

Diversity in Higher Educational Institutions: The Case of King Abdulaziz University (Rabigh)

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Abstract This paper studies diversity and multiculturalism in higher education institutions. Diversification assures racially inclusive learning environments where diversity refers to differences in culture, language, gender and religion and social class. Diversity has been discussed through a literature review, a prior personal experience and typical diversity-related attitudes in KAU (Rabigh) including undermining skills of minority and non-English speakers due to Saudization. Diversity-related issues in KAU involve racism, gender-related issues (e.g. women education) and disabilities. To overcome discussed issues, a presentation workshop was suggested to raise students' awareness about ethnicity/race diversity, workshops involving men/women were proposed to be organized to allow interactions and meet women needs in education, and a disability awareness program has been introduced to adopt appropriate practices in working with hearing impairments. Diversity in KAU can be implemented through a developed mission statement, a step-by-step strategic plan, and the roles and responsibilities of educational leaders. Lastly, an interview was conducted with an ESL student (Saudi) from a reputed US institution to answer questions regarding diversity issues and linguistic/bilingual challenges.

Keywords Diversity, Higher Education, Multiculturalism, Racism, Women Education, Disabilities, KAU, Rabigh

1. Introduction

Diversity refers to different culture, race, ethnicity, language, gender, religion and social-class of people within the community. Multicultural education includes programs and practices related to educational equity, women, ethnic groups, language minorities, low-income groups, LGBT, and disabilities. Embracing diversity might be a challenging task for many educators. This is because many educational leaders fail to understand their students' culture. Educators will not be able to identify students' culture unless they are familiar with their culture [1].

In this work, we discuss diversity in education from three different perspectives: literature review, personal experience and the current situation at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) at Rabigh. Diversity-related issues in KAU were introduced and analyzed to furtherly suggest various presentations, workshops and awareness programs along with developed mission statement, strategic plan, and responsibilities of educational leaders that will eventually overcome present diversity issues.

2. Diversity in Education

2.1. Literature Review

The importance of diversity and multiculturalism in higher education institutions was pointed out by Karkouti in his article where it is stated that there should be no exclusionary and/or discriminatory recruitment practices affecting minorities. However, Karkouti only considered race and ethnicity in his diversity analysis and definition "Diversity is the engagement across racial and ethnic lines comprised of a broad and varied set of activities and initiatives", but diversity also refers to differences in culture, language, gender, religion and social class. It was suggested that educational institutions should promote the consideration of race, ethnicity, sex, or national origin to allow for diverse campus racial climates and prevent racial and ethnic discrimination. Racism and discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities can be addressed through various professional development programs and policies such as affirmative action policy (1953) and academic curriculum programs that emphasize diversity in college [1].

According to Karkouti, creating racially inclusive learning environments through diversifying institution's curriculum, faculty and student bodies would prevent underestimating minorities and colored students; and this is only possible if educational institutions are willing to have a diverse staff, faculty, and student body which is directly related to the

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educational richness. A less diverse institution's campus negatively affect minority students because they feel that they are discriminated and less important than majority students [1]. Minorities with opposite cultural views (frame of reference) of American mainstream culture have greater inflexibility to learn at school [2]. Collaborating with legal organizations in developing new admissions and hiring policies that increase diversity and promote equality must be considered to overcome the social oppression of minorities. Yet, developing educational policies and teaching practices requires the engagement of both students and faculty members to foster diversity; as mentioned by Milem et al. in his proposed diversity framework which involves (a) taking a multidimensional approach, (b) engaging all students, and (c) focusing on the process. Two other frameworks were suggested based on the association between leadership and diversity and they are leadership practices for diversifying (LPD) and diversify for leadership practices (DLP); which are very helpful to have racially inclusive environments (cross-racial interactions) as an attempt to diversify the institution's campus [1].

Dr. Mobley indicated that educational diversity is associated with the inclusion of excluded races and groups; there must be an action plan to successfully accomplish diversity in educational institutions. It was suggested that there might be a paradox in diversity between diversity initiatives in her City and/or University (Case Western Reserve University) because some people believed that the City had been already in a post-racial society, since President Obama was black, where others said we have only begun diversity. Hence, based on the latter views diversity can go either way depending on how we deal with it. Many educators believe in Dr. Mobley saying "Diversity is the nation's unfinished business; If we cannot acknowledge it, we cannot address it!" [3].

Educators and leaders have just started/realized progress towards diversity in the last few years and we need more diversity in the society. Dr. Mobley, in her talk, stated an interesting concept "diversity wheel" which determines internal (race, age, gender, etc ...), external (income, appearance, etc ...) and organizational (management status, work content/field, etc ...) dimensions of diversity. In the US society, the equality issue between colored (black) and white women is still unresolved because leaders confuse racial diversity with gender diversity. However, Dr. Mobley pointed out in her story of the two orphanage girls that it is not about the color only, but about being moral and ethical to others [3]. W.E.B Du Bois, in his published book *Souls of Black Folk* in 1903, mentioned his thoughts about diversity as "This, then, in the end of his/her striving: to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture, to escape both death and isolation" [4]. Dr. Mobley recommended that we have to work towards diversity and believe in diversity by valuing it and applying the best practices towards it in order to give the people a sense of belonging to encourage them for competitions and learning [3].

Educators in educational institutions should always work towards diversity and make sure to diversify their students, faculty members and curriculum for student's success. Diversity and racially inclusive learning environments should become from involving both educational leaders as well as students in developing educational policies and teaching practices. Certain diversity frameworks (e.g. LPD and DLP) may be used to foster cross-racial interactions between student/student and student/faculty bodies. Dr. Mobley agrees with Karkouti that diversity is strongly associated with the inclusion of excluded races within the society. However, Karkouti only considered race and ethnicity in his diversity analysis whereas Dr. Mobley believes that diversity is not only about one's color and/or gender, but it is about being moral and ethical to others as she explained the diversity wheel concept [1, 3].

Diversification is a non-ending continuous process of improvement of applied practices, like using PSEL standards, to give students a sense of belonging and promote student's academic success and well-being. A paradox in diversity may arise if people in the society have different levels of education, awareness, and understanding of the word "diversity". If everyone in the society has a similar idea to what Dr. Mobley thinks, then there will be no paradox and everyone will agree with the statement "Diversity is the nation's unfinished business" and that it is a non-ending development process in educational institutions. Regarding the personal level, diversity is even important in our daily activities; and there should be no racism and discriminations towards any person whoever he/she is regardless of his race, gender, language, social class, culture, ethnicity, and religion. Nevertheless, the current progress of diversity in an educational/institutional level is much more difficult than in a personal level; but both levels require a continuous development in diversity to have diverse societies [1, 3, 5].

2.2. Personal Experience with Diversity

A past experience for me, in which cultural differences were an issue, is related to my previous job when I was working as a chemical engineer in Saudi Aramco Company. I used to work with diverse employees of different nationalities, race, ethnicity, language and cultural background; and since the company approach is based on the team-work, I have been usually assigned in groups with people of totally different nationality and race than of mine. Hence, I was annoyed because of the idea that it would be hard for me to understand others' minds. In the beginning, I faced some difficulties in getting along with my team of foreigners, mainly due to cultural and language differences, but on a later stage, I have been able to adjust myself and learn a lot from working with them. However, this took me longer than I expected (three weeks with daily meetings) because I have not had the chance to know that understanding others' culture would have helped me in understanding their behavior and thinking [6].

Later, I found out that I was mistaken in getting annoyed at

the first place because I learned skills like organization, work experience, respectfulness, and discussion. However, it will absolutely take some time to understand the other person's accent, behavior, think, and culture; but this time will be much shorter if I know today's knowledge about diversity. This completely depends on the idea of putting culture to work and knowing others' culture. With today's knowledge on diversity, I would have learned the other teammate's culture much faster and I would have engaged myself with them in various activities to overcome cultural differences and create collaborative and productive relationships [6, 5].

2.3. Diversity in King Abdulaziz University (Rabigh)

Students in the Chemical Engineering Department at KAU (Rabigh) have been observed to recognize/understand several diversity-related issues that arise from student-to-student and faculty-to-student interactions (faculty staff evaluation, grading, and lecture/notes delivery to undergraduate students). Diversity-related attitudes in KAU (Rabigh) include, but not limited to, undermining learning skills and abilities of low-income/rural students, non-English speakers, and non-Saudi students. These attitudes are associated with the differences in social class, language, ethnicity/race (nationalism) and culture background between university students.

The higher educational institute (KAU, Rabigh) is typically constructed for undergraduate study levels. The University was established in 2009 and is located at Rabigh City in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia, and is a branch of the main KAU in Jeddah. In 2015, there were approximately 1000 students attending the university and were distributed on the five available academic programs (200 students per program) which are Medicine, Engineering, Science, Business and Computing/Information Technology [7]. The university had no clear standards and/or regulations relevant to the mentioned diversity-related attitudes. However, today's administrators at KAU are developing standards of assessment for student's performance as an attempt to promote equality. The university should address diversity-related attitudes by having a more diverse campus, teaching students about diversity and engaging students and faculty staff in solving the problem [8].

There are various difficulties inherent in creating a culture to change attitudes towards diversity in KAU (Rabigh). While religion and culture permeate every facet of life including economic, governmental and educational arenas, Saudi Arabia remains a very traditional, conservative society where educational institutions prefer to have a static culture (a non-diverse campus). Yet, successful educational reforms encourage new ideas, new thinking and new concepts to be implemented in order to achieve/accept diversity [9]. Commonly, difficulties arise because students/faculty staff are not exposed to other cultures within the university campus (or even outside the university); and this is because Saudi students account for more than 90% of the total university students [7].

Saudization (Saudi applicants have the priority in student/faculty staff vacancies at the university) creates a huge challenge for educational leaders to change students/faculty staff attitudes towards diversity. The university should collaborate with Saudi organizations to initiate diversity awareness programs and encourage campus diversity (e.g. admitting more international students) to overcome any difficulties towards the change. The University reform/change should be antiracist, anti-biased and independent of one's social class and language keeping in mind that identities and cultures are not static and they change and evolve according to curriculum and instruction [6].

3. Addressing Diversity Issues in KAU

3.1. Race/Ethnicity and Culture

The university administrators should develop a presentation about diversity to be delivered to both employees (faculty/administrators) and students of the Chemical Engineering Department at KAU (Rabigh). The presentation topic should be "Overcoming Racism through Establishing a Multicultural Curriculum Reform" which should be delivered as an attempt to raise awareness about ethnicity/race diversity between students and faculty members in the department. Racism issues should be embraced by teaching the students that social and education equality between various students/faculty members within the university is essential [6].

Race/ethnicity and culture of every student should be respected, appreciated and understood without any bias and/or inclination from faculty/administrators to a specific group/race/ethnicity of students within the department. Thus, this presentation provides the guidelines and techniques for faculty/administrators to establish a multicultural reform through curriculum transformation in order to have anti-racism community and students who value other's race/ethnicity and culture [6].

In 2015, the Chemical Engineering Department at KAU (Rabigh) had approximately 40 undergraduate students [7]. The primary goal of the department should be to engage faculty, staff, and students in a better learning environment through having a diverse campus community that will ensure collaboration, creativity, equality, and innovation. The department should seek a safe environment that is free from discrimination which is possible by understanding and appreciation for the complex cultural and physical worlds in which faculty, staff, and students live [11, 12].

Students should know that race is a modern idea and has no genetic basis and that equality idea just came out when racism appeared in the society; hence, this presentation topic would help students/faculty members in understanding the following questions: What is race? Why do we have differences between people? How do we accept diversity and have a more diverse campus? How would

faculty/administrators work together to establish a new/modified curriculum (a multicultural curriculum reform) that will ensure our department is free from discrimination behaviors? [15]. Curriculum transformation plays a key role in changing students' thoughts, ideas, opinions, and perspectives about race/ethnicity diversity.

The presentation workshop/seminar aims to raise awareness of participants (Department faculty, students, and administrators) about diversity and develop their understanding of race, ethnicity and cultural differences within higher educational institutions. Intended outcomes of the workshop are as shown below [6, 15, 16]:

- (1) Understand and define diversity in a university educational level.
- (2) Respect, appreciate and understand the differences in culture, race, ethnicity between people on campus (e.g. in the Chemical Engineering Department).
- (3) Define the following terms: race, racism, multicultural curriculum reform, and discrimination.
- (4) Develop students' skills to interact, engage and include themselves with others to have positive relations between different ethnic and racial groups.
- (5) Build a more inclusive and cohesive community within the department by incorporating faculty, staff, and students in solving different racism issues.
- (6) Consider and apply government regulations and university laws regarding cultural diversity and racism.
- (7) Encourage faculty members and administrators to work together to establish a new/modified curriculum for a better learning environment that is free from discrimination.
- (8) Identify and resolve current racism issues within the department and respond to them according to the given instructions.
- (9) Ensure cooperation between faculty members and students in supporting and developing a more diverse community.
- (10) Comply with the new university rules regarding diversity and respect university leaders and administrators guidelines in mitigating racial activities and behaviors within the department.

Relevant sources that can help/support participants to achieve the above outcomes:

- Book (chapter 9): Banks, J. A., & Banks, C. A. M. (2016). Multicultural education: Issues and perspectives. John Wiley & Sons. "Approaches to Multicultural Curriculum Reform"; [6].
- Link (website): Race – The Power of an Illusion (from: http://www.pbs.org/race/001_WhatIsRace/001_00-home.htm); [15].
- Link (website): KAU Vision and Objectives (from: <https://www.kau.edu.sa/pages-vision-and-objectives.aspx>); [8].
- Link (news article): Higher Education in Saudi Arabia (from:

<https://wenr.wes.org/2014/11/higher-education-in-saudi-arabia>); [17].

- Article: Harper, S. R., & Davis III, C. H. (2016). Eight actions to reduce racism in college classrooms. *Academe*, 102(6), 30.; [18].

The book chapter will enable leaders and educators to apply the concepts of "Multicultural Curriculum Reform". Students and staff can get more information about racism and its origin from "Race – The Power of an Illusion"; while faculty and administrators can keep on their mind the overall goal of the department from "KAU Vision and Objectives" during their journey towards diversification. A news article about "Higher Education in Saudi Arabia" is very beneficial for all parties to understand the current situation of higher education in Saudi Arabia. Finally, several actions that may help to reduce racism at KAU are explained in "Eight actions to reduce racism in college classrooms".

Other actions are required in order to overcome racism at KAU in Rabigh (Chemical Engineering Department); and they are as the following: (1) Leaders and educators must develop the current curriculum to be equally describing/explaining all genders, races, ethnicity, and cultures of the students in the classrooms; (2) Students have to embrace the meaning of diversity and accept other cultures. (3) Both students/leaders should continuously get knowledge about others and engage themselves with others on campus in order to promote campus inclusion/diversity [6, 16].

Students, faculty members/staff, and administrators are all responsible for the change in the university (diversification). For example, in order to successfully engage students in classrooms, educators must know their students and their academic abilities individually, rather than relying on racial or ethnic stereotypes. Educators must be very sensitive to their own ethnic attitudes as well as their student's ethnic attitudes in order to have a more harmonic environment that is free from racism. Moreover, curriculum and text selections are crucial to academic performance and can help students to find and value their own voices, histories, and cultures [19]. The growth/development of the department can be assessed from leaders/educators through weekly reports about negative outcomes (e.g. racism issues and cultural conflicts) and positive outcomes (e.g. more inclusion, engagement and positive attitudes) [6].

3.2. Gender

Saudi Arabia is a very conservative kingdom and is one of most gender-segregated countries in education in the world; where women live under the supervision of a male guardian due to country/religion culture. Still, many people believe that this system is unfair to women as Ms. Akeel reported that "Male guardianship is un-Islamic and humiliating for women, some (men) take advantage of this male guardianship for their own benefit and abuse it" [20].

In the early days in Saudi Arabia, a woman's right to study in educational institutions and participate in the development

of the nation was constrained by getting a man's permission and/or approval (a male representative, preferably a family member); where women in every field are subordinate to men [20], [21]. Also, the general public in Saudi Arabia discussed another gender-related problem associated with women education which indicated that a Saudi woman's place is in her home (as believed by governors/educators); and if they are allowed to study, they cannot go for any profession other than teaching and medicine. Saudi women encountered continuous limitations and restrictions at both educational and professional levels. Only a few women have been able to gain access to pursue their education in professions like engineering, science, media, aviation or construction since the government and religious leaders think women are not capable of doing specific jobs/tasks due to differences between male and female structures [21]. Hence, a bias related to gender that impacts women students to pursue their education and affect their educational relationship with a staff member of an educational institution arise from the previous beliefs and views determined from the country's culture, religious norms and regulations.

However, recently and during the last 50 years, the government of Saudi Arabia has changed their views about women education and built many universities and colleges for women in order to involve women in the educational society. Also, Saudi Arabia has changed their views about letting women work and study without a man's permission [21].

The number of women's institutions has grown from 15 in the 1960s to 155 in the 1970s [22]. Effat University (in Jeddah) has allowed women to study science, engineering, language and liberal arts and to be as equal as men in choosing any profession of study. Moreover, KAU has opened branch campuses for women offering mathematics, biology, medicine, computer sciences, humanities, and architecture. However, in all universities, women have attended segregated campuses, and subjects were still more limited than those for men [21]. In 2009, there was a controversial move from King Abdullah to open KAUST University that does not follow the segregation model. KAUST was the first entirely co-educational institution in the country where both genders are taught in the same campus and classes. Women now account for 58% of all Saudi university students, and this rate is expected to increase because, as of today, there are approximately 300 women's colleges in Saudi Arabia [23].

Educational institutions should address previous gender-related problems regarding women education (e.g. woman's right to study without a man's permissions, woman's right to continue her study in any field or profession, women segregation in education and women as being viewed as subordinates and/or undermined groups to men). One example of what universities have done to encounter gender-related problems is that, In 1967, KAU in Jeddah began to allow women to attend campus and the Girls Education College was started in Makkah which gradually increased the number of women in Saudi universities [24].

Another example is that girls/women at KAU were allowed (in 2009 or even before) to enter other educational fields and professions such as engineering, science, media, computers, information technology and tourism when the university opened new faculties for girl's campus to ensure gender-equity and gender-equality [25].

Educators should not view women as subordinate students and there should be no discrimination and segregation against women. KAU may adopt the KAUST University model in having a free-segregated campus (women and men have equal chances and opportunities for study). Even though this might look very hard at the beginning, especially that Saudi Arabia is a conservative society, it will be a good start to have a diverse campus where both genders have a chance to begin to understand each other's mind.

A bias-free environment is attainable if the university has a plan of inclusion to (1) ensure diversity and minimize stereotyping and discrimination against women, (2) provide educators with the required knowledge about women and their capabilities to have equal chances to men in learning and studying, (3) Host men/women student panels to share students' experiences with staff, and community events [6] [26]. Educational institutions in Saudi Arabia must allow individuals to interact with the opposite gender (men with women at the same campus/classes, but under university/country/religion regulations and laws) to understand each other's mind, thoughts and views about education and rights of being educated. Segregation is never a solution to the discussed problems because universities have to become more inclusive, diverse, supportive and cooperative with minorities (e.g. women) to promote educational equality and reject any biased behaviors [27]. There should be organized workshops and communication gatherings between students and staff members to educate educators/students about how to object other's idea and reduce bias towards women in a respectful way and without denigrating or destroying other's own beliefs or culture. Leaders and educators have to revisit university policies regarding women education and make sure to include the following: (1) inclusive learning environment, (2) discrimination-free behaviors between men and women, (3) women rights to learn without a man's permission and (4) women rights to select any major of study.

Higher education in Saudi Arabia has changed over time in accordance with Saudi cultural traditions and religious norms [28]. According to Slattery (2013) "The ignorance about race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity is the root cause of senseless bullying, segregation, workplace discrimination, salary disparities, identity confusion and repression, hate crimes, and much more" [29]. Hence, we should update the education system to create programs that support women and balance social constructions of gender. Universities have to redesign their teaching and training programs to embrace the growth mindset of their students (men/women) and to give women the opportunity to be successful leaders and independents in the future. Moreover, curriculum reforms and teacher engagement in complex environments

(multi-perspective learning) will greatly impact the classroom's atmosphere and student's diverse populations for consistent progress and learning equality [28].

3.3. Disabilities

The engineering college at KAU (Rabigh) has shown a few educational inequality and exclusion practices towards students with disabilities. Thus, this study also aims to design/develop an educational initiative program related to students with disabilities to raise students' awareness. The project work (Disability Awareness Program: The Case of Students with Hearing Impairments in the Engineering College at KAU) should be introduced to the students in a workshop presentation which involves the following: [what is disability?, types of disability, students with hearing impairments, types of hearing impairments, plan of actions/changes towards students with hearing impairments, workshop outcomes, and student attitudes].

What is disability? According to the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), disability includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, psychological, neurological, sensory, learning disabilities, physical disfigurement and/or the presence of disease-causing organisms [30]. A student is considered disabled when there is a physical, behavioral, or cognitive difference that adversely affects a student's educational performance [6].

Types of disability: There are many different types of disability and some students may have more than one disability. Different disabilities will impact the student's educational involvement in different ways; hence, affecting his/her educational success. Students with disabilities include the following: vision impairments, hearing impairments, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, psychological and psychiatric conditions, autism spectrum disorders, neurological and cognitive impairments, brain injuries and medical conditions [30].

Students with hearing impairments: Students in KAU have to be educated on how to interact/work with other disabled students (on campus) such as students with hearing impairments. A hearing impairment can range from a mild hearing loss to profound deafness. This category of disabled students has been chosen because students with hearing impairments need assistance from the university as well as their peers (e.g. other students) to properly communicate with others. Many students with impaired hearing experience a delay between hearing and/or reading information, processing it, and responding. Thus, it is not only about communication and/or better access to course material, but also about how much time impaired hearing students are given to process this information [30]. Educational equality and inclusion of students with hearing impairments are attainable if the university raises its students' awareness regarding students with disabilities [6].

Types of hearing impairments: (1) conductive hearing loss which is caused by blockage or damage in the outer and/or middle ear (often cause loss of loudness and may be

improved by medical or surgical treatment), (2) sensorineural hearing loss which is caused by damage to, or malfunction of, the cochlea (sensory part) or the hearing nerve (neural part) leading to a loss of loudness as well as a lack of clarity, and (3) mixed hearing loss which results from a problem in both the conductive pathway (in the outer or middle ear) and in the nerve pathway (the inner ear). A student with hearing impairments should use hearing aids, cues from lip-reading, sign language and/or a combination to assist with communication [30].

Plan of actions/changes towards students with hearing impairments: There are various actions and changes that should be considered by the university and other students to assist students with hearing impairments in their learning journey. Suggested plan of actions/changes is explained as the following:

- (1) **Use the sign language to explain, communicate and work with students with hearing impairments:** It is important to understand that sign language is not equivalent to English. Sign language is a visual, spatial language with its own syntax and grammatical structure; the university should coordinate with sign language interpreters and/or transcribing service providers for deaf and/or hard-of-hearing students in classroom and lab requirements, academic-related activities and university events [30, 31].
- (2) **Provide hearing aids devices to students with hearing impairments to assist them in communication with others:** Devices should be provided by the university disability services division; available resources include C-print (video captioning) and UbiDuo (a communication device that enables communication via texting) [30, 31].
- (3) **Support students with hearing impairments in lecture note-taking by live remote captioning, interpreting and other communication aids:** Support may be provided by disability services and/or from other students and faculty staff from videotape, descriptive video and videos with scripts, lectures records, and notes from a classmate in native language [32].
- (4) **Communicate effectively with students with hearing impairments:** Educate group members about strategies for effective communication, raise your voice when speaking and always look forward, guide students in group activities, do not walk around when speaking and speak clearly [30].
- (5) **Look for signs indicating the difficulty of hearing:** A student may not be taking notes, watching you, not reacting as expected, asking you to repeat what you just said and not participating fully in class; these are all numerous signs which need to be considered [30].
- (6) **Be positive, friendly and remember: person first; disability second:** Your language should reflect a positive attitude; avoid terms like handicapped, retarded, able-bodied, physically challenged,

differently abled, victim, sufferer, wheelchair-bound; use appropriate language and have an appropriate behavior to make students feel welcomed and important to receive good service and respect [30].

Workshop outcomes: The expected outcomes from the workshop include that, but not limited to, the students should appreciate and assist other students with hearing impairments problems through (1) use of sign language, (2) provide support such as note-taking and hearing aid devices, (3) communicate effectively and determine if there is difficulty of hearing from students. Also, the workshop should raise the students' awareness about disabilities by (4) promote an inclusive learning environment, (5) avoid being disrespectful and stereotypical or offensive, and (6) encourage students to be friendly, assistive, smile and make eye contact with students with a disability.

Student attitudes: Changing students' attitudes is vital in eliminating discrimination. The rising number of persons with disability and the transition of people with disability into the community has helped to increase the understanding and acceptance of people with different needs. The workshop goal is not to only let student accept their disability peers, but the ultimate goal is to have an inclusive environment and equal learning opportunities where everyone is treated fairly regardless of his/her physical, mental and/or intellectual conditions.

4. Implementation of Diversity in KAU

4.1. Mission Statement

The primary purpose of the university, KAU (Rabigh), should be to educate students to develop their knowledge, wisdom, and values and to improve their problem solving, leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills; and personal health and well-being through discovery, innovation, participation, diversification, understanding, learning, critical examination, professional practice/training and behavioral and educational guidance. The university should seek to engage faculty, staff and students in better learning environment and diverse campus community that will ensure workforce/students collaboration, free exchange of ideas, creativity, equality, innovation and entrepreneurship with an understanding and appreciation for the complex cultural and physical worlds in which faculty, staff, and students live; which reflects a safe environment that is free from discrimination. The university should aim to support and encourage its faculty/students regionally, nationally, and globally by engaging them with external and international partners to ensure individuals can achieve their full potential for the survival of this and future generations and improve the quality of life for all; and for the ultimate goal of becoming a world-class university [10-12].

Summarized Mission Statement: "Educate, Communicate, Participate – and Diversify the Community for a Better Learning Experience" [10, 12].

4.2. Strategic Plan

A developed step-by-step strategic plan must be considered by KAU and involve diversity to implement a positive change in the cultural attitudes [11-13]:

- (1) Create a transformative educational experience for undergraduate and professional students that is focused on student success (Students).
- (2) Offer a broad range of academic programs that are mutually reinforcing and emphasize high quality and creative instruction/curriculum at the undergraduate and professional levels (Academics).
- (3) Participate extensively in statewide, national and international conferences/programs and encourage students to seek benefit from the university's unique educational resources, such as faculty and staff expertise, libraries, archives, museums and research facilities and technology (Participation, Research, and Technology).
- (4) Strengthen cultural understanding through admitting more international students/faculty staff, providing opportunities to study languages, cultures, the arts and the implications of the social, political, economic and technological change to ensure campus diversity and safe learning environment that is free from discrimination (Culture and Diversity).
- (5) Achieve a high level of excellence and standards in all programs through the encouragement of study, research and service off campus and abroad and through engaging students, faculty and staff in decision-making practices (Excellence and Engagement).
- (6) Generate new knowledge through a broad array of scholarly, research and creative endeavors, which provide a foundation for dealing with the immediate and long-range needs of society (Knowledge).

4.3. Roles and Responsibilities of Educational Leaders

The university (KAU, Rabigh) should adopt the following roles and responsibilities of educational leaders and major stakeholders [6, 14]:

- (1) **Community members:** Participate in the diversification act and appreciate administration efforts in culture change and academics areas.
- (2) **Administrators:** Communicate with the involved groups and organizations to initiate the culture change and develop student's learning experience, academic programs, research, technology, and diversity.
- (3) **Students:** Study cultural differences, accept diversity, and get engaged in the society to promote student's learning experience and community inclusion.
- (4) **Families:** Get engaged with administrators and students in decision-making practices towards culture change, diversity, students success (e.g. curriculum and instruction change/update) and academic

programs.

- (5) **Faculty:** Provide students with guidance, support, encouragement; and participate in updating programs' curriculum and in international conferences for better diversity and research outcomes.
- (6) **Staff:** Ensure university facilities, technology and knowledge (e.g. libraries, archives, museums and research facilities) are available and accessible for everyone for better research and learning experience.

5. ESL Students in a US Institution

I have interviewed an international student (a woman from Saudi Arabia) from the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program at the University of Illinois (UIC). I chose this student for the interview because she is an international student studying English in a foreign country. Yet, the chosen student is a monolingual student but is interacting with other students on campus who are considered bilingual. The student's ESL at UIC is a semester-based program. Students have to come every day from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM to have a variety of English classes to enhance their English skills in reading/writing, speaking/listening and comprehension [33]. The student commented on the class diversity and mentioned that "ESL classrooms included diverse student's nationalities from China, Thailand, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and Ecuador".

I asked the student various questions regarding diversity, linguistic/bilingual challenges and issues that she might have faced during her study in the ESL Program at UIC. The student replied to my diversity question as "UIC has a very diverse campus and classrooms, instructors are very demanding (in a good way to teach their students), informative, and objective towards their students' culture/ideas and most of the English instructors have no obvious racism behaviors". However, the student explained that she faced a stereotyping issue in the classroom from one of her American instructors. She said that her instructor thinks that all women from Saudi Arabia are viewed as oppressed, poor and unintelligent women due to many unspecified reasons.

I have been told that the university system follows English-only instructions with no bilingual education. The student thinks that it is impossible to teach students in two languages in the US universities due to the varieties and/or diversity in the nationality and the language of the students. However, the author believes that English-only is not the ideal way of teaching because students have to learn, understand, grasp the required knowledge in both languages (L1 and L2); so that they get more successful during their study journey. Dual-language immersion programs, where students receive academic instructions in their both languages such as primary and English languages, allow students to understand, engage and participate with other students in the class in order to develop their academic performance through learning others' language, accent, and

pronunciation for better learning progress [6].

The student stated that she faced a problem of understanding other international students within the class due to pronunciation and accent differences; which might be related to the fact that those students have been taught in schools that were monolingual (which presumably does not teach English and/or apply a bilingual education). Also, the student said that there was a sentence structure issue among international students due to differences in each student's mother language. She tried to ask students to repeat their sentences in order to understand them correctly. However, she was unable to change the language style of others due to the way those students have been taught in their home countries (monolingual educational system). Applying a bilingual education system, in student's origin country and/or in the US University, may help students to understand each other easily and overcome the language barrier that arises from the limited vocabulary, sentence structure problem and poor pronunciation/accent [34].

Classrooms of the ESL program at UIC have the policy that states everyone should speak in English language only; since students are there to learn English which makes sense. However, instructors allow students to speak to their same-language peers in their native-language when they struggle in explaining their thoughts [33]. Also, teachers help their students to overcome their pronunciation/accent problems and the problem of understating others by assigning more presentations that are delivered individually by each student (in English language only). "This activity would facilitate understanding others' accent and improve communication between students in a monolingual classroom"; said by the student.

According to Palmer (2014), teachers need to promote bilingual identities by applying the suggested powerful instructional strategies: (1) modeling dynamic bilingual language practices, (2) positioning students as bilingual (even before they are), and (3) celebrating and drawing attention to language crossing. Combining these strategies would allow teachers to move towards using students' bilingual language practices as a resource for educational success. Palmer believes that we need to offer teachers better guidance for nurturing bilingualism, biculturalism, and biliteracy in their schools/universities [35]. Other instructional programs for promoting linguistic diversity include transitional bilingual education (TBE) and maintenance bilingual education (MBE); where students receive academic instructions in their both languages (primary and English languages) to develop their academic proficiency [6].

The culture plays a key role in changing the learning process of international students in learning two different languages. Governments, administrations, and communities should work together to provide a bilingual education (in the home country) for students; as an attempt to overcome sentence structure problem and poor pronunciation/accent of the English language from coming international students. Since the English language has recently become the

international language as it is the primary language of instructions, guidelines and publications for science, education and research [36], students must be taught the English language from an early age that is from or even before the elementary school (preferably at kindergarten; when students are very young). The benefits of bilingual education are mostly attainable for children. According to the Georgetown University Medical Center (2017): "It is often claimed that people who are bilingual are better than monolinguals at learning" [37].

To address the student's issues, the university should have adopted several regulations and laws concerning the student situation with diversity and bilingualism: (1) the university should teach students in two-language instructions to allow more interactions, understanding and discussions, (2) the university should examine and test the performance of students in English-only language since it is the international language of science as of today. Hence, graduated students would be able to engage themselves in the society and be more successful individuals [36, 34].

Discourses of power that might have influenced the student's situation include, but not limited to, culture, monolingual and/or bilingual education, instructions language, engagement with other international students and practice of foreign L2 (English) language.

University leaders should guide their students to overcome the given issues through the following actions: (1) apply dual-language immersion programs, (2) teach students in two-language instructions, (3) test the performance of students in English-only language, (4) offer teachers better guidance for nurturing bilingualism, (5) adopt instructional programs for promoting linguistic diversity (e.g. TBE and MBE), (6) allow students to speak to their same-language peers/faculty members in their native-language only when they struggle in explaining their thoughts, and (7) change monolingual educational systems to bilingual.

6. Conclusions

Diversity in higher educational institutions has been literature reviewed and applied to KAU (Rabigh) to have inclusive learning environments. From my prior personal experience, diversity knowledge allows to understand other's culture and result in more collaborative and productive relationships with others.

Typical diversity-related attitudes in KAU (Rabigh) include undermining the abilities of minorities (due to Saudization), racism, gender-related issues (e.g. women education) and disabilities. A presentation topic "Overcoming Racism through Establishing a Multicultural Curriculum Reform" was suggested to be delivered to raise awareness about ethnicity/race diversity. Gender-related problems regarding women education may be approached by giving women the right to choose her field of study and allow interactions with the opposite sex in organized workshops. A project work "Disability Awareness Program: The Case of

Students with Hearing Impairments in the Engineering College at KAU" was also suggested to have appropriate practices towards students with disabilities (hearing impairments). A more diverse university campus may be attainable through implementing developed mission statement, step-by-step strategic plan, and roles and responsibilities of educational leaders. The conducted interview with an ESL student (Saudi) from a reputed US institution concluded that there are diversity issues associated with bilingual education; the teacher needs to promote bilingual identities for the students' success.

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