

# Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030: Approaches to Multicultural Education and Training

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Although multicultural education is a distinctly American reform movement, it is also relevant to social and educational issues in other countries. Due to the moderation process occurring in Saudi Arabia since the launch of Saudi Vision 2030 (Vision 2030) in 2017, Saudi culture is in flux. Vision 2030 hopes to nurture respectful, tolerant students who are proud of their heritage. Openness to different cultures is encouraged to develop globally-engaged, open-minded, and competent students. This article explores the application of multicultural education theory to Saudi Arabian education, arguing that various contemporary approaches to multicultural education can be used to craft a multicultural curriculum that takes Saudi Arabia's unique situation into account. The article examines each approach's strengths and limitations, reflecting on social considerations that may be relevant to the Vision 2030, and hoping to advise Saudi educators about incorporating multicultural education into their curricula. Implementation challenges and the need for further research are discussed.

**Key words:** *Saudi Arabia, Saudi Vision 2030, Teacher education, multicultural education, global education, critical pedagogy.*

## Introduction

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is considered a multicultural society. Throughout Saudi history, merchants and pilgrims came from various regions and travelled freely within the Arabian Peninsula, resulting in ethical and environmental diversity and multicultural exchange. Today's KSA is diverse and includes Muslim Arabs from different ethnic backgrounds, Saudi-born Sunni, Shia, and other religious groups, and religious groups from other religious backgrounds coming to KSA for work, bringing with them their own cultures



and languages. KSA is also diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, class level, national origin, and individuals with special needs (Merryfield, 2000).

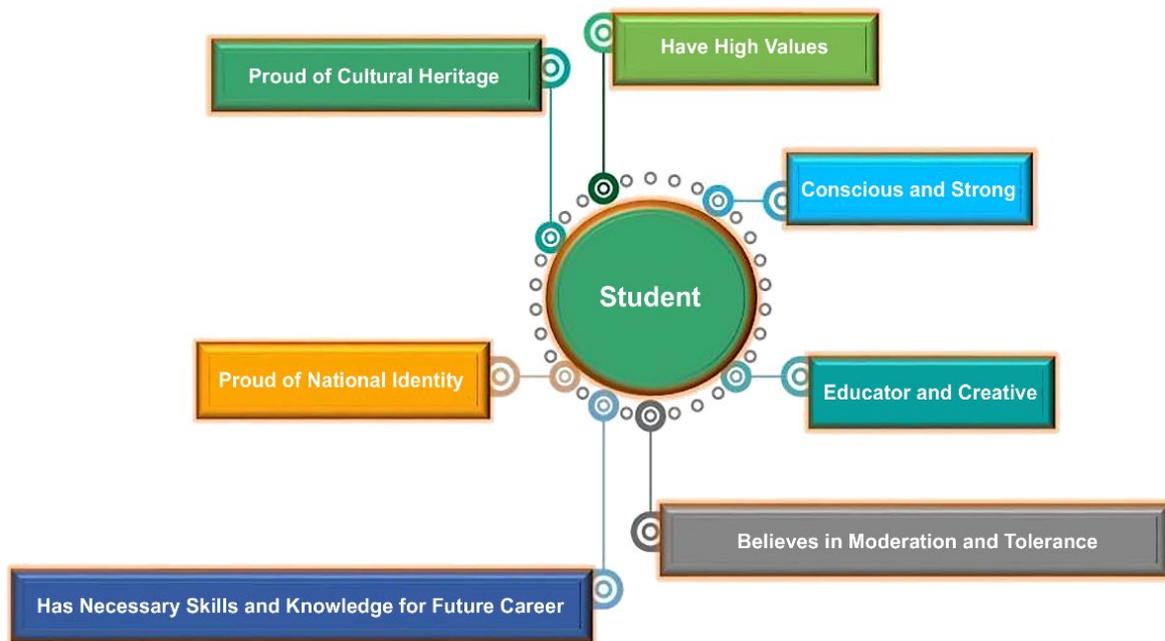
Scholars (e.g., Al Thowaini, 2015) note that the history of this region has played an important role in the development of its educational system. Education was restricted during the Ottoman Empire to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, where teaching was hosted in mosques or houses of philanthropists. Later, modern education sites known as “*Katateeb*” where you learners learn Quran and literacy, were established (Rass & Addine, 1994). When KSA was founded by King Abdul Aziz, education began to be promoted and organised by the Directorate of Education (Al-Amrry, 1997), which later transformed into the Ministry of Education (Ministry). The Ministry unified the curriculum and teachers’ qualifications for certification (Al Thowaini, 2015). From that time on, two characteristics have distinguished KSA’s education system. First, K-12 and higher education are free for all Saudi students. Second, due to national religious beliefs, segregation by gender is mandatory from elementary to postsecondary education. This educational segregation is a response to Islamic rules that discourage mixed-gender schooling.

Between 2006 and 2015, KSA invested heavily in education scholarships, launching the King Abdullah Scholarship Program. The program intended “young Saudis to know the world and for the world to know them so they could pursue their higher education goals and meet the demand for a national labour force while obtaining global experience and an understanding of other cultures” (Havril, 2018, p. 152). The goal of this program is to prepare students for leadership roles in Saudi society by exposing them to cultures outside of KSA, with a focus on providing the skills and knowledge that will both benefit them personally and benefit KSA when they return.

In 2017, KSA released Saudi Vision 2030 (Vision 2030), an educational plan to be fulfilled by the year 2030. Vision 2030 focuses on diversifying the Saudi economy and developing its education and tourism sectors. According to Vision 2030, Saudi students are challenged by lack of creativity, critical thinking, and life skills, which may be attributed to weak teacher preparation, curriculum, and teaching methods (Harvri, 2018). Vision 2030 focuses on developing civic values such as respect, sense of responsibility, creativity, belief in moderation and tolerance, and skills required to ensure future career success (Figure 1). Further, Vision 2030 aims to “help students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators” (p. 44). It develops a K-12 curriculum fostering creativity and international level competency in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The Ministry seeks to develop an educational system that is more compatible with the multiplicity present in KSA today. According to Havril (2015), “At the primary and secondary level of education, most students receive strong KSA-specific knowledge and miss a comprehensive outlook on common human knowledge, especially in the fields of humanities or social

sciences” (p. 562). Havril (2015) goes on to note that university students are provided with coursework and books covering international knowledge and various cultural topics. Yet, this is not enough to comply with Vision 2030’s imperatives.

**Figure 1.** Ideal Students: Characteristics



Since Vision 2030’s launch, two issues have dominated the growing discussion on the challenges facing the Saudi education system. First is the scope of the curriculum, currently devoted to the Muslim religion and Islamic history (Al Munajjed, 2009; Al Wedinani, 2016). Consequently, Saudi universities tend to produce graduates in Islamic studies or Arabic language, whereas graduates in engineering, technology, or economics are rare. Second, many instructional pedagogies still emphasise rote learning techniques that focus on memory and recall rather than comprehension, thus hindering the development of different types of thinking skills (Havril, 2018). The traditional method of teaching failed to include active learning techniques that involved students as partners in learning.

Thus, teacher preparation programs must be reevaluated, particularly concerning the ability of these programs to provide the awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary to fulfil Vision 2030 objectives. Multicultural education is one approach that can address the above challenges while simultaneously supporting Vision 2030’s objectives, including developing students who are tolerant, respectful, and proud of their heritage. Alismail (2016) reported, “researchers emphasise that the professional preparation process can increase teachers’ awareness of the impact of cultural differences, and bring children’s different cultures into the classroom, influencing their teaching strategies” (p. 140).

However, because multicultural education is a new concept for Saudi institutions of higher education, few studies investigate its use in KSA. Yet, because of Vision 2030, discussion of this approach has become essential. This paper aims to combat the dearth of research on multicultural education in KSA by assessing the role of multicultural education in the context of Vision 2030. The author synthesises some of the concepts and topics discussed within multicultural education and reviews possible means of incorporating multicultural education into the KSA K-12 curriculum and teacher preparation programs. The nature and/or type of multicultural education considered applicable to KSA's unique situation is also discussed. The author begins with a brief synthesis of five common approaches to multicultural education teaching. These approaches are then used as a basis for discussing the incorporation of multicultural education into the Saudi education system under Vision 2030.

## **Approaches to Multicultural Education**

### ***Defining Multicultural Education***

Multicultural education is a philosophy based on the acceptance of and respect for cultural differences within educational settings (Jones, 2015). It “challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities, and teachers represent” (Asante, 1996, p. 20). Multicultural education prevents the proliferation of stereotypes acquired from homes, community, and media, enabling individuals to understand and respect students from different cultural groups (Ford, 2014). The goal of multicultural education, therefore, is to “develop cross-cultural competency within the American national culture, with their own subculture and within and across different sub societies and cultures” (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. 9). In the case of KSA, multicultural education would enable Saudis to develop the cultural competency necessary to succeed within their changing society.

Many scholars in multicultural education believe the future depends on youths' ability to interact efficiently with people different from themselves (Banks & Banks, 1995). Ideologists such as Vygotsky (1978) argue that when students know more about each other, they become more confident and work together in a constructive way (Salgur & Gursoy, 2015). Multicultural forms of education further help students to dissect social and economic systems that may lay behind inequality between the minorities and the majority (Arphattananon, 2018). Consequently, multicultural education can contribute to economic development. Furthermore, scholars such as Nieto (2004) and Czerniawski et al. (2018) argue that multicultural education supports democratic principles of social justice by using critical reflection and criticism of the current social practice to effect social equality.

Further, teachers' attitudes and expectations influence their student's achievements (Acar Ciftci, 2019; Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016; Ly & Crowshoe, 2015; Raisa & Alisa, 2018; Tasha & Michelle, 2019). Therefore, acquiring multicultural competence is crucial for teachers who are facilitating multicultural classes. Unfortunately, research studies have found that teachers, in general, hold "simplistic and naive views about culture and diversity" (Castro, 2014, p. 190). However, teachers' professional development primarily depends on working within global, national, regional, and local policy contexts. The author argues, therefore, that in the interest of improving teaching strategies, professional preparation of preservice teachers should include training on student differences and multicultural approaches to education.

### *Approaches to Multicultural Education*

To achieve the goals of multicultural education, various approaches to teaching it have been identified. Some focus on human relations and celebrating diversity, while others call for social equality and change (i.e., Gorski, 2009; Jackson, 2003; Vavrus, 2002). Grant and Sleeter (2006) are the most prominent and cited scholars; they construct multicultural education approaches that include concepts of social justice and action, critical analysis, and hegemony (Gorski, 2009). This paper focuses mainly on their framework.

Their first approach is Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally Different. Students are taught and assimilated into middle-class culture, values, skills, language, and information. It focuses on students who are economically disadvantaged and second language learners. Teachers help students acquire the skills and knowledge to achieve academically and function effectively in their society. However, this approach assumes that failure is related to an individual's inability to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to survive, ignoring the very real economic and social limitations and constraints faced by people experiencing poverty or lacking educational opportunities (Grant & Sleeter, 2006).

The second approach is Human Relations. It is one of the most popular approaches among middle school teachers. Human Relations emphasises tolerance and respect among students and promotes positive peer relations, fosters an understanding of differences, and focuses on eliminating stereotypes. It also investigates how prejudice and stereotypes developed historically among people. An awareness of how prejudice develops helps teachers generate strategies that may assist students in reducing prejudices (Grant & Sleeter, 2006). Opponents of this approach argue that Human Relations accepts common stereotypes of minority groups, teaching acceptance of differences without critically analysing the underlying assumptions on which the perceived difference is based or analysing student reactions to being treated differently based on such assumptions and stereotypes (Chin, 2016).

The third approach is Single-Group Studies. Its main goal is reducing racial discrimination among oppressed groups (Grant & Sleeter, 2006) including people often characterised as single groups, such as women, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. Single-Group Studies stresses the importance of schools for providing students with information regarding their history, values, and contributions. It argues that the aim of education is to help people who are oppressed overcome discrimination and to call for equal opportunity for all (Walker & Soltis, 1997), and that schools should help students develop pride in their identities by providing accurate and equal information about their groups in a respectful way. Single-Group Studies has been accused of accelerating hostility among other group members rather than promoting tolerance, acceptance, and appreciation of similarities and differences (Grant & Sleeter, 2006).

The fourth approach is Multicultural Education, the aim of which is to support and respect diversity. Multicultural Education embraces five goals: (1) promoting cultural diversity; (2) promoting respect among members of diverse groups; (3) promoting social justice for all people; (4) promoting equal distribution of power among all diverse groups; and, (5) opening more opportunities for all people to have a better life. Multicultural Education not only seeks to change the attitude of the dominant group through teaching respect and tolerance (as the Human Relations approach advocates) but also demands to add courses about specific societal groups (as in Single-Group Studies). Thus, the Multicultural Education approach seeks to transform the school curriculum as a whole.

The fifth approach is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist. This approach is rooted in the work of Freire (1970), who believed in the role of school in empowering oppressed groups. Grant and Sleeter (2006) argue that Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist education seeks to transform the current education status and critiques contemporary modern culture. It criticises current social situations and assumes that the educational program as a whole has a bigger role. Advocates of this approach believe strongly in the individual's ability to change society. Therefore, education should help students develop the skills needed to bring about social change for a better future—a future of freedom and equal access to opportunity and quality education. Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist has been criticised for relying on a curriculum to initiate social change and ignoring factors such as race, class, and ethnicity, which are contentious and unsettled issues affecting social transformation (Jenks et al., 2001).

These five approaches have been arranged into three frameworks in multicultural education literature: conservative, liberal, and critical (Banks, 1994; Jenks et al., 2001; Banks & Banks, 2012). Teaching the Exceptional and Culturally Different provides a conservative framework that assumes differences should be lessened and calls for the minority groups to assimilate into mainstream culture and at the same time carrying out principles of democracy to ensure

equality for all. It assumes that equality and inclusion are part of the language to reduce differences that exist in schools (Jenks et al., 2001). The second framework is liberal multiculturalism; it acknowledges that values like equality and tolerance help different groups live together. It focuses on including minority groups in the curriculum, focusing on their history and challenges. According to Grant and Sleeter (2006), the Human Relation approach represents the liberal framework as it promotes acceptance and tolerance of differences. It respects the history of the different groups and honours them through various representations in the school curriculum, such as courses on African American culture or units on female feminists. This framework is the one most often utilised in schools (Jenks et al., 2001). Lastly, the critical framework critiques the situation and refuses student assimilation into mainstream culture. It encourages questions about justice and equality and aims to change the current cultural situation through actions. The Single-Group Studies and Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approaches fall under the critical framework, focusing on increasing social awareness of minorities' rights to equal treatment.

In the subsequent section, possible implications of multicultural education in KSA are examined, followed by a discussion of the role of feminist pedagogy in increasing representation for women in the Saudi national curriculum.

### **Possible Implications of Multicultural Education in KSA**

Education that is multicultural carries several potential implications in the Saudi education system. Multicultural Education is the most discussed approach in multicultural education literature, mainly because of its two important features: assimilation and pluralism. Both of these characteristics endorse equality and inclusion and necessitate the transformation of Saudi society into a pluralistic society that accepts differences and promotes equality for all. Further, from a religious and social perspective, both pluralism and equality are values promoted in Islam. The aim of multicultural education is not to criticise the political or economic aspects of the culture but to understand the social dynamics of students to improve achievement (Nieto, 2017; Erbas, 2019; Acar-Ciftcil, 2019). Both Saudis from different cultural backgrounds and foreigners who work or study in KSA need to adopt and blend into Saudi culture. The teacher's role is to help students from different cultural backgrounds understand Saudi culture and provide them with equal opportunities for quality education. This could include varying the curriculum and modes of instruction to meet different learning styles and needs (Jenks et al., 2001). Curriculum content should, for example, change according to different Saudi groups, genders, and nationalities.

Table 1 summarises the topics covered in the KSA elementary school curriculum. It provides an overview of unit topics covered across elementary grades. Table 2 summarises the percentage of multicultural topics covered in Saudi curricula. The analysis of the Saudi

elementary curricula revealed an emphasis on Saudi national topics in grades 4-6. Some of these topics include but are not limited to Saudi history, culture, development, and Saudi Arabia's natural resources such as petroleum and natural gas. Saudi geography and Islamic history are limited to upper grades. Countries and cultures outside of Saudi culture are not explored in history, geography, or as reading topics; no role is given to civics education at the elementary level.

**Table 1:** Topics in KSA elementary education

Grade	Arabic language	Social studies	Civics
1	Health, games, animals, hobbies, food	None	None
2	Manners, transportation, communication, work ethics	None	None
3	Seas and continents, Muslim scientists, morals	None	None
4	Jobs, sports and games, birds and insects	Blended with citizenship Prophet Muhamad lineage	None
5	Loyalty, manners and behaviours, communication and transportation	Included in with civics: Education, economic and social issues in the Arabian Peninsula, land and sea preservation	None
6	Health awareness, community work, science and technology	Included in civics: People in my country, resources, development in KSA	None

**Table 2:** Percentage of multicultural topics covered in elementary education in KSA

Subject	National	Regional	Multicultural
Arabic language	100%	None	None
Social studies	100%	None	None
Civics	100%	None	None

The goal of multicultural education is to promote pluralism and accept diversity within schools. Lack of representations of different Saudi groups, especially women, will result in a

lack of interest among students, especially Saudi women. Further, neglecting to acknowledge Saudi women's role does not reflect the acceptance and respect characteristic of Saudi culture. Faas (2011) argues that students studying subjects such as geography, history, and civics have been found to "respond to culture and diversity because of their identity formation intent" (p. 467). As such, these subjects should be present in the curriculum. The need for multicultural education in this situation is evident. The goal, as Faas (2011) states, is "to create an environment offering equal education opportunities to students from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds" (p. 473). Vision 2030 focuses on expanding the Saudi economy by opening the country up to different cultures and regions. Consequently, KSA is likely experiencing a demographic shift as a result of increased immigration. This further reinforces the need to adopt multicultural education to promote pluralism and interculturalism (Castro, 2014). Core subjects in Saudi elementary education are generally focused on religious topics. The elementary curricula include six religious subjects (Table 1). The current practices are not conducive to Vision 2030's goals of preparing students for national and international labour markets by ensuring they are open-minded, creative, and critical thinkers. The global economy demands more graduates in fields such as the sciences, engineering, and healthcare who are skilful and knowledgeable of global affairs. The current religion-based curricula create Saudi graduates who are less active and competent in these sectors (Rugh, 2002). In addition, the globalisation of the economic, political, and technical sectors has shaped and defined the important knowledge younger generations need (Merryfield, 2000). Education programs must prepare students to work and function effectively in a global society (Mayo & Larke, 2010).

Research on multicultural education acknowledges the importance, for example, of adopting "multicultural identity in citizenship education" (Castro, 2014, p. 190). Schools are associated with the responsibility of preparing younger generations to be the leaders of their countries. Scholars recommend that higher education institutions in KSA prepare students to live and work in environments that accept and respect diversity. Many studies (i.e., Jenks et al., 2001; Mayo & Larke, 2010) argue that universities in KSA must include courses containing multicultural content, such as diversity studies, international studies, and women's studies. Such multicultural education will assist Saudi society in understanding diversity. Adopting multicultural education as a part of the national curriculum will support the achievement of Vision 2030 goals, including equal representation of all groups in the curriculum and in pedagogy, reducing racism and prejudice, enhancing global awareness and acceptance, and empowering women by closing the gender gap (Mayo & Larke, 2010).

Havril (2015) reveals another type of multiculturalism important within the education environment: interactions between Saudi university teachers from different cultural backgrounds. Saudi universities hire teachers from around the world with a broad range of religious, ethnic, linguistic, social, and cultural backgrounds and affiliations. Havril (2015)

suggests the need to raise awareness of the diversity of cultures among Saudi university staff; she argues that understanding other cultures will help promote understanding, tolerance, and acceptance among them. Havril (2015) explains, “intercultural competence development operates in the framework of cultural pluralism on a global stage and creates globally competent university students. These endeavours presume to forecast the opportunity of a paradigm shift in university education in the future” (p. 565). Teaching about other cultures provides a good opportunity for university staff to interact with students in a way that fosters interculturalism and promotes pluralism.

### ***Preservice Teacher Preparation and Training***

To achieve equality, teacher training programs that include explicit instructions on multicultural education strategies are of high importance. Such programs must provide teachers guidelines, instructional strategies, and curriculum differentiation to meet the needs of the various students in the classroom (Castro, 2014). For example, Castro (2014) suggests the following components: 1) specific vocabulary that promotes inclusion; 2) strategies for preservice teachers to use in their classrooms; and 3) assigned readings on the history of different groups, for example, accomplished influential Saudi women, different Arab groups during the Gulf War, or the history of Jazani people. Such readings may help promote respect and friendship between group members (Jenks et al., 2001).

Banks (1994) suggests four teaching approaches that could also be effective in teaching multicultural education in KSA: Additive, Transformative, Contributions, and Social Action. In the Additive framework, teachers play an important role in adding and then using materials that are missing from the curriculum (Jenks et al., 2001). For example, teachers who notice that women are not represented in the assigned readings could add readings about women in KSA or women in general to the curriculum. In the Contributions framework, teaching is focused on promoting assimilation through teaching mainstream Saudi culture and trying to help people from different cultures understand, appreciate, and be part of Saudi culture. The Transformative framework, as the name suggests, requires changes from inside the curriculum and includes, for example, adding topics that discuss different groups from distinct cultures to the curriculum. This approach specifically helps teachers and students develop reflective and critical thinking (Jenks et al., 2001). Finally, Banks (1994) suggests the Social Action framework, which encourages students to play an active role in changing issues related to inequality and injustice.

Since the concept of multicultural education is new in KSA higher education, education departments should take the lead in preparing preservice teachers to design learning experiences that support diversity among their students. Mayo and Larke (2010) state that “culturally responsive teaching and learning with an emphasis on greater teacher awareness

of the cultural dynamics in the content, interaction and pedagogy enhances teachers' ability to design culturally enriched and sensitive teaching: learning experiences" (p. 20). Alismail (2016) suggests that the concept of diversity should be part of field experiences where prospective teachers are able to practice planning and designing lessons that incorporate different cultural aspects. He further suggests that the syllabus include specific methods for teaching multicultural education.

The author will now expand upon the Single-Group Studies approach in the interest of advancing the representation of women in the KSA curriculum and as an additional framework for multicultural education.

### **Single-Group Studies and Saudi Women**

Since KSA adopts single-sex schooling, the following discussion of feminist pedagogy is limited to female students studying in women-only institutions, taught by female teachers. Single-Group Studies is an important approach to multicultural education because, since Vision 2030's launch, "much effort has been put into fostering equality and closing the gender gap at every level of society in the last few months in Saudi Arabia" (Havril, 2018, p. 2). An explicit goal of Vision 2030 is to facilitate opportunities for Saudi women to contribute in more diverse ways to KSA's economic and social development. Havril (2018) revealed that sixty per cent of women at Jazan University in Jazan, KSA, wanted to improve their cultural competence and professionalism for more active participation in the global market. Havril (2018) explained that "only half of the participants in the present research have been influenced by Western teachers' cultural, social, and academic endeavours, but in their constructive interactions more than sixty per cent suggest that they want to learn to improve their intercultural competence" (p. 174). This indicates that Saudi students have positive attitudes toward learning about other cultures.

Developing Single-Group Studies programs in KSA is, in the author's opinion, essential. Women in KSA are forced to be singled out as one group; they are separated from male students in public and private schools and universities. The curricula for women reflect disciplines that reinforce a woman's role as a mother. This has limited the representation and participation of women in different fields of study in universities. Saudi women have fewer expectations from their families and their community to play a bigger role in their society (Vincent-Lancrin, 2008; Al Wedani, 2016).

Furthermore, women are underrepresented in the Saudi curriculum. The current curriculum omits the contribution of women throughout history, including their experiences and roles in the past and present. Thus, the problem lies with the Saudi curriculum, and the adoption of the "one size fits all" mentality toward curriculum building that is standardised across the



country for both male and female students. In addition, the curriculum is written by male scholars. Therefore, the curriculum does not represent women's needs, interests, and expectations. Girls' curriculum, as discussed previously, is dominated by religious and Arabic language studies. To achieve the goals of Vision 2030, the Ministry must revise, evaluate, and reform girls' curricula to be more responsive to the new educational objectives that seek to develop skilful, open-minded, tolerant graduates in all fields who will be able to compete globally.

The current changes in KSA, as driven by Vision 2030, provide an opportunity for the adoption of the Single-Group Studies approach. The process of reforming the curriculum is lengthy, especially if the proposed program generates controversial issues such as empowering women in KSA. Sufficient communication and cooperation are needed between Ministry personnel and female teachers to share decisions related to national curriculum reform regarding women's representation at all educational levels in KSA.

Further, since Vision 2030's launch, universities have been entrusted with developing and supporting initiatives and projects that will contribute to curriculum innovation and development. Universities will thus be able to have more freedom in initiating women's studies programs, although within certain limitations, which include avoiding issues that conflict with KSA's religious and social ideology. At the individual level, for example, a teacher could adopt the Single-Group Studies approach by using different instructional strategies inside her classroom to empower young female students. One such strategy is feminist pedagogy (Grant & Sleeter, 2006). This is a teaching technique that encourages women to critically question their current situation in society; for example, female students may be encouraged to question what they read in a textbook that has been written by a man (Al Wedani, 2016). It helps female students, in particular, to acknowledge their strengths and abilities while building confidence, self-esteem, and trust in their own judgment. In addition, depending on the subject being taught, a teacher could use the assigned subject and expand on the idea, providing her students with materials for generating additional knowledge regarding female contributions, histories, and struggles, in the past and present. Further, a teacher could encourage her students to reflect on their personal experiences through writing, using these narratives to expand on certain issues and build their awareness. This could open student discussion and reflection on personal experiences or other relevant issues. With this approach, teachers could help students develop critical thinking skills and offer female students, particularly opportunities for reflection.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this paper, possible implications of different multicultural approaches in KSA were discussed. KSA is considered a home for all Muslims around the world. In light of this,

principles of Islam are celebrated, include accepting differences and promoting equality. Therefore, complying with their religious values, Saudis accept pluralism and multiculturalism to encourage appreciation and difference (Yusdani, 2018). This fact makes the implementation of a multicultural approach to education possible. However, not all the frameworks promoted by the five approaches to multicultural education are applicable to the Saudi curriculum. The authors found that the Multicultural Education promoted by Grant and Sleeter (2006) is the most appropriate for the Saudi context. Yet, it is evident that adopting such an approach would require fundamental changes at the institutional and ideological levels, with respect to those who have the power to effect such changes. Although there are some internal factors that might effect change in the curriculum, such as faculty's beliefs, schools' missions, and students' preparation, the external factors such as social expectations and government authority have the most sway. All of these factors need to be further investigated and evaluated. With the new educational transformation in KSA under Vision 2030, such investigation has become possible. Therefore, the implementation of multicultural education is crucial. To this end, it is essential to establish organisations that guide schools and universities in developing multicultural curricula as a part of the national educational standards required at different education levels (Faas, 2011).

Yusdani (2018), in discussing similar reforms occurring in Indonesia argues, “[t]he realisation of multiculturalism in the reform era of Indonesia is hindered by the obstacles and stumbling blocks in three levels, namely the level of discourse, the level of legislation and the level of application in people's lives” (p. 12). This is analogous to the situation in KSA, and thorough discussion and investigation must take place at all three levels. Today in KSA, the time is right to evaluate the importance of multicultural education.

Additionally, the author argues for the examination of teachers' (including teachers who instruct in teacher training programs) perception and awareness of different issues relating to other cultures. In reality, most Saudi teachers today, as Castro (2014) argues, hold naive and simplistic views about diversity in their culture. There is a strong need to develop a curriculum that incorporates issues related to multicultural education. However, little is known about the awareness of teacher training program faculty regarding multicultural education and what, if anything, is being taught to prepare teachers to facilitate multiculturalism in their lessons and curricula. Schools and universities in KSA have historically welcomed students from different cultural backgrounds, and this is unlikely to change. Thus, the author further suggests the need to investigate issues related to perception, awareness, curriculum evaluation, and teaching strategies as well as the potential obstacles that may hinder the adoption of multicultural education in KSA.



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