The homecoming experiences of female Saudi Arabian international students

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

There is an increasing world-wide trend for people to live overseas and at some point, to return to their countries of origin. The displacement of these individuals has the potential for both disturbing and favourable consequences for themselves and their families, as well as the social and economic fabric of their home and host countries. This thesis explores the experiences of six Saudi Arabian female postgraduate students, as they completed their international education sojourns in Australia and began the repatriation process. It chronicles the participants' individual perspectives of repatriation, with the aim of reporting descriptively on their experiences. A qualitative methodology involving in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the study's participants at significant junctures within the repatriation process was the primary data collection method used for this study. The special place of culture and cultural identity was explored throughout, with particular emphasis on how cultural differences were bridged during the research process. The findings of this study are noteworthy for their capacity to augment understandings about the repatriation process; provide descriptions that link expatriate experiences with repatriation outcomes; and generate ideas that might be later used to develop frameworks for improving sojourner readjustment.

Key words: cultural identity, intercultural relations, international sojourn, readjustment, repatriation

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS Australian Bureau of Statistics

AEI Australian Education International, the international education arm of the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education.

CCTV Closed circuit television

ISB International Student Barometer

KASP King Abdullah Scholarship Programme

KSA Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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