)

5.1.4 Friends' Support

The findings under this theme are related to two types of friends: college friends and non-college friends. The findings about impact of friends in academic settings and friends in social settings are discussed hereafter.

5.1.5 College Friends

Most students expressed their preference for in class interaction over online interaction with their college friends. Students feel that college friends play both positive and negative roles for them. Most students' friends at college are class room friends. Table 5-6 lists the positive and negative impacts college friends have on students.

Table 5-6: Impact of College Friends

Impact of College Friends						
Interaction Type	Interaction	Area of Impact	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Positive	Collaboration	Assignment	✓	✓		
	Encouragement	Motivation Exam preparation		✓	✓	
Negative	Playing	Time management		✓		
	Student distraction	Class room management	✓			
	Cheating	Academic integrity		✓		
	Chatting	Distraction in the class				✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

Examples of positive interactions included online collaboration between students and their classmates through social networks like Twitter to solve assignments and share lecture slides. This has had a positive impact on their motivation and academic achievement. Also, some students who passed IELTS played a mentor role with others, encouraging them to study and practise for IELTS.

On the other hand, negative interactions include online chatting with college friends through social networks like BBM on their phones. This has had a negative impact on students' focus in the classroom. Also, some students admitted to online cheating with college friends through social networks like Instagram. This had a negative impact on students' academic standing and could lead to academic dishonesty. Further, some students distract lecturers making other students and the lecturer angry. This has a negative impact on students' focus and class management. And finally, in dormitory-college settings, some students suffered from roommate distractions and pressure to play and not study. This had a negative impact on their study schedule.

Evidence from the literature

Student-student interaction was considered to have “central influences in students' learning outcomes” (McCulloch, 2009, p. 179). In the current research, the occurrences of positive student-student interaction played an important role in student learning as “constructive student-student relationships contribute to the achievement of educational goals” (Johnson, 1981, p. 5). Students mentioned that they collaborate with college friends and sometimes are mentored by high achievement students to prepare for the IELTS exam. Those high-achievers motivated their peers to success as noted by Johnson's (1981) study which stated that “interaction with academically motivated peers can significantly increase achievement” (1981, p. 6).

Research confirms that positive student-student interactions fostered cohort learning communities (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014; Rawls & Hammons, 2015), help students overcome academic problems (Dennis et al., 2005), and lead to better learning (Blaschke, 2014; Sher, 2009), and student engagement (Hew, 2015; Prestridge, 2014). This results in “positive academic and social outcomes ... both in the short and long term” (Carroll, Houghton, & Lynn, 2014, p. 70)

The literature supports the notion that Twitter is used not only as a communication tool but also as an effective collaboration medium for class discussion (Scheg, 2015). Prestridge (2014) conducted a qualitative study on interaction types that students utilise using Twitter. Studying the tweets of 180 students in a 13 week-course, she found that student-student communication was important to enable them to “share ideas and opinions, build a sense of community, reflect and speak informally ... These types of practices indicate social, emotional and academic engagements” (Prestridge, 2014, p. 12).

This research highlighted that behaviour from peers in the classroom demonstrated a lack of respect to teachers, and causes other students to lose focus. Evidence from research conducted on drop out students within the UAE shows that this behaviour interrupts

learning in the classroom (Ridge et al., 2013b). Moreover, students “who perceived other classmates as disruptive were 1.34 times less likely to drop out than those who had not indicated these concerns” (Ridge et al., 2013b, p. 29). This is probably true in the current research since students who remarked that other peers were disruptive did not mention their intention to drop out or the impact on their academic outcome. It could be that focused and motivated students are more likely to notice disruptive behaviour and that the impact of this behaviour is not obvious. For example, the dropout rate of these students might be lower still in a less disruptive environment and their grades could be impacted. It is also possible that motivation and resilience act in concert, resulting in resistance to classroom disruptions.

On the other hand, some student-student interactions are unambiguously negative, as seen in the current research finding. For instance, research supports the finding that students’ use of mobile devices, to chat with their friends, impacts fellow students’ focus in the classroom (Duncan, Hoekstra, & Wilcox, 2012). Duncan et al. (2012) conducted a mixed method study on 394 students consisting of survey, interview, and observation to measure the impact of digital devices such as phones, laptops and iPads on students’ attitude and learning. Their study confirms that 75% of students use mobile devices in the classroom for activities other than learning and 34% of students complained about this behaviour labelling it a distraction to their focus on the lecture (Duncan et al., 2012).

Teachers also agreed with the current findings that some students’ actions in the classroom, using mobile devices, have a negative impact on other students. For example, Thomas, K. et al. (2014) surveyed the perception of 1,121 teachers on how they thought students use mobile devices in the classroom. Their result showed that the majority of teachers identified negative students’ use of mobile devices in “cheating, access to inappropriate information on the Internet, cyberbullying, and disruptions” (Thomas et al., 2014, p. 373).

The literature suggested that students in collective societies feel a social obligation to help their peers cheat during exams (Błachnio & Weremko, 2011; Thomas, Raynor, & McKinnon, 2014; Williams, Tanner, Beard, & Chacko, 2014). Students in the current research did not only speak about helping each other cheat, but they expressed it in a proud manner as if it was a sign of being loyal to their friends. This finding is supported in research by Craig and Dalton (2014) who found that although UAE students come from a reserved culture “living in a society which openly states its strong religious heritage, [they] did not seem to have any perceptions of cheating as unethical” (Craig & Dalton, 2014, p. 61). This is further evident of the experience of first year UAE male students in college where students “stated emphatically that supporting their friends is more important than college rules” (Hatherley-Greene, 2012, p. 167).

Williams et al. (2014) conducted comparison-survey research on the differences in perceptions of academic misconduct amongst 164 students from the collectivist culture of the UAE and 345 students from the individualist culture of the U.S. and showed that UAE students were more open about academic misconduct than their U.S counterparts with 71%

of the UAE students admitting to cheating and helping someone else cheat on a test. Their result confirms the current research finding and explains that for UAE students, being from a collectivist society, “collaborative cheating such as copying from others with mutual agreement occurs more frequently than in individualistic societies” (Williams et al., 2014, p. 69).

Recommendation

Class management techniques will help minimize students distracting others in the classroom. Well defined policies on inappropriate use of mobile devices, such as chatting or cheating, and their consequences should be an integral part of such policies (Thomas, K. et al., 2014). Next, proper enforcement of such policies by instructors and administration is important to ensure an “effective learning environment for all students” (Tindell & Bohlander, 2012, p. 7).

An Oral examination is suggested as an alternative to written examination to help minimize cheating using mobile devices and academic dishonesty in collectivist societies such as the UAE (Thomas, J. et al., 2014). In their study on UAE students, Thomas, J. et al. (2014) reported that students were more satisfied and relieved by oral examination while higher levels of academic integrity were maintained than in written examinations. The authors contended in their conclusion that “oral assessment can help validate the originality of student work, whilst simultaneously facilitating assessment in a mode highly resonant with the region’s own educational traditions and collectivist cultural norms” (Thomas, J. et al., 2014, p. 533).

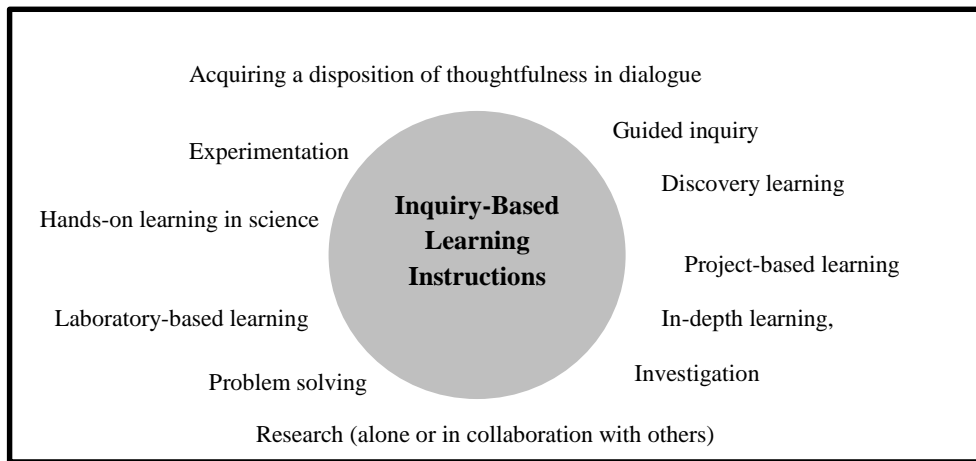


Figure 5-1: Inquiry-Based Learning and Affiliated Instructions

Source: (Koh & Ho, 2013)

Another approach to minimize cheating is to adapt inquiry based learning, as shown in Figure 5-1 above. There are 11 types of instruction related to different disciplines like math, science and social studies that are affiliated with inquiry-based-learning. In a study on

classes utilizing inquiry based learning in a UAE college, students from those classes were found to be more focused on “documenting process and findings than with the memorisation of content and students report being far more engaged than in the traditional methods” (Craig & Dalton, 2014, p. 65).

5.1.5.1 Non-College Friends

Students in Campuses 1, 3 and 4 mostly have non-college friends who largely exert a negative influence. Students in Campus 2 tend to have supportive friends. Table 5-7 lists the positive and negative impacts of non-college friends on students.

Table 5-7: Impact of Non-College Friends

Impact of Non College Friends						
Interaction Type	Interaction	Area of Impact	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Positive	Encouragement & Mentoring	Persistence Exam Preparation	✓	✓		
Negative	Discouragement Social activities	Drop out/ Transfer Time Management	✓ ✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

As an example of positive impacts on motivation, students mentioned that some of their non-college friends, who also happen to be graduates of the same college, encouraged them to stay and get a degree. Some friends even volunteered to become mentors to students with advice and assistance in their studies. This has helped their persistence and gave them good strategies to prepare for IELTS.

On the other hand, discouragement is an example of negative impact of non-college friends which impacts many students in all Campuses. One source of discouragement was friends who were working in the military or police who pressure students to drop out and start an early career. Another source of discouragement was friends who are students at other Campuses pressuring students to transfer to their colleges claiming it is easier and takes less time to graduate or required a lower IELTS score to start college courses.

Social pressure increased when the student failed, or does not get the required IELTS score, or studies in a college where the study duration is considered long compared to other colleges. Some students have dropped out of college or transferred to other colleges because of the pressure of these two groups of social friends. The second form of negative impact is that some non-college friends who are unemployed pressure students to go out and stay out late. This has negative impact on students’ time management which results in issues in attendance, focus in the classroom and study schedule.

Evidence from the literature

UAE students in this study clearly identified the impact of their non-college friends on their decisions to drop out of college. The current finding about the negative influence of non-

college friends adds new insights since most research on friends' impact does not include different types of friends, mostly concentrating on college friends. However, Schneider and Ward (2003) did relate positive or negative friends' support to students to the type of friends they have.

Their findings are consistent with the current research findings. Students are exposed to streams of often contradictory advice from various types of friends. On the one hand, friends from other colleges push students to drop out and transfer to their colleges, while employed friends who are college drop outs advise them to quit college and work. On the other hand, employed friends who are college graduates do support students completing their studies and sometimes act as mentors or private tutors to them if they were graduates from the same college.

These mixed messages increased in intensity when students failed their classes or the IELTS exam, which could lead students, depending on what advice is given at the time, to drop out. This built up pressure from non-college social peers is also acknowledged in other research. For example, Crockett al. (2007) conducted a study on 148 students in an American college to measure students stress and the role of social support in their coping. The study concluded that "support from friends may increase anxiety if friends espouse perspectives that heighten cultural conflicts or other kinds of distress" (Crockett et al., 2007, p. 353). In another example, Brannan et al. (2013) found that perceived social support of friends was deemed to have negative impact on a sample of 151 students, 51% of them males, from Iran, a similar collectivist society to the UAE. Friends from social settings did not contribute to students' well-being, in particular their mood to study.

5.2 Determinants That Impact Motivation: Curriculum Themes

For many students, the curriculum itself was a de-motivator rather than a motivator. Following is a discussion summary of curriculum quality, including IELTS, duration of study, language of instruction and its impact on students.

5.2.1 Quality of Curriculum

Students differed in how they saw the curriculum link to the real world and future career but mostly agreed that most of the material was a repetition from high school. Table 5-8 below demonstrates their views regarding curriculum, exposing areas of weakness in instructional design.

Table 5-8: Impact of Curriculum

		Impact of Curriculum			
	Area of Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Positive View	Curriculum is linked to real world	✓		✓	✓
	Curriculum is linked to future career	✓		✓	
Negative View	Curriculum is repeated from high school	✓	✓	✓	
	Curriculum is not linked to real world			✓	✓
	Curriculum is not linked to future career		✓		
	Some subjects not related to my degree		✓	✓	
	Electronic books not clear	✓			
	Printed books old/ not clear		✓		
	Foundation grades not part of GPA		✓		
	There is no technical training			✓	
Foundation passing requirement too high	✓				
Positive Impact	English language skills improving	✓		✓	
Negative Impact	Student Morale is down		✓		
	Lowered Motivation to study		✓		
	Carelessness in class		✓		
	Causes boredom			✓	
	Minimum effort to pass the course			✓	

Source: Developed by the researcher

Because of this repetition, some students got bored in class. Others complained that foundation subjects were not related to their college degree and that the foundation does not count towards student GPA. This results in lower morale, lower motivation to study, and carelessness in the class, and made some students exert only minimum efforts to pass or sometimes give up because of high criteria to pass which can reach 70%. Further, some complained about quality of both printed and electronic material, while others complained about lack of technical training.

Evidence from the literature

One published study employed a number of pre and post lesson interviews with teachers and students to understand both groups of participants’ perceptions on the impact of teacher curriculum on student learning and motivation (Shawer et al., 2012). Their research involved two different curriculum approaches by teachers: a transmitter approach where teachers only delivered the material as the text book, and an adaptive approach where teachers developed and adjusted their curriculum. Students were dissatisfied with the transmitter approach and showed signs, similar to the current research participants, of class indifference and inattention. This led the researchers to conclude that “curriculum-transmission rarely resulted in significant student learning or motivation in those subjects” (Shawer et al., 2012, p. 20). This conclusion supports the finding of this research that current curriculum design had in effect lowered student morale and motivation to learn.

Other research has also confirmed similar impact of low quality curriculum design on student motivation (Al-Qatawneh, 2012). A comparison study between two groups of Arabic students in which one group was exposed to Concept Based Instruction (CBI) and

a second group was taught using a traditional curriculum design was conducted by Al-Qatawneh (2012). The aim was to compare the impact of the two different approaches to curriculum design on student motivation in each group. The researcher found that students exposed to traditional curriculum had lower learning motivation because “motivation correlates positively and inversely with curriculum and instruction design; ill-designed curriculum and instruction lower learners' engagement in the course of study” (Al-Qatawneh, 2012, p. 6).

Research also supported the current finding that students who view curriculum as related to their future career show more learning improvements than those who do not (Orthner, Jones-Sanpei, Akos, & Rose, 2013). In their research, Orthner et al. (2013) conducted a three-year longitudinal study of the impact of a career-relevant curriculum on 3,493 students' engagement and school valuing. Students who were exposed to future career related curriculum had better engagement and value for school than those who were exposed to controlled non-career related curriculum (Orthner et al., 2013). Their results confirmed that students showed more interest in learning and considered “school as having more value when class content is provided in the context of information that the student values or considers relevant for future benefits and choices” (Orthner et al., 2013, p. 35). Other research from the UAE supported this claim where students demand that “new teaching strategies ought to include ‘inspiring’ pedagogical approaches which, in order to have effect, ought to be discussed with the students concerned” (Aboudan, 2011, p. 174).

5.2.2 IELTS

Students in Campus 2 had mixed views on IELTS. On one hand, some students who attended the Campus learning centre after hours felt their English skills improved and passed IELTS with the required score. On the other hand, some students were not able to pass IELTS. In the other Campuses negative views of IELTS were present as listed in Table 5-9 below

Table 5-9: Impact of IELTS

		Impact of IELTS			
	Area of Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Positive View	Learning centre improved student English		✓		
Negative View	IELTS not introduced early in curriculum	✓	✓		
	IELTS is not free.	✓			
	Cannot enter college without required IELTS			✓	
	Negative admin view of student ability			✓	
	Extra English test required to college				✓
	College has higher IELTS requirement than others		✓	✓	
Positive Impact	Learning centre helped student pass IELTS		✓		
Negative Impact	Student Morale is down	✓	✓	✓	
	Student Intend to leave		✓	✓	✓
	Drop out	✓	✓		

Source: Developed by the researcher

Those views included concern about the late introduction of IELTS in the curriculum and the fact that IELTS costs money, hindering student ability to take it more than once. Also, some students complained about IELTS being a requirement to enter college, and that sometimes college gives students an extra challenge test that maybe harder than IELTS, even if they get the required IELTS score. Some students also complained that administration doubt their ability to pass IELTS, while others remarked that their college requires higher IELTS than other universities. Most students felt that the IELTS requirements were detrimental to morale, and some expressed their intention to move to colleges with a lower IELTS requirement, while others mentioned that some students, due to their inability to get the required IELTS score, had already dropped out of college.

Evidence from the literature

On a positive note, students who used the writing centre more frequently in Campus 2 were able to pass IELTS. This finding is supported by Al Murshidi and Al Abd (2014). Their study used a mixed method technique to uncover the awareness of a sample of 50 students about using the college's writing centre effectively. Only 24% of students were able to use the writing centre effectively utilizing its offerings of "regular writing workshops and ... practice materials for all foundation writing courses, ESP and the IELTS writing exam" (Al Murshidi & Al Abd, 2014, p. 58).

The authors found that the majority of students were not able to use the writing centre effectively and an overwhelming "76% of students stated that the role of the writing centre is to edit their assignments" (Al Murshidi & Al Abd, 2014, p. 58). This result explained why in the current research many students at Campus 2 were not able to pass IELTS and ended up dropping out while a few others, who used the writing centre regularly in an effective manner, passed IELTS.

Aboudan (2011) conducted a research study on 250 UAE college students' perceptions of the factors that led to their underperformance on IELTS. In her study, students' complained that not having enough time to develop their IELTS skills was the "most frequently mentioned problem, and many students said they would like a longer span of time to enable them to practice more effectively on IELTS requirements" (Aboudan, 2011, p. 173). This finding resonated with the current research finding where students complained that IELTS was not introduced earlier in the curriculum, which had negative impact on their test preparation.

Other studies on UAE colleges criticised the curriculum not only for introducing IELTS at a late stage but also for the inability to develop students' skills to pass IELTS. In his research, Taylor (2013) related students' underachievement in IELTS to ineffective curriculum which led to "under-development of the skills and strategies which are needed to effectively perform on the IELTS" (p.1).

Other researchers have also noted issues with UAE male students' lack of strategies in particular to achieve the required IELTS score (Schoepp & Lydiatt, 2014). In particular, the Schoepp and Lydiatt (2014) study stated that students in the lower English foundation levels were defined as at-risk students that might fail IELTS and possibly drop out because they "have had minimal exposure to English and tend to lack effective learning strategies" (Schoepp & Lydiatt, 2014, p. 233). In the Gad (2012) study, the researcher related UAE students' frustration with IELTS to the foundation program curriculum design. In particular, he noted that the "big mistakes of exam based classes is having unrealistic expectations of scoring high in a test like IELTS while the actual English abilities are not as high" (Gad, 2012, p. 14) .

Recommendation

As noted by students themselves, those who regularly attended the learning centre at Campus 2 were better prepared to pass IELTS with the required scores than others who did not. More awareness programs and communication can encourage other students to attend such tutoring lessons. Other colleges can follow suit and establish similar learning centres with similar programs. Another suggestion would be to introduce IELTS early on in the curriculum. This will give students ample time to master the needed skills since there is a learning curve that is not reached with the current curriculum, where IELTS is not focused upon from the beginning of the language courses.

A third suggestion is to actually encourage students to take the IELTS exam as early as possible and continue retesting until they achieved the required score. An official IELTS test costs money, but colleges have the ability to duplicate the test and prepare students by practice. This will break the fear barrier and give students more confidence and motivation as their skills and scores improve and will help them focus on their weaker skills early on in their studies.

A fourth suggestion is for colleges to adopt other entrance English exams such as the International Second Language Proficiency (ISLPR). ISLPR provides a framework where educators can develop complete English learning programs down to selecting each learning task required for each level of test (Wylie, 2010). Furthermore, in the academic version of this exam, students can take any of the 4 ISLPR subtests, speaking, listening, reading and writing separately. This feature allows students to focus on their weaker skills, for example: writing, and repeat that particular test until they achieve the desired score. ISLPR offers a more convenient option than IELTS since in the latter exam one has to retake the whole exam as one unit.

5.2.3 Duration of Study

Most students complained about study duration which could take up to seven years. Table 5-10 shows students' negative opinions about study duration and the implication on their decisions.

Table 5-10: Impact of Duration of Study

Impact of Duration of Study		Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Negative View	It takes a long time to finish college	✓		✓	✓
	It takes a long time before getting a job.	✓	✓		
	Foundation is not worth all this time	✓		✓	
	Study duration is shorter in other colleges	✓	✓	✓	
	Students who don't have scholarship suffer		✓		
	Students want to work	✓			✓
	Students want to start a family				✓
Negative Impact	Student Intend to leave			✓	✓
	Transfer to other colleges			✓	✓
	Drop out	✓	✓		✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

The typical study period is considered far too long and many students see little value in staying all this time especially those without scholarships. Students emphasized that they share the needs of young people across the UAE - to start a family, buy a new car and get a job. Therefore many end up dropping out or intend to drop out to go to other colleges where it takes a shorter time to graduate. Some start an early career right away to fulfil their needs.

Evidence from Literature

Spending a long time in foundation studies without enrolling into a university program is a sufficient reason for students to drop out. Jenkins and Cho (2012) conducted research on students who entered community college and the result they found was similar to the current research findings in that the longer it takes students to get into a college major the more likely they will drop out. In this research, students could spend up to two full years before entering a college program and some drop out at different stages of this period. Jenkins & Cho (2012) noticed that “students who do not enter a program within a year of enrolment are far less likely to ever enter a program and therefore less likely to earn a credential” (p. ii) and the failure could extend to the students’ later career.

Research on UAE college foundation programs recognized and supported students’ claims and issues in this study about duration of such courses. In their research to improve the English level of UAE college students, and hence reduce the duration of the foundation program, Gitsaki, Robby & Bourini (2014) noted the following :

“Having high-school graduates attend long post-secondary academic bridging courses in preparation for higher education reduces student motivation; underutilizes the development of their knowledge, skills, and abilities; and delays students’ opportunities to engage in experiences that will enhance their personal and social development.” (Gitsaki et al., 2014, p. 171)

5.2.4 Language of Instruction

Many students complained about having weak understanding when the language of instruction is English. They attribute this to high school teachers who were uncaring and grade inflation which results in them receiving high grades in high school but failing their English tests in college. This results in them being placed in the lower level of foundation classes and extends their degree program. Many students expressed that they are not enjoying their study because of their weak level of English. Some suggested the use of Arabic language especially in courses that are not scientific in nature like law. Other students, who were graduates of private high schools mentioned that they understood most of the lectures because English was used extensively in high school.

The question arises whether the current structures are working. Should more courses be taught in Arabic with English skills built gradually during the time at university? If most first-year courses were taught in Arabic, would retention rates be better?

Evidence from the Literature

High school systems in the UAE have been lagging in preparing students for college education. Research on UAE college students showed that high school did not “adequately [prepare] them for the critical thought and work ethic needed to succeed at university” (Freimuth, 2014, p. 38). This is due to grade inflation in high schools where students achieve an average of 80% and above in English and other subjects, but fail college entry tests and as many as 94% of them are forced into foundation programs before entering college (Freimuth, 2014).

It is not only UAE male students in the current study who suffer when learning in English; UAE female students experience similar difficulties (Sumaya, Tennant, & Stringer, 2014). In their research on married female students seeking to become teachers, Sumaya et al. (2014) noted that “44% strongly agreed that learning in the English language was a challenge for all students whose first language is Arabic” (Sumaya et al., 2014, p. 8).

5.2.5 iPad

In Table 5-11 below, iPad impact on students is shown. Students have mixed use of iPad in the classroom, an educational use as a book, a notebook, and a platform to do assignments and take exams.

Table 5-11: Impact of iPad

		Impact of iPad			
	Area of Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Academic use	Virtual book/ Light weight	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Difficult/slow to write	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Inconsistency of use	✓			
	Technical Issues (Apps Crash/ saving files)	✓	✓		✓
	Difficult to adapt to iPad		✓		✓
	Easy to adapt to iPad			✓	
Non Academic use	A platform for SN access (chat, cheat, Play)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Impact on students	Does not help memorization			✓	✓
	Frustration of use (iPad-Anxiety)				✓
	Loss of focus in the class	✓	✓		✓
	Causes boredom		✓		
	Prefer traditional book over iPad	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic outcome	Made studying easy	✓			
	Made learning English easy	✓			
	Low motivation to study				✓
	Class Failure				✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

Also, and because of its unrestricted access, it may be used as method of cheating and social network access to chat, play online games, and watch movies. Boredom in the class was sometimes an issue; some students refer to teaching style or repeated material as boring which makes them start looking for entertainment in the class, most often using an iPad. With the exception of a few students, most students expressed difficulties in adapting to use an iPad, acknowledging its lack of keyboard as a main drawback in writing tasks, along with technical difficulties in saving files and applications crashing.

Another drawback was inconsistency of iPad use where some students spend the whole semester using the iPad and ended up with a paper examination. There were many negative impacts on students like weaker memorization from an iPad screen as compared to books, frustration of use or iPad-anxiety, and boredom with using it as an academic platform of learning. For these reasons, students suggested the use of books to replace the iPad in learning. Academically, some students felt the iPad made studying and learning English easier and more interesting. On the other hand, negative academic outcomes included failure due to iPad-anxiety, where some students became nervous around the iPad, which severely degraded their efforts to study and do assignments, leading them to failure.

Evidence from the literature

Research on iPad use in the classroom is both recent and an expanding area of research where recent studies have concluded similar findings to the current research results (Bain,

2015; Hargis, Cavanaugh, Kamali, & Soto, 2014; Mullen, 2014; Rossing, Miller, Cecil, & Stamper, 2012; Shepherd & Reeves, 2011; Souleles, Savva, Watters, Annesley, & Bull, 2014; Wood, 2014).

Hargis, Cavanaugh, Kamali and Soto (2014) conducted a case study on teachers' perceptions of the iPad initiative at one of the colleges that participated in this research and found that the iPad initiative has achieved its goal, which was to focus on a student-centric education. In contrast to the current study, their result indicated that "student engagement was perceived as high" (Hargis et al., 2014, p. 56) when using the iPad. In their study, students were perceived as keen and quick in adapting and using the iPad for class registration, reading text material and surfing the net (Hargis et al., 2014). A key difference was that the current research took into account students' perceptions, while the research by Hargis et al. (2014) measured teachers' points of view and their thoughts about students' perception. In other words, this research is a direct measure of students' opinion while the previous research (Hargis et al., 2014) was an indirect approach and this difference in approach could probably explain the opposing views on student engagement. This difference is supported by other research findings that teachers have a prior assumption of the positive student-iPad encounters as evident in Benton (2012) finding that teachers "perceived that iPads had the potential to positively impact student engagement and learning" (Benton, 2012, p. 5).

Another key difference was the period in which the research was conducted; the Hargis et al. (2014) research was conducted in the first month of the iPad implementation initiative compared to the current research which took place in the third year of the iPad-initiative. In Hargis et al. (2014), the measurement of student's engagement in the classroom using the iPad was not the intention of the study; the intention was to measure how well faculty had adapted to the iPad-initiative. On the other hand, students in the current study have acknowledged how easy it was to use iPad for internet browsing and reading, but the difficulties they faced were to use it as the main method of their learning activities, such as taking notes and writing assignments, and the challenges in accessing educational applications during the classroom activities. It is these challenges that accumulated after repeated iPad use and which affected their engagement in the classroom and impacted their study outcomes.

As a smart tablet, the iPad was used in some cases as a platform for students to cheat in their exams, because "e-cheating inside the classroom requires the use of an electronic device to access unauthorized information from a variety of sources" (Bain, 2015).

On their study of using the iPad in the classroom, Shepherd and Reeves (2011) noticed that students complained about being frustrated with the iPad virtual keyboard in writing and difficulties in using some applications. Similarly, in Rossing et al. (2012) research on students' perceptions of using the iPad as a learning tool, some students, although growing up in a digital environment, had difficulties adapting to the iPad. Rossing et al. argued that students' knowledge in certain technology or technology functions was not applied when

using the iPad because of the lack of “refined critical thinking skills that would allow them to adapt this knowledge to other devices and uses” (Rossing et al., 2012, p. 17).

Difficulties using the iPad cited in this research have also been mentioned in other researches. Within the UAE context, Mullen (2014), used a mixed-method research of 35 instructors’ perceptions on the benefits and challenges of using the iPad in teaching foundation classes. Of the challenges found in her research, 43% agreed that students had difficulties in writing using the iPad, with 53% of teachers experiencing technical difficulties in such processes as file storage and software compatibility. Most of all, 57% of the participants view the iPad as a distraction from the learning process (Mullen, 2014).

Technical difficulties faced by teachers created idle time in the classroom, an environment in which students drifted away from learning activities to entertainment activities using the iPad with teachers recalling that “occurrence of technical problems impedes learning and creates more opportunities for students to download free games or become engaged in social media applications” (Mullen, 2014, p. 32). This was also confirmed by Rossing et al. who claimed that “unstructured learning activities create idle time that allows students to lose focus and explore games or other interests on the Internet” (Rossing et al., 2012, p. 17). It is not surprising then, that as few as 7% of teachers in Mullen’s (2014) findings thought that the iPad helped student engagement in the classroom.

Other researchers confirmed that students preferred to use other devices over the iPad in their learning even with students who thought that the iPad is a positive educational device (Souleles et al., 2014). In his phenomenological study of students’ perception on using iPads for Art classes, Souleles et al. found that some students considered the iPad “had low usability, and the laptop computer—in comparison with an iPad—is more useful for their learning” (Souleles et al., 2014, p. 9).

Contrary to the findings of this research, Diemer, Fernandez and Streepey (2013) stated that student engagement was increased when using iPads. Their survey-based results on students’ perceptions of iPad use in the classroom reported that students felt more engaged when using iPads in active and collaborative learning (Diemer et al., 2013). This claim was further supported by Mango’s study on students’ perceptions of using iPads in foreign language class. In the study, students felt that iPads “enhance students’ learning and engagement with classroom activities facilitating students’ collaboration between each other and their participation in classroom activities” (Mango, 2015, p. 56). Other research supported the view that iPad use has improved student engagement in the classroom (Manuguerra & Petocz, 2011; Shanbrun & Gilmore, 2013).

Recommendation

The iPad is an educational tool that, when used appropriately, has the potential to revolutionize learning (McFarlane, 2013). There is a wealth of iPad implementation plans that do support successful roll out of the iPad (“21 Steps to 1-to-1 Success: iPads for Learning,” 2011). Although these plans are useful when considering a new iPad initiative, the participating colleges have already implemented the iPad and thus more focus should

be placed on involving students and their opinions in the process of evaluating and updating current strategies to better engage them in their learning.

One way to engage students in using the iPad in the classroom is to involve them in the evaluation of iPad-based class activities following Ostashewski, Dickinson-Delaporte, and Martin (2014) 5 step-process of iPad activity design aimed at reconceptualizing learning designs in higher education using mobile devices such as the iPad to engage students. This process is detailed in Table 5-12 below.

Table 5-12: iPad Activity Design Process

Steps	Tasks
5. Identify learning outcomes of the authentic activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify outputs (artefacts, assessments etc.) • Review traditional approach to tasks and note areas where resources are used
6. Adapt/develop learning design for the iPad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a sequence of tasks to be undertaken by learners • Identify tasks which could be supported by iPads (e.g. researching, graphics creation, e-book creation) and alternative options for students without iPads (e.g. drawing on paper, creating graphics in Photoshop; creating PDFs) • Source, install and test apps that will be used to support tasks • Test and revise activity design
7. In class – pilot the activity with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain learning outcomes and learning activity • Demonstrate apps and required processes and provide information about non-iPad alternatives, if required • Provide support for student activity • Note areas of difficulty
8. Share outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students present and discuss outputs in class or via discussion forum • Students share artefacts online • Students upload artefacts to a portfolio (optional)
9. Evaluate activity and modify as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather student feedback • Review processes for iPad users and alternative approaches

Source: (Martin, Ostashewski, & Dickinson-Delaporte, 2013, p. 251)

Students are to be involved in steps 3-5 of the iPad activity design process. In step 3, instructors will explain the activities and support students while noting the difficulties they face. In step 4 students discuss the activity’s output in class and online. In step 5, student feedback is gathered to improve the design. In this process, student feedback is a measure of students’ engagement, collaborative work, technical challenges, and their focus in the classroom. A successful implementation of the process is measured by whether or not the learning outcomes have been met while providing students “an enhanced learning experience and a more engaging series of classroom activities” (Ostashewski et al., 2014, p. 232).

5.3 Determinants That Impact Motivation: Personal Themes

5.3.1 Social Networks

Findings of this study

Students at all Campuses accessed social networks both in class and at home. There were both positive and negative outcomes of using social networks as listed in Table 5-13 below.

Table 5-13: Impact of Social Networks

Impact of Social Networks (SN)		Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Academic use of SN	Chatting with teacher	✓			
	Spelling/ Translation	✓		✓	
	Writing apps	✓			
	Cheating (Instagram)		✓		
Non Academic use of SN	Chat (BBM, WhatsApp) in class	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Playing games (SubwaySurf) in class	✓		✓	✓
	Check SN sites (twitter, Instagram) in class	✓		✓	✓
	Watching YouTube Videos all night		✓		
	Watching YouTube Videos in class				✓
	Send pictures to peers in class		✓	✓	
Impact on students	SN addiction	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Care SN more than studying	✓		✓	
	Low motivation to learn	✓			✓
	Loss of focus in the class	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Time organization issues		✓	✓	✓
	Social Isolation			✓	
Academic outcome	Incomplete assignment	✓		✓	
	Low Exam grades	✓		✓	
	Low IELTS Score	✓			
	Drop out of college	✓			

Source: Developed by the researcher

Academic use of social networks included chatting with teachers, spelling checks, word translation - and cheating. This has positive and negative impact on students’ learning. Many students mentioned that they use social networks for non-academic purposes in class for two main reasons: social network addiction and feeling bored in the classroom. Students’ social use of social networks includes browsing Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter, chatting and sending pictures to friends and girlfriends using WhatsApp and BBM, watching movies on YouTube, and playing games like Subway Surf. Most students agreed that negative use of social networks outweighs its positive use.

Students mentioned that the impact of social network use includes loss of focus in class, time organization issues, social isolation in social gatherings, low motivation to learn, social network addiction and less care for studying. Most students thought social networks addiction is a trend at college and is on the rise. Social network activities distracted students’ study schedule and sleep habits which in turn affected their attendance and grades. It also had an impact on their social status as they became more and more socially isolated even when they were with their friends. Academically, negative outcomes of social networks access by students were incomplete assignments, low grades, and sometimes failing their classes. As a result some students dropped out of college.

Evidence from the literature

Research on social media utilization by students in and out of the classrooms supports the finding of this study (Bain, 2015; Kuss, Griffiths, & Binder, 2013; Stollak, Vandenberg,

Burklund, & Weiss, 2011; Tindell & Bohlander, 2012; Wiest & Eltantawy, 2012; Yu, Hsu, Yu, & Hsu, 2012).

Wiest and Eltantawy (2012) conducted a survey on 200 students of a UAE private college asking them to rate their use of social networks one year post Arab spring. The survey revealed that as many as 81% of students have Facebook profiles, and 63% send daily messages through social networks during and after classes. When asked about the purpose of accessing social networks, only 4.7% of students accessed social networks for educational purposes while the majority used them for news update, political and health information, and entertainment purposes. Furthermore, using data from their online survey of 269 male and female students, Tindell and Bohlander (2012) found that engaging in social network actions had negative impacts on students. In their research, as many as 35% of students admitted to texting during classes and suffered from loss of attention and poor grades.

In their study on social media access in the classroom, Stollak et al. (2011) administered an online survey on a sample of 430 students at a liberal arts college in the US asking them to rate their usage of social media. Mostly, students used social networks to build social contacts and find jobs. Of the accessed social networks, students spent most time on Facebook which had a negative impact on their grades.

In their quantitative study of 577 students, both males and females, at five universities in Taiwan, Yu et al. (2012) focused on the relation between time spent on the social network platform of Facebook and increased internet addiction amongst students. The study concluded that the more time students spend on Facebook, the more addicted they get as it becomes a daily habit to access Facebook for both emotional support and amusement. Therefore, students addicted to Facebook became more socially withdrawn than those who were not. On the other hand, a survey-based research conducted by Helou and Rahim (2014) on 30 undergraduate and graduate Malaysian students indicated that although students acknowledged their addiction to social networks, spending more than 50% of their time on social networks to make friends and chat, their grades and academic outcomes were not affected (Helou & Rahim, 2014).

This difference between Yu et al. (2012) and Helou and Rahim (2014) could be attributed to the sample size difference. The latter study used a very small sample of students and different age groups of student with graduate students being more mature in their social networks interaction, while the former study used a large sample size from many universities of similar age students. Although they differ on the impact of social networks, both studies agree that students are addicted to social networks; a result that confirms the finding of the current study.

Kuss et al. (2013) conducted a study on use of Twitter and online gaming and internet addiction. The study found that participants' use of Twitter gives them instantaneous satisfaction while online gaming makes them access the internet more often and become addicts. The findings of the study support the notion that internet addiction has become a

mental health issue amongst students and that increased usage of social networks may lead to situations where “adolescents who are less conscientious would chose using the Internet over other, less pleasurable activities, such as doing their homework, and may therefore be at increased risk of using the Internet excessively” (Kuss et al., 2013, p. 1992).

In this study, it emerged that improper time management and consequent attendance issues are related to student use of social networks outside the classroom for long hours into the night. This association is confirmed by Wolniczak et al. (2013) who studied the relationship between social networks use and sleep disorder. The study used the Pittsburgh sleep quality index to assess sleep quality of college students who use Facebook. The findings of the study revealed that “there is an association between Facebook dependence and poor quality of sleep” (2013, p. 4) and that over 55% of students suffered sleep disorder because of their addiction to Facebook, which had a negative impact on their academic standing .

Cheating using social networks is a representation of how “e-cheating has also advanced to creative and new levels” (Bain, 2015, p. 3) where, for example, students access the internet to find and copy answers for their tests. The range and complexity of technology-assisted cheating behaviours constantly increases as technology improves and social networks become more pervasive.

Recommendations for countering cheating using social networks & Smart devices

One way to counter cheating through social networks is to use a three-point remedy summarized by (Bain, 2015) as awareness, prohibition, and reporting. The approach begins by establishing and implementing an academic integrity policy and ends with awareness campaigns as regards the definition of cheating and sanctions applied to cheaters. This program could be extended to instructors to keep them up to date with the latest technology-based cheating methods used by students. A second step is to block students’ ability to access social networks using college-provided iPads or their own smart devices during examinations. This step requires the involvement of the college information technology department to help implement such measures. Reporting is the last step of the remedy to help prevent academic cheating using social networks. Although punishment for academic cheating is commonly implemented, it is the reporting that is loosely applied, where some cheating actions go unnoticed or some faculty hesitate to report the case and this gives students a message that “cheating is not taken seriously” (Bain, 2015, p. 97).

Social networks as educational tool

Davis et al. (2012) argued that theories such as student persistence (Astin, 1984; Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2011b; Donovan, 1984; Tinto, 1987), attrition (Bean, 1982; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2011a; Tinto, 1982, 1987, 1988), engagement (Lamborn, Newmann, & Wehlage, 1992; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) and social and academic integration (Merton, 1968; Shilling, 2012; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1977) are focused on positive achievement and are associated with “engagement, involvement, and connection and belonging with the academic and social realms of the Campus” (Davis et

al., 2012, p. 20). These theories can be used as research frameworks to “explore how SMT (social media activity or social networks) may or may not function to support such student engagement and involvement” (Davis et al., 2012, p. 20) at college.

Furthermore, a national survey of 224 colleges in the US on the current and potential use of social media in academic learning revealed that embedding social media in the learning activities was widely used in college.

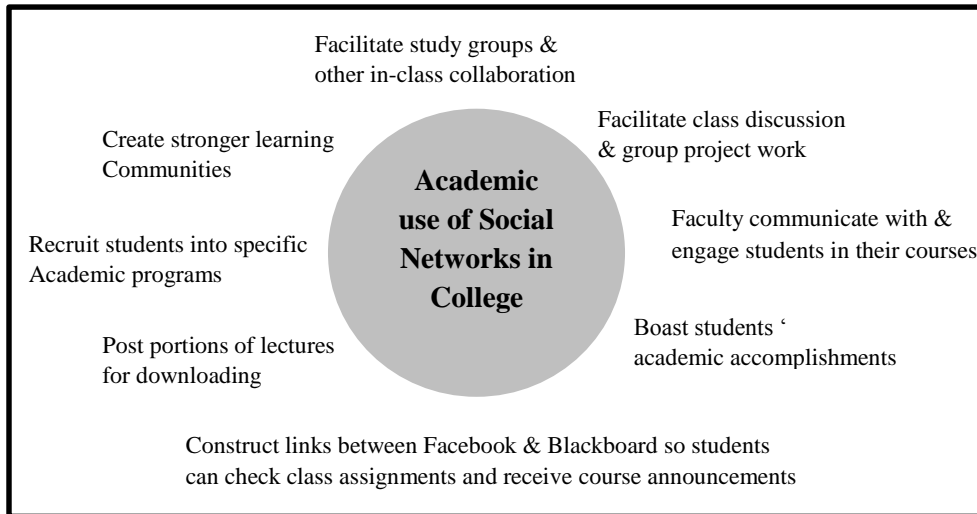


Figure 5-2: Academic use of Social Networks in college

Source: Adapted from Davis et al. (2012, p. 8)

The survey, in Figure 5-2 above, described usage of social networks in these colleges as an environment to link class Blackboard spaces to Facebook, post lectures, class discussions, group-assignments, study groups and student recruitment information in academic programs (Davis et al., 2012). Further, it was seen as a tool of increased communication, better learning communities and as a boost to student engagement and academic outcomes.

Junco et al. (2011) conducted a semester-long student-engagement experiment on 125 students divided into two groups on the impact of using Twitter in the curriculum. Twitter, a form of social network, was embedded in an experimental group as a platform for academic discussions between students and instructors, and monitoring their engagement and grades in comparison with the control group where Twitter was not utilized. The result indicated that the use of Twitter increased students' engagement and grades in comparison to those who did not use it. This study provides evidence that social networks such as “Twitter can be used as an educational tool to help engage students and to mobilize faculty into a more active and participatory role” (Junco et al., 2011, p. 119).

5.3.2 Work

Table 5-14 below shows students' opinions on the impact of work on their academic status.

Table 5-14: Impact of Work

		Impact of Work			
	Area of Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Positive View	Scholarship motivate me to study		✓		
	A degree will make put me in higher position		✓		
Negative View	Having no scholarship impact my motivation	✓			
	Time conflict between class and work				✓
	Too much work pressure				✓
	Work leaves no time to study				✓
Positive Impact	Higher Motivation to study		✓		
Negative Impact	Lowered Motivation to study	✓			✓
	Intend to leave	✓			✓

Source: Developed by the researcher

Campus 3 students did not discuss work since they all were unemployed, and seemed to have high socioeconomic status. Some who were unemployed and have lower socioeconomic status, especially in Campus 1, expressed their worry about not having a job or a scholarship and a few intended to leave to start a job. On the other hand, some students at Campus 2 had a scholarship and it motivated them to study. Working students also varied in their views, with some mentioning they are motivated to get a degree to obtain a better position in their current job while others complained about work pressure, time conflict and the limited time they had to study. As a result, some working students expressed their intent to drop out.

Evidence from the Literature

In previous research, work was seen as an important determinant of college students’ drop out (Nora et al., 1996). Even in the western hemisphere, students looking for jobs or trying unsuccessfully to balance between work and college end up leaving college (Tyler, 2015). In a recent exploratory study on the impact of first year experience at college on student engagement, part and full-time working students were found to drop out of college at a higher rate than non-employed students (Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011). The study explained that long working hours and weak workplace interest for students’ academic needs lead to negative impact on student experience at college. From a theoretical perspective, the study claims that according to the theory of planned behaviour, “lack of support in the workplace for the educational needs of employed students can represent a significant hindrance to the continuance of their studies” (Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011, p. 46).

5.3.3 Goal-Setting

Findings of this study

Many students had future goals to be engineers, TV-Anchors, psychiatrists, game developers, or famous politicians, but few of them had any mastery goals. Those with mastery goals wanted to learn English because of their interest in communicating with the outside world, and their realization that their specialization studies in college are taught entirely in English. Those students showed more focus and interest in the classroom. However, the majority of students focused on getting good enough grades just to pass their current English level. This is a form of performance avoidance goal, where students aim to get good enough grades so that they do not fail and be labelled by others as a failure. Procrastination was the most present symptom associated with avoidance performance goals where students admitted not studying until the night before the exam. Also, cheating amongst many students was another sign of performance-avoidance tactics adopted to pass the exams. Furthermore, students' lack of goal-setting has also had an impact on some of them expressing their intention to drop out of college.

Evidence from the literature

Lack of clear goal setting impacts student motivation and contributes to lower grades and school performance. This relationship has been pointed out by Morisano and Locke where they showed that issues with goal definition lead to deficits in school performance “which can precede demotivation, resulting in poor grades. This often results in course failure, which can give rise to withdrawal or expulsion” (Morisano & Locke, 2013, p. 47). In their meta-analysis of 109 studies on the relation between psychosocial and study skills factors and college outcomes, Robbins et al. (2004) indicated that goal setting was moderately related to two college outcomes: performance, including academic achievement, and students' persistence.

Recommendation

Goal setting is an important element of student motivation. Students with goals show more persistence and efforts than those without (Locke & Latham, 2002). The current situation of lack-of goal clarity needs be addressed with intervention programs. Morisano and Locke (2013) clearly stated that “intervention is key, and teaching our students' academic goal-setting is a simple and reasonable solution” (Morisano & Locke, 2013, p. 47). Furthermore, teachers can play a role to create more interest in the classroom and avoid giving extra homework to encourage students to adopt a multiple goals setting strategy which involves both mastery and performance goals which lead to higher motivation and better academic outcomes (Pintrich, 2003). Another area of concern is student self-efficacy, a term closely related to students' goal-setting and academic achievement (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Teachers can hand out self-efficacy surveys and find out students' weakness such as time management and offer solutions based on individual student self-efficacy needs to enhance their goal setting and achievement. In summary, better student motivation and academic outcomes can be reached by a mix of “cognitive ability, high grade goals, high mastery-approach and performance goals focused on individually chosen outcomes, high self-efficacy, feedback, and commitment” (Morisano & Locke, 2013, p. 48).

The uncertainties prevalent in the curriculum and the pressure of obtaining a satisfactory IELTS score make it difficult for many students to develop anything but short-term goals. For many students, even these short-term goals are compromised because they perceive a tenuous link at best between working hard and actually achieving their goals.

5.3.4 High School Experience

Many students, specifically at Campuses 2 and 3, recalled that the English language teaching at their high school did not prepare them with the required skills to pass the college English requirements tests. Table 5-15 shows students' views and the impact of high school English teaching on them.

Table 5-15: Impact of High School Experience

		Impact of High School Experience			
	Area of Impact/ Explanation	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Negative View	Careless high-school teachers		✓	✓	
	Careless high-school students			✓	
	Poor English curriculum		✓		
Negative Impact	weak English Skills		✓	✓	
	Low scores in college Entrance tests		✓		

Source: Developed for this study.

Some students refer to weak English skills as an outcome of high school learning. Some blame themselves for their careless attitude towards learning English in high school and many blame high school teachers and curriculum for the issue. As a result of weak skills, notably in listening and speaking, those students were placed in a lower level of English classes and were not able to obtain the needed IELTS scores to enter college. This had an impact on students' English skills self-efficacy. Students acknowledged their weak skills and felt that they were not able to pass their IELTS exams. Further, some mentioned that their weak communication skills were hindering their enjoyment of the college environment.

Evidence from the literature

A recent study revealed that students' negligence in learning English at high school within the UAE is due to the fact that they were unaware of its importance to them in college (Hudson, 2013). Also, the study, conducted on 11 universities in the UAE, revealed that some practices that were permissible in high school lead to weaker listening and communication skills, because students "used to just copy and memorize things, not learn to communicate" (Hudson, 2013, p. 300).

Recommendation

To overcome the issue of low English proficiency amongst first year college students, IELTS Intervention programs that raise awareness of IELTS importance should be implemented early, in high school. In these programs, there should be a focus on enhancing students’ English skills to achieve the required IELTS score. In fact, in a recent cross-sectional study on 391 male and female high school students in the UAE, an 8-week supplemental support study programme (SSSP) was introduced to raise both students’ awareness and English language skills (Gitsaki et al., 2014). As a result, “65 per cent of the students were able to achieve a band 5.0 or greater on the IELTS exam” (Gitsaki et al., 2014, p. 180). Further, the program enhanced students’ motivation, engagement and confidence in passing the exam; hence enhancing their self-efficacy in English.

5.4 Positive and Negative Impact of Determinants on Motivation

Students talked about what impacts their motivation. They mentioned the word motivation as they understood it in their native language. Each Campus had a different set of factors that students related directly to their motivation. Students have linked some themes that emerged in this study and their positive or negative impact directly to motivation. In some other themes, the direct link was not established but evidence from motivation theory and the literature show that those themes have an impact on motivation. The following sections reveal the direct and indirect relations between themes and student motivation in a systematic approach.

5.4.1 Determinants with Positive Impact on Motivation.

There were themes that have had positive impact on students’ motivation and are mentioned in Table 5-16 and Figure 5-3 below.

Table 5-16: Determinants with Positive Impact on student Motivation

Factors Students Relate Directly to increase their Motivation					
Type	Factor	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Social	Caring Instructors	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Family Support	✓	✓	✓	✓
	College Friends Support	✓	✓		
	Non-college Friends Support	✓	✓		
	Goals Setting	✓		✓	✓
Personal	Work (Scholarship)		✓		

Source: developed by the researcher

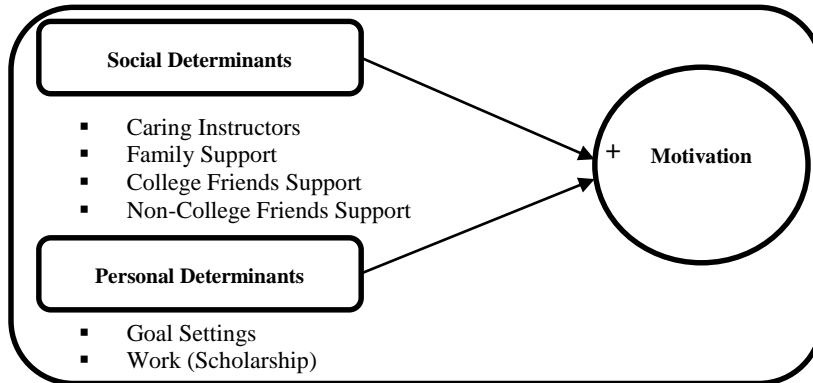


Figure 5-3: Determinants with Positive Motivation Impact

Source: developed by the researcher

As the table and figure above show, social themes are the major contributors to boost student motivation. Students seek social approval not only from other peers or instructors at college but also from their families and non-college friends. In a collectivist society like the UAE, a person values interactions with others and considers it a source of motivation. Unlike in individualist societies, social acceptance and support plays a significant role on UAE male students will to study and the resilience to continue their academic quest. Students regard contact as an important element of their motivation and this represent the importance of external motivation over the intrinsic motivation within the UAE context.

The other elements that play a positive role on student motivation are the personal themes of goal setting and work. Students feel motivated if they have a scholarship or concrete goals that drive them to study to accomplish these goals. Few students had concrete goals. Unfortunately, most students' goals were associated with getting a job, and scholarship is a form of early employment that drives students to achieve. Students regard education as a vocational goal where the valence of education is not a core element that drives them to achieve, it is the external driver of being able to get a job that drives their needs to achieve. The social and personal determinants presented here that play a positive role on student motivation are all externally driven, and this leads to the conclusion that participant students' intrinsic motivation is low.

5.4.2 Determinants with Negative Impact on Motivation

There are a host of determinants that have direct and indirect negative impact on motivation as listed in Figure 5-4 below.

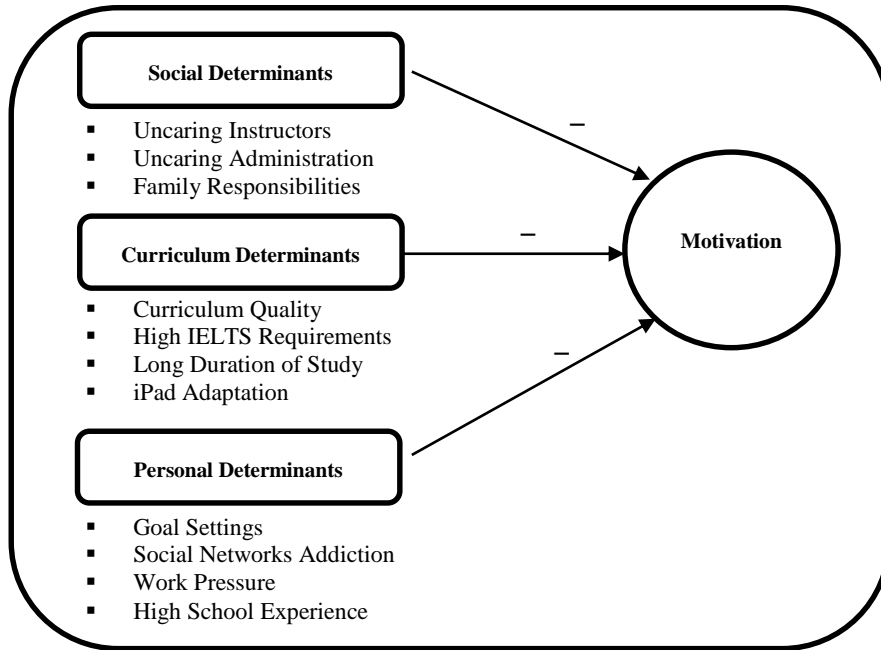


Figure 5-4: Determinants with Negative Motivation Impact

Source: Created by the researcher.

Determinants in the figure above were divided into two categories based on the type of impact they had on student motivation. The first category was determinants with direct negative impact on motivation including uncaring instructors, family responsibilities, curriculum quality, iPad adaptation, goal settings, social network addiction and work pressure. The second category was determinants which have indirect negative impact on motivation including: uncaring administration, high IELTS requirements, long duration of study, and high school experience. Both categories are discussed further in the following sections.

5.4.2.1 Determinants with Direct Negative Impact on Motivation

Students related some social, curriculum, and personal themes to have direct negative impact on their motivation as listed in Table 5-17.

Table 5-17: Factors students related directly to their Motivation

Factors Students Relate Directly to Student Motivation					
Type	Factor	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4
Social	Uncaring Instructors	✓	✓		✓
	Family Responsibilities	✓		✓	
Curriculum	iPad Adaptation				✓
	Curriculum Quality		✓		
Personal	Social Networks Addiction	✓			✓
	Goals Setting	✓		✓	✓
	Work Pressure		✓		

Source: Developed by the Researcher.

Almost all social and personal themes mentioned in the table above had dual effects on motivation, both positive and negative as discussed in the previous sections. Socially, uncaring instructors damage student affiliation with the class and the subject, while family responsibility hurdles directs students' attention away from the academic responsibilities to the social responsibilities that take precedence over education. Work pressure played a demotivating role when students do not find the time to attend or to study. Students feel pressured in the adjustment struggle between work and college.

Work pressure and inflexible college roles lead those students to feel less control over their education and become less and less motivated to study. When students value social network interaction more than they value their academic efforts, they become less motivated to pay attention in class and devote little time to study or do assignments. Education has a lower status when compared to social and personal factors, and when placed in the weighing scale of choice with social or personal themes, it loses to these factors.

Curriculum themes with direct negative impact on motivation were iPad and quality of instructions. In some classes students were bored with repeated material from high school so that they did not feel motivated to pay attention or exert studying efforts in those subjects.

Current research findings indicate that iPad adaptation has motivational constructs of efficacy, self-efficacy, and competence. When introduced to the iPad, students had overrated their iPad-efficacy simply because many of them had it at home and had used it before. After some time of daily use of the iPad and the issues related to its use, a re-evaluation of their iPad-efficacy occurred. Each time students had difficulties in writing, or saving their work, their doubt in their ability to overcome these obstacles only increased. These technical and learning issues have caused loss of focus and boredom in the classroom and made it difficult for many students to adapt the iPad in their learning. As a result, student's self-efficacy decreased to negative levels. In turn, this impacted their efforts. Students felt low motivation to study, and ended up showing weak coping efforts and giving in to pressure which led to class failure. Emotionally, some students described that they felt

anxiety using the iPad to study. Anxiety was another effect of low self- efficacy, and also represented a student state in which their competence was challenged. The challenge of successfully mastering the use of the iPad was overwhelming to students’ skills so that they ended up with anxiety as a result of their low competence and unsuccessful efforts to win this challenge; hence they were unable to achieve the desired flow in this situation

5.4.2.2 Determinants with Indirect Negative Impact

Reeve’s (2008) framework for motivation was used to examine the link between student motivation and research themes including uncaring instructors, long duration of study, high IELTS requirements, and high school experience. The process involved mapping the collected students’ voices from the focus groups into Reeve’s (2008) framework. This process served two aims: reverse engineer the motivation process, and answer the research questions. The result of this process is listed in Table 5-18 below.

Table 5-18: Current Research Motivation Framework

Theme	From a cognitive perspective	From a Needs perspective	From an Emotion perspective	Related Motivation Theory
Caring instructors	Autonomy, Competence	relatedness		SDT, ET
Uncaring instructors	Autonomy, Competence	relatedness	Self-perception	SDT, ET
Caring administration		Affiliation		SDT, ET
Uncaring administration	Autonomy	Affiliation relatedness	Self-perception	SDT, Self-worth,, ET
Family Support		Affiliation		SDT, ET
Family Responsibilities		Affiliation		SDT, ET
College Friends		Affiliation		SDT, ET
Non-College Friends		Affiliation		SDT, ET
Social Network	competence			SDT, ET
iPad	Competence, Efficacy, Self-efficacy			Flow Theory SDT, ET
Goal Setting	Goal setting			Achievement goal, ET
Quality of Curriculum	competence			SDT, ET
IELTS Score	Self-efficacy	Performance Avoidance goal		SDT, ET
Duration of Study	competence		Self-perception	SDT, ET
Language of Instruction	competence			SDT, ET
Work				ET
High school Experience	Self-efficacy			SDT, ET

Legend : SDT: Social Determinant Theory, ET: Expectancy Theory

Source: Developed by the researcher

An analysis of the data in terms of the model identified the following variables:

- Antecedent conditions
- Type of motivation impacted (needs, cognitions, emotions)
- Drive, sense of wanting to / urge to approach vs avoid.
- Expression of motivation (behaviour, engagement, physiology, & self-report)

Most often, students talked more about the events or determinants that awakened certain motivations and how it impacted their expression of motivation both in intensity and direction. This is a self-report approach where students describe their motivation in response to questions, and the intent is to follow through with this description to specify, which of the behaviour, engagement and physiological facets of motivation expression appeared in reaction to instigating events. Less apparent in the motivation model was the motive status of internal motivations of needs, cognitions and emotions. These elements, once events and expressions of motivation were identified, were extracted from the suitable motivation theory in relevance to the resultant impacts.

It is important to remember that the following assumptions were implemented in this motivational analysis:

- Each determinant of motivations or theme extracted from data analysis can have one or many triggering events, motivational constructs, low or high motivation intensity impact, and positive and negative direction of motivational expressions.
- There could be one antecedent action or many at any given time.
- There are many motivation types existing within a person. The fact that students talked about certain motivational expressions means that those types were prevalent at the time of the event over other motivations which became less important but did not cease to exist.
- In response to one or more antecedent events there could exist one or many motivation types which could be related to different motivational theories.

The table shows that determinants that were linked directly to motivation by students did in fact impact their motivation. These factors include study duration, IELTS requirements and high school experience, iPad adaptation, and uncaring administration. The following sections explain further how those themes played negative roles on student motivation.

5.4.2.2.1 Study Duration & Self-Concept/Self Perception Issues

The reporting of the students represented issues with self-concept, identity, agency, and self-regulation; the four motivational constructs in the study of the self. Within the self-concept construct, many students showed low levels in self-schema related to job-competence and scholastic competence. Most students expressed their intentions to get married, which is a representation of two needs: physiological need of sex and social need of intimacy. This also represents a low level of the intimacy self-schema. Since the self-concept is constructed from a collection of self-schema that are important to the individual (Reeve, 2008), it is safe to conclude that low levels in job competence, scholastic competence, and intimacy contribute to lower levels of self-concept, probably affecting students' self-esteem and psychological wellbeing.

If there was to be a self-perception map in the student mind, between themselves and their friends, then the layout of this comparison, from students' own descriptions might have looked something like Table 5-19.

Table 5-19: Student Self-Comparison vs Friends

Comparison Source (Self vs. Others)	Self & Social Status in times (Y: Year)						
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Y7
Me (7 years study, IELTS of 6, No scholarship)	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single
Friends with me (7 years study, IELTS of 6, scholarship)	• Student • working • Single	• Student • working • Single	• Student • working • Single	• Student • working • Single	• Student • working • Single	• Student • working • Single	• Student • Working • Single
Friends @ other colleges (4 Years, IELTS of 4.5)	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Student • Job-less • Single	• Graduate • Working • Single	• Graduate • Working • Single	• Graduate • Working • Married
Employed Friends (No degree, police or army)	• Working • Single	• Working • Single	• Working • Married	• Working • Married	• Working • Married	• Working • Married	• Working • Married

Source: Developed by the researcher

In the mental comparison map laid out in the table, students compare their status versus the status of those friends who are either on scholarship in the same college, in other colleges with less study duration and lower IELTS score requirements, and friends who abandoned college choice altogether, and instead joined the police or the army. The self-schema of comparison consist of the three main elements of job competence, scholastic competence, and intimacy. For the sake of the discussion, if it takes two years of work before getting married, then the following are true:

- In year 3, my working friends are both working, and married; I am still a student and single.
- In year 5, my friends from other colleges graduated and started work. In year 7 they got married. I am still student and single.
- In year 1, my friends in the same college who are on scholarship, are already working, and their job is waiting for them. They can save money and use it to get married while in college.

The student’s current and future state for 7 years is the same, while his friends have achieved some or all their self-schema drives during this period. Thus the student finds himself at the lowest level of the desired self and identity in comparison to what he strives to be in the society. There is a conflict between the current self and the desired self, and the self-schema directs the behaviour into corrective actions towards fixing this model, by striving to get a scholarship, or transfer to other colleges with less requirements, or, as a last resort, to drop out and work, in order to achieve the desired self. The long study duration students have to endure, along with work status and high IELTS score requirement, has a major role on triggering this conflict and thus it has an impact, a negative impact, on their motivation as shown above.

5.4.2.2.2 The IELTS Issue: Score Requirements and High School Experience

IELTS is a test; an important test. It is a test of students' abilities, skills, and competence in English. Without the proper score, students are not permitted into college. It is a decisive exam. It decides a student's future. Thus circumstances surrounding this exam are both tense and challenging. How did students prepare for it? How did the curriculum prepare students for it? Did students see themselves having the required skills to get the required score? Did students learn English to master the language or just to pass the test?

Backtracking to high school years, students mentioned their skills in English were low because of the quality of teaching and grade inflation. Grade inflation resulted in overestimation of students' efficacy in English. In the first true test of English in college, they failed. This caused low self-efficacy in students' ability to pass English. Students who wanted to pass IELTS to avoid not being let into college, public embarrassment, and loss of face followed a performance-avoidance goal.

When students mentioned their morale is down, they meant they had low self-esteem, self-confidence, and little hope of getting the required IELTS score. Another negative outcome of performance avoidance goals was when students mentioned they will quit because of a poor IELTS score. These are results of adapting a performance avoidance goal and having low self-efficacy.

5.4.2.2.3 Uncaring Administration Issue

In some Campuses, students' reference to uncaring administration involves two terms: relatedness or affiliation and autonomy. Some students complained about administration care. As administration distance themselves from visiting or meeting students, students felt less and less affiliated with administration. To some students, administration-affiliation is a social need that has not been fulfilled. This grew feelings of fear and directed students to avoid administration or not contact them at all.

Some administration created an environment full of policies and rules. Students' locus of causality, a component of autonomy, is negatively impacted as their behaviour is controlled. In these environments, students are being told where to park, where to access classes, where to walk, when to take breaks, when to access sports facilities and when to come and go. Students' interest and preference about class time and freedom to roam around Campus are controlled by an environment of rules set by administration.

Autonomy has been impacted in two area, locus of causality and freedom of choice. Students' perceived choice over their actions, another component of autonomy, is also negatively affected. Students are not able to suggest or change class times to suit their preference or work as they have to be at Campus at a certain time and place. They are deprived of flexibility in deciding on their car park location, access time and class time. The result is feeling pressure, control, lack of respect and anxiety about being at Campus which led some students to drop out.

5.5 Additional / Side Findings

Additional or side findings of the current study were themes that students linked directly, to, not only motivation, their learning outcomes. These side findings include student drop out themes and class failures themes. The side findings are presented in the following sections.

5.5.1 Side Finding 1: Student Drop out Model

Findings of this study indicated not only impact on student motivation, but also on their decision to continue or drop out of college. These verbal statements of students recalling the reasons why some students left college, and why they intend to leave college are listed in Figure 5-5 below.

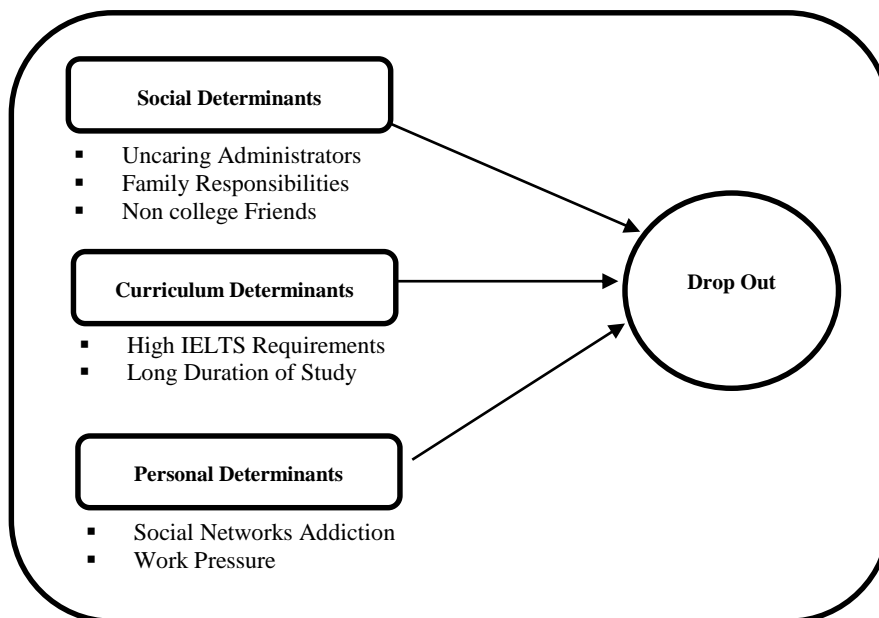


Figure 5-5: Student Drop out Model

Source: Developed by the Researcher

From the diagram, the factors that led male students to drop out of college were: High IELTS requirements, long duration of study, uncaring administration, work pressure, social network addiction, non-college friends' pressure, and family responsibilities. IELTS and duration of study were the most common reasons across all the Campuses while family responsibilities was the least talked about reason. When students expressed their intent to leave college, they mentioned duration of study, IELTS requirements, uncaring administrations, and work pressure as the main reasons for this decision as listed in Table 5-20 below.

Table 5-20: Factors Students relate directly to Drop out

Factors Students Relate directly to College Drop out						
Type	Factor	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4	Students Intend to leave
Social	Uncaring Administration			✓	✓	Yes
	Family Responsibilities			✓	✓	
	Non-college Friends	✓		✓	✓	
Curriculum	Long Duration of study	✓	✓	✓	✓	Yes
	High IELTS Requirements	✓	✓	✓		Yes
Personal	Work Pressure	✓			✓	
	Social Networks Addiction	✓				

Source: Developed by the researcher

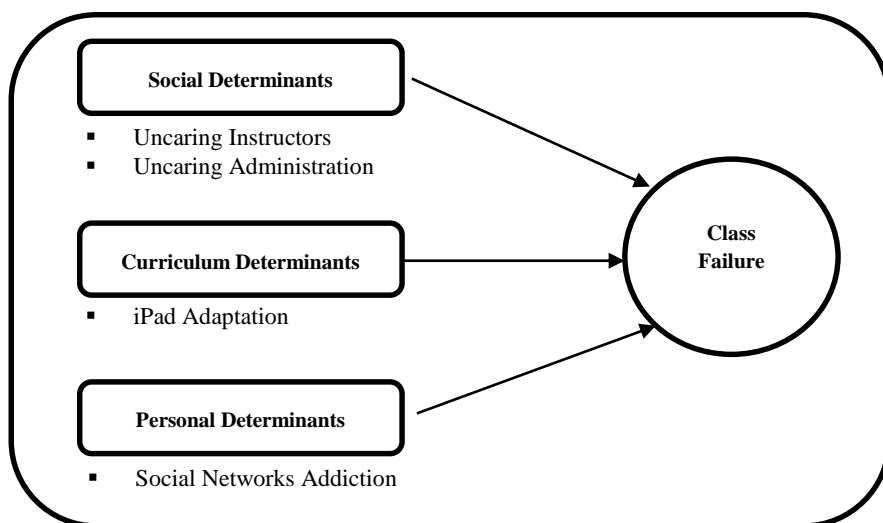
It is important, however, to note that other factors not mentioned in this model but in the motivation model are viable candidates to lead students to drop out. Motivation impacts behaviour and what impacts motivation indirectly also impacts behaviour. The fact the students linked the factors of the student drop out model to them leaving college does not mean factors that are not mentioned did not have an impact. Future research on UAE male student drop out can make use of this argument by studying the factors in the student drop out model as primary or direct factors and the other factors in the student motivation-model as secondary or indirect factors. Also, it will be of great use to know which factors are important to the individual student and thus to tailor intervention programs specifically aiming to improve individuals at the skills or motivation elements that they lack in order to help them succeed in their learning.

5.5.2 Side Finding 2: Student Class Failure Model

Another finding of the study is related to class failure. There are four factors in this model, namely: uncaring instructors, uncaring administration, iPad adaptation, and social network addiction. The model is shown in Figure 5-6 below.

Figure 5-6: Student Class Failure Model

Source: Developed by the Researcher



From the figure above and Table 5-21 below, uncaring instructors, not surprisingly, tops the list in the factors that cause students to fail classes. Further, uncaring administrators are also another, factor, surprisingly, that cause students to fail. These two factors, social factors, impact student relatedness and affiliation needs. They also impact student autonomy and competence.

Table 5-21: Factors Students relate directly to Class Failure

Factors Students Relate directly to Class Failure						
Type	Factor	Campus 1	Campus 2	Campus 3	Campus 4	
Social	Uncaring Instructors			✓	✓	
	Uncaring Administration			✓		
Curriculum	iPad Adaptation					✓
Personal	Social Networks Addiction	✓		✓		

Source: Developed by the Researcher

The third factor is iPad adaptation. Inability to adapt to the iPad as a learning tool, was due to writing, saving, and technical issues associated with the use of iPad. Students with lower self-perception gave up easily and felt anxiety when using the iPad. The last factor, social network addiction was a shared responsibility of the student as well as the teacher and the curriculum. Students addicted to social networks, when teachers are lenient or present repeated instructions, tended to access social networks through their iPads and phones. This has impacted their focus, study strategies and exam preparation.

5.6 Recommendation

In the previous sections, recommendations associated with each theme of the study were mentioned when applicable. In a general sense, some issues that appear in certain Campuses

were dealt with in other Campuses. It is suggested that there should be a common committee formed from the three main colleges with representatives from all different Campuses to discuss and generalize the good practices found in each Campus that have positive impact on student motivation. These practices should be the guidelines for the colleges to implement appropriate changes in policies, laws, intervention programs, and curriculum design to further enrich male students' motivation and engage them to continue their education and graduate. Further, action research should expand on the specific issues that students have mentioned in the current study using recommended models and theories suggested by the researcher earlier to recommend suitable solutions for such issues.

5.7 Contribution

5.7.1 Contribution to Theory

The current study fills a gap in motivational research on UAE male students, uncovering a detailed account of students' perceptions of the determinants that are important to their motivation and ultimately lead to their continuation in, or drop out from, college. Different motivation theories can be applied when it comes to UAE male students' motives in higher education. Motivation theories at micro and macro levels can be used. Micro theories related to motivational constructs such as self-efficacy can be applied to certain determinants, and other macro level theories such as SDT can be used to study multiple motivation constructs of autonomy, relatedness and competence and the related determinants. Therefore, a contribution of this research is the use of multiple theories to develop a rich, multi-layered understanding of students' motivations.

Another contribution is the use of Focus groups as a contained method of qualitative research. Evidence from this research supports the notion of the advantages that the focus group method has over personal interview or observation. When implemented correctly, focus groups give participants the window to express their thoughts and perception without having to worry about sounding politically correct.

Group discussion helped in the richness and openness of the collected data. This was not only an information session, but a session with a therapeutic value where it became soothing for students to share their opinion to one another and get to know their fellow students. At some instances, many focus groups in this research resembled support groups in the sense that students were encouraged to speak up by other students when discovering they were not the only ones who are faced with the same issues. It made a big difference to students that the researcher was not associated to their college.

At the beginning some students were reluctant to talk, but once they knew that the researcher was a student from a foreign university, their attitude towards the session changed and they felt more relaxed to express their feelings and stories, especially in the case when they had negative opinions about the university and its staff. Different focus groups allowed for an important process: data convergence. Convergence of data occurred

during the sessions between different students and opinions, and outside the sessions when data from different groups were compared to each other.

This study expands the literature on motivation by offering a cross cultural perspective. There is a wealth of research effort on motivation in the western and eastern hemisphere but a shortage of studies conducted in the Middle East region. The cultural factors and the differences between these regions in terms of values and traditions that dictate society is reflected in how students shape their perspectives on what factors are important to their motivation and what are not. The current study enriches these different perspectives and forms a basis where other researchers can benefit in their understandings of diverse cultural impacts on motivation.

Methodologically, the study at hand offered a novel, graphical representation of students' quotes. This technique was intended to show the frequency, extent, specificity and emotion. The table shows how frequently the subject was mentioned, how many people mentioned it, the level of details provided, and the emotions associated with it. This visual representation helped decide the relevance and the importance of the quotes to the main theme without specifying numbers or percentages.

5.7.2 Contribution to Practice

The findings at hand from the study suggest room for improvement in college student motivation, using technology in education, and fostering better communities of practice among higher education institutes. Higher education stakeholders, including policy makers, instructors and administrators can make use of the presented themes that have an impact on student motivation and accommodate the desired/required changes in educational policies that have direct impact to elevate student experience and enhance their resilience during their first year of college.

For policy makers, addressing issues like technology, IELTS standardization and study duration is an important element of developing a better study environment. Technology is a paradoxical tool that needs to be tested and verified before fully-fledged implementation. In particular the use of iPad as an educational tool needs further assessment and evaluation. Students' opinions should be taken into account when addressing the short falls and issues in using iPad. Some issues are clear and straightforward like technical issues and physical control measures. But other issues like writing difficulties and iPad-use-anxiety take time to develop and therefore requires student input in the beginning and end of semester to measure the extent of the impact of these issues and find and implement the proper solutions. There is also the issue of study duration and IELTS score requirements. Policy makers should look into introducing IELTS training to pupils at school level before they enter college and try to set a unified standard on the IELTS score requirements across not only public universities, but also private colleges in the UAE.

Administrators also can benefit from the recommendations of this research in better communication with both students and their peers in other universities. Some universities

have policies that enhance more flexible rules and better communicative attitudes between administrators and students. Establishing communities of practice between those universities will help some colleges borrow and adopt better policies from other colleges to enhance administration-students relationship.

For instructors, curriculum must be revisited to remove the repeated material and add more relevant instruction to student's daily life. Students agree that almost all instructors are qualified to teach but the main difference between 'good' and 'bad' teachers was their level of care. To solve this issue, instructors are encouraged to attend professional development programs focused on methods used in their teaching style to enhance student's motivation. For example, instructors can integrate techniques to increase empowerment, caring, interest, usefulness of course material, and student self-efficacy in their teaching instructions as per the guideline of MUSIC model (Jones, 2010) to enhance student motivation to learn.

For students, intervention programs are needed. These programs are suggested to raise student awareness of the importance of IELTS training centres in college, that will enhance their reading, writing, and communication skills towards achieving the required IELTS score to enter college. Other intervention programs should relate to time management and psychological assistance for those who suffer from social networks addiction that proved to be a cause for student drop out.

5.8 Limitations

The first limitation is that the research was designed as a horizontal study aimed at uncovering the factors that impact student motivation without focus on vertical or in-depth analysis of each factor. This is due solely to time limitation and the choice of methodology for the current study. Furthermore, it was vital to understand the nature of the factors that are of importance to student motivation more than to comprehend the detailed description of each factor. However, some factors were described in more detail than others because the methodology allowed for students to speak freely and place emphasis on what they thought was a more important determinant from their experience and perspective.

The second limitation was that the current study did not look for individual differences and their impact on student motivation. Three aspects of personality-related motivation, in particular, are happiness, arousal and control (Reeve, 2008). Personality differences such as affect intensity, perceived and desired control, and sensation seeking "explain why different people have different motivational and emotional states even in the same situation" (Reeve, 2008, p. 368). These variant expressions of motivation could make the difference between one student's persistence and another's drop out when exposed to the same event like not achieving the required IELTS grade or inability to balance between work and college.

The third limitation stems from the fact that the research was conducted using a single data collection method. A concern that is usually associated with research of this nature is the risk of not being able to obtain objective findings to ensure validity of results. The

researcher was aware of this concern and addressed it at each step of the research design and execution. The difference in backgrounds between the researcher and the participants was intentional to ensure neutrality and limit researcher bias from influencing the results. Further, the research included systematic processes for collecting and analysing participants' views. Probe questions and summaries were used to clarify views. Field notes, and recording were used to capture all different opinions and comments. Participants' emotion-table for each discussion topic was developed to emphasise the importance of each view and the feelings associated with it. Moreover, for each theme, the researcher established enough evidence that can be checked and verified. The findings of this research were a close representation to participants' voice and the discussion was an interpretation of these voices in a clear, systematic approach. The steps followed in collecting, analysing and discussing the results were all part of accepted protocols and guidelines of focus group research to achieve valid and objective results. After all, validity is "overemphasized in qualitative research. Instead, one should concentrate on good practice" (Krueger & Casey, 2000, p. 203).

The fourth limitation is associated with the issue of generalization from qualitative research. A de facto limitation of a focus group technique is the inability to generalize to the wider population. Because of the limited number of participants, focus groups represent the participants' voices and these numbers usually are not sufficient for generalization. The research question helped shape the design of the study with an aim of in depth understanding. As this was the case, the intention was to have a detailed understanding of a small group of students on their interpretation of elements and situations that shape and impact their motivation. Transferability (Krueger & Casey, 2000) was a more proper approach for the findings of this research. Using transferability, other researchers should evaluate the applicability of the methods, processes and results of this research into their own environment. On the other hand, given the fact the focus groups covered all three public universities with 83 participating students, it can be argued that the results of this research describe a general trend especially with the resultant themes that were common to all four participating Campuses.

5.9 Future Research

Future Research on student drop out

Findings from the current research suggest that there are diverse factors from the classroom, college, technology and from the wider society that shape students' perceptions and affect their decisions to stay or opt out of college. Researchers in future studies should look into the relationship between the factors that contribute to student drop out and male students' intention to drop out. For example, Thomas (2014) developed a model for students' intention to complete college. The model includes independent variables such as "perceived institutional support, academic self-efficacy, institutional commitment, classroom learning environment, and social support" (p. 225) that play a role on students' intention to drop out. Within the model, factors of family and non-college friends can be included in social support constructs. Further, factors of teacher, social networks, duration of study and

IELTS can be used under classroom learning environment and administration can be included in perceived institutional support.

Future researchers can use both positive and negative models of determinants as constructs for quantitative studies. Such studies will help confirm or generalize the themes to a wider population. Further, future research can also focus on investigating further the two side-findings of this study, the drop out model and class-failure model. Those models can be tested using qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches. Each college can tailor action research based on the finding of this study to its female students or students in its other Campuses to see if there is a continuous general trend of these findings.

Another recommendation for future research is to include female students as a main sample or part of a mixed sample. All participating universities have both female and male students. Although the specific issue of male student drop out and their motivation is wider than that of female students in the UAE, it is important to look at similarities and differences in gender perceptions at these same educational institutes. These insights will help the universities to either duplicate the same intervention programs to both genders or establish new programs or procedures that are more suitable for each gender.

Future Research on Friends' impact

Until now, friends were generally assumed to be one group, but in this research different groups of friends contributed to different student outcomes. On one hand, both college and non-college friends contributed to student persistence and motivation to study. On the other hand, non-college friends were the sole contributors towards student drop out. More evidence is needed on the relationship between support of those two groups of friends and well-being, academic motivation, and persistence. For example, future research can focus on a student well-being scale adapting measures for social support of both types of friends, college and non-college friends, which can be augmented with motivation and persistence scales.

iPad Future Research

Future research can focus on iPad acceptance amongst students utilizing one of the technology acceptance models (TAM) (Davis, 1986) or an updated version of TAM used by Park and del Pobil (2013) for tablet PC acceptance. Although these models measure the intention to use technology through perceived usefulness and ease of use, future research should augment this measure with concentration on the impact of adaptation on motivation because “technology acceptance in education is more complex, requiring complementary approaches to examine how adaptation and learning behaviors influence motivation” (Gasparini & Culén, 2012, p. 4).

Specifically, questions related to student experience using iPads should be explored for UAE male students. Among the variables to be tested, future research should focus on iPad impact on students' satisfaction, engagement, retention, motivation, and achievement of learning outcomes (MacDonald, Brimble, & Manning, 2014).

Another area of future research should focus on iPad-anxiety and its role in student motivation, academic outcome and drop out. The research at hand points out that students explicitly commented that their frustration when using iPads has driven their motivation level downwards and affected their assignment completion and exam outcomes. The fact that some students left because of these challenges requires further investigation on the implications of such issues on students. Anxiety scales have been used in measuring the impact of iPad social script application on students with autism (Johnson et al., 2014). Currently, iPad anxiety related research is both recent and scarce. As an example, iPad-use anxiety emerged as a theme in a case study of 16 instructors at a woman's college in the UAE from a research carried by Psiropoulos et al.(2014). Therefore, further investigation into student related anxiety using mobile devices will help diminish the gap in the area of iPad-anxiety impact on students.

5.10 Research Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the factors that impact UAE male college students' motivation in their first year of studies. The study was conducted using a mono-qualitative method; focus groups. The exploratory nature of the research required a method that blends debates with personal experience and views of coherent student groups. The discussions brought different viewpoints and vivid details of students' experiences on the themes they thought were important to their motivation. Positive and negative encounters and even intentions to drop out of college were discussed throughout the sessions. This was due to two main elements: the researcher being an independent interviewer, and the use of the native language which gave students the ability to express what they felt and say what they usually fear to say when staff or administrators are present. The result showed a host of social, curriculum, and personal themes that impact student motivation. Some themes had dual impact on motivation and some were purely negative. Of the important themes, students' social circles of college and non-college friends, family, administrators, and instructors have a profound impact on student motivation, both positive and negative, class failure and drop out decisions. Themes related to curriculum such as quality of instruction, IELTS requirements, duration of study and iPad adaptation had mainly negative impacts on students' motivation, academic achievement and in some cases drop out of college. Some personal themes like goal setting and job status generated both positive impact when present and negative impact when absent. Other personal themes like high school experience and social network addiction had negative impact on motivation. Students were more inclined to be extrinsically motivated than intrinsically where the education journey does not inspire them internally to achieve but it is regarded more or less as a means to achieve other goals that some students view can be achieved with or without a college degree. Ultimately students seek jobs to have money, get married and form families. When external motivation becomes negative, students seek alternative options to reach their goals, such as transferring to other colleges with lower IELTS requirements or study duration, or simply end up dropping out to join the military or police which offer high salaries. More focus should be exerted on nurturing intrinsic motivation towards college degrees and

fostering a positive environment where policy makers and educators implement changes in policies, intervention programs and teaching methods in light of students' points of view to enhance their motivation to learn.

It should be acknowledged that there were limitations associated with this research. Using a qualitative approach limited the ability to generalize the results. However, the aim of qualitative research is to achieve in-depth understanding rather than to generalize the findings. The second limitation was associated with the fact that the themes were not deeply examined. This is due to the limited time of the research and the fact that the goal was to examine the relation between these themes and student motivation rather than examining what constitutes these themes. Likewise, the third limitation is that the research did not focus on individual differences between students. That was not possible due to the nature of the inquiry dictated by the research quest to understand the collective experience of students as a group and not as solitary. The fourth limitation was that the use of a single research method limited the objectivity of the results. However, using probe questions, summaries, field notes, personal reflection, and comparing data collected from one focus group with another helped achieve balanced and valid outcomes.

Future research in the area of student motivation can use the motivation models from this study for further verification and generalization. More research is needed to understand the components of the factors that impact motivation and their interdependencies when it comes to student experience at college. Now that the factors have been identified, research can focus on how individual difference impact students' motivation when exposed to the same environment. Other research can include bigger samples from both government and private organisations. It can also be conducted with a more balanced gender sample by including female students which constitute the majority of UAE college students.

No matter what determinants impact motivation of male students in college, motivation is both important and a complex construct with an extensive set of theories that can be used to explain it. The first step to foster facilitative motivation is to understand and comprehend the elements that play a role in its sustainability. Using the understanding from the current study, learners can be taught to explore their inner drives to achieve their academic goals by providing them with the proper motivation to facilitate their success.

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7 Appendices

Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Sample of UAE Research in Higher Education

	UAE Literature	Sample & Gender			Student Profile				Class Profile		Institute Profile				Internal Researcher
		Sample	Male ⁽¹⁾	Female ⁽²⁾	Student level ⁽³⁾	Age Group ⁽⁴⁾	Enrolment Type ⁽⁵⁾	Nationality ⁽⁶⁾	Class Type ⁽⁷⁾	Subjects ⁽⁸⁾	Number of institutes studied	Institute type ⁽⁹⁾	Institute name ⁽¹⁰⁾	City ⁽¹¹⁾	
1	(Daleure, 2012)	N	0	N	U	N	F	AE	S	B	1	PB	HCT	Sj	X
2	(Tubaishat & Lansari, 2011)	67	N	N	U1	N	F	N	S	T	1	PB	ZU	N	X
3	(Abou Naaj et al., 2012)	108	38	70	U	N	N	M	S	T	1	PT	AUST	Aj	X
4	(Nachouki, Naaj, & Ankit, 2011)	350	N	N	U	N	N	M	M	T,A	1	PT	AUST	Aj	X
5	(Radecki, 2005)	26	0	26	U1	N	F	AE	S	E	1	PB	ZU	Ad, Db	X
6	(Patronis, 2005)	48	0	48	U1	N	F	AE	S	E	1	PB	ZU	Db	X
7	(Vrazalic, MacGregor, Behl, & Fitzgerald, 2009)	455	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N	2	PB, PT	N	Ad, Db	X
8	(Dougherty, Butler, & Hyde, 2011)	32	2	30	G	N	N	N	M	N	1	PB	N	Ad, Db	X
9	(AlSagheer, 2011)	62	28	34	U,G	5	M	N	M	N	2	PB, PT	HBM	Db	X
10	(Nasir et al., 2011)	428	N	N	U	N	N	M	M	T,B	1	PT	CC	Ad	X
11	(Mohammad & Job, 2012)	150	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N	1	GF	AOU	G	X
12	(Fayed, 2010)	N	N	N	N	N	N	AE	S	E	1	HS	N	Ad	X
13	(Alrawi et al., 2012)	31	N	N	A	N	N	N	N	N	1	N	N	N	X
14	(Solan & Crane, 2012)	400	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N	2	PT	N	DB, O	X
15	(Burt, 2004)	3	0	3	U	N	F	AE	M	n	1	PB	ZU	DB	X
⁽¹⁾ Male		(1-999): total male student. (0): no male students. (N): male number is not specified.													
⁽²⁾ Female		(1-999): total female student. (0): no female students. (N): female number is not specified.													
⁽³⁾ student level		(U1): Freshman (Y1). (U2): Sophomore (Y2). (U3): Junior (Y3). (U4): Senior (Y4). (H): High school. (G): Graduate level. (U): Undergraduate, year not specified. (N): Not specified. (A): Academic instructor													
⁽⁴⁾ Age Group		(1): 18-22. (2): 23-30. (3): 31-40. (4): 41++. (5): 18-35. (N): Not specified.													
⁽⁵⁾ Enrolment Type		(F): Full-time students. (P): part-time students. (M) : Mixed (N): Not Specified.													
⁽⁶⁾ Nationality		(AE): UAE. (O): Other. (3): Mixed. (N): Not specified.													
⁽⁷⁾ Class type		(S): one class room, one subject. (M): More than one class room, multiple Subjects. (N): Not specified.													
⁽⁸⁾ Subject		(E): English. (T): Technical (IT, Computer). (A): arts, humanities. (4): Business. (N) : Not specified.													
⁽⁹⁾ Institute Type		(PB): UAE Public Higher Education Institute. (PT): UAE Private Higher Education Institute. (GF): Gulf Region Higher Education Institute. (HS): UAE High school.. (N) : Not specified.													
⁽¹⁰⁾ Institute name		(ZU): Zayed University. (HCT): Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT). (UAEU): UAE University. (HBM): Hamdan Bin Mohammed e University (HBMeU). AUST): Ajman University Of Science & Technology. (CC): Computer college. (AOU):Arab Open University (N) : Not specified.													
⁽¹¹⁾ City		(Ad): Abu Dhabi. (Db): Dubai. (Sh): Sharjah. (Aj):Ajman. (Fj): Fujairah. (Rk): Ras Alkhaima. (Uq): Umm Alqaiwain. (An): Al Ain. (N): not specified. (G): Gulf Region. (O): Other.													

UAE Sample Studies Characteristics

	UAE Literature	Objective
1	(Daleure, 2012)	Influence of using blended learning to maximize teaching efficiency for undergraduate students
2	(Tubaishat & Lansari, 2011)	Evaluation of undergraduate student's readiness for blended learning course initiative.
3	(Abou Naaj et al., 2012)	To develop and evaluate an instrument measure of student satisfaction in blended learning based on 5 elements (instructor, technology, class management, interaction & instruction)
4	(Nachouki et al., 2011)	To investigate the impact of video conferencing on student performance and satisfaction in blended learning environment
5	(Radecki, 2005)	Share students' insights on blended courses with colleagues and other institutes to improve blended courses design & management.
6	(Patronis, 2005)	Description of effects of interaction in blended learning on motivation.
7	(Vrazalic et al., 2009)	Description of e-learning barriers
8	(Dougherty et al., 2011)	Assessment of benefits & drawbacks of blended courses on postgraduate students.
9	(AISagheer, 2011)	summative evaluation of e learning impact on student satisfaction
10	(Nasir et al., 2011)	Formative evaluation research on impact assessment of LMS usage on students
11	(Mohammad & Job, 2012)	summative evaluation of blended learning impact on student confidence, Motivation, satisfaction, performance
12	(Fayed, 2010)	Impact assessment on the benefits of blended learning for English language students
13	(Alrawi et al., 2012)	Assessment of higher education academics perceptions on barriers between knowledge management and LMS in blended learning
14	(Solan & Crane, 2012)	Student retention model including creativity, emotional intelligence and learner autonomy.
15	(Burt, 2004)	Impact of active learning on performance and motivation in female Emarati students

Objectives of a sample of UAE studies on Higher Education student experience

Appendices

UAE Research	Type				Research Sections Check List										
	Basic	Applied	Action	Evaluation	Abstract	Literature Review	Research Question	Hypothesis	Theoretical Frame	Methodology	Data Analysis	Questionnaire?	contribution	Limitation	Future Research
(G. Daleure, 2012)			x		x										
(Tubaishat & Lansari, 2011)				x	x	x									
(Abou Naaj, Nachouki, & Ankit, 2012)	x				x	x	x		x	x	x				
(Nachouki, Naaj, & Ankit, 2011)	x				x	x	x		x	x	x				x
(Radecki, 2005)			x		x										
(Patronis, 2005)	x				x		x		x		x				
(Vrazalic, MacGregor, Behl, & Fitzgerald, 2009)	x				x	x			x	x	x		x	x	
(Dougherty, Butler, & Hyde, 2011)				x	x	x						x			
(AlSagheer, 2011)		x			x	x	x					x			
(Nasir, Kabir, & Arabia, 2011)				x	x	x						x			
(Mohammad & Job, 2012)				x	x				x		x				
(Fayed, 2010)				x	x	x									
(Alrawi, Ibrahim, & Alrawi, 2012)		x			x	x									x
(Solan & Crane, 2012)	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
(Burt, 2004)		x			x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x

A sample of Basic, Applied, Action, and Scientific UAE Studies in Higher Education

7.2 Appendix 2: Sample structure of UAE Researches

UAE Study	Sample		
	Total	Male	Female
(Daleure, 2012)	N	0	N
(Tubaishat & Lansari, 2011)	67	N	N
(Abou Naaj et al., 2012)	108	38	70
(Nachouki et al., 2011)	350	N	N
(Radecki, 2005)	26	0	26
(Patronis, 2005)	48	0	48
(Vrazalic et al., 2009)	455	N	N
(Dougherty et al., 2011)	32	2	30
(AlSagheer, 2011)	62	28	34
(Nasir et al., 2011)	428	N	N
(Mohammad & Job, 2012)	150	N	N
(Fayed, 2010)	N	N	N
(Alrawi et al., 2012)	31	N	N
(Solan & Crane, 2012)	400	N	N
(Burt, 2004)	3	0	3
Total		68	211

(N): number is not specified in the study

UAE Student Experience Studies' Samples