

**An exploration of cross-cultural interactions between international
Middle Eastern students and Australian students**

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Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree at this or any other university. I have acknowledged information derived from the published work of others in the text and in the list of references.

Signature

Dedication

I dedicate this to my beloved father whom I lost in the middle of my research. I wish he was still here to see me completing my research. Wherever you are dad, you are in our hearts and memories.

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My odyssey just finished. Finally I have reached my Ithaca. This could not be possible without the support of many people to whom I am very grateful.

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Abstract

Australia is the third largest provider of international education behind the USA and UK. In 2008 more than 350, 000 international students were enrolled in higher education and vocational and training sectors. Such presence of international students in these sectors presents an ideal environment for intercultural learning. However, the literature indicates that this is not the case and it appears that the interactions between Australian and international students are limited, and the formation of friendships among them is rarely taking place in educational and social contexts.

The lack of the interactions between Australian and international students is an area of concern for the Australian Higher Education institutions which hold the view that the major educational goal of internationalisation of higher education, besides the economic gains, is to prepare citizens to operate in international and intercultural environments. There is documented research that many international students live in isolation from their Australian peers and even though for about five years live among Australians, they depart without having clear knowledge about Australians and their culture.

This research explores the cross cultural interactions of international Middle-Eastern (IME) students from Arabic speaking countries in both educational and social contexts. Understanding the cross cultural interactions of IME students has become particularly relevant since their number has recently increased rapidly and the majority of literature on the interactions between local and international students refers to international students generally originating from Asian countries. Despite the fact that IME students share similar previous educational experiences with the other international students, they differ from the rest of the international students because in their majority they are full scholarship receivers. This implies that they are not allowed to do any type of paid work while studying in Australia.

This research used a mixed methods methodology to explore the level and nature of IME students' cross cultural interactions, the nature of their networks and their perceptions about local students. An online survey instrument, informed by the literature review, was developed to obtain base line data and more in-depth data was then collected through the use of focus groups and interviews.

The major finding of this research regarding cross cultural interactions of IME students with their Australian peers is the pivotal role that English language proficiency plays in the interactions and the development of friendships. The findings indicate that IME students in their majority initiate the contact with local students; however this contact tended to be only for academic purposes rather than recreational and social purposes.

The findings from the research were used to develop recommendations that could help Australian Higher Education institutions to initiate educational interventions. These recommendations could also help respective Arab governments' scholarship bodies to provide prospective students with pre-departure information regarding Australian socio-cultural and educational environment.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Over the past decade international education has become an increasingly competitive market and developed countries worldwide have been competing to attract international students. Among these countries, Australia is the third largest provider of international education behind the USA and UK. In contrast to the USA and the UK, where international students in 2008 comprised 3.4% and 14.7% of the total enrolments respectively, in Australia international students for the same year comprised 20.6% of the total student population enrolled in tertiary institutions (OECD, 2010).

Such presence of international students in the tertiary sector presents an ideal environment for intercultural learning. As Volet (1997) states "International, multicultural classrooms, provide ideal social environments for students to develop the skills and attitudes to participate appropriately in culturally diverse community and work environments" (p. 5). However, in order to benefit from each other's presence and develop the necessary skills and attitudes a reciprocal interaction is an important prerequisite. As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature indicates that this is not the case, as it appears that the interactions between Australian and international students are limited and the formation of friendships among them is rarely taking place in educational and social contexts.

Despite the intercultural aspect of international education it remains underdeveloped due to the tendency of both groups to "congregate separately within their own ethnic groups" (Todd and Nesdale, 1997, p. 5). Research findings suggest that cross cultural interactions are associated to some degree with the

satisfaction of the international students' experience in the host country (Berno and Ward, 2003; Ward, 2001; Ward and Masgoret, 2004) and their social adaptation (Searly and Ward, 1990). As Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland and Ramia, (2007) claim, the "students with strong support networks exhibit better psychological and physiological well-being, particularly during periods of high stress" (p. 9). But cross cultural interactions often are incidental (Volet and Ang, 1998) and rarely occur spontaneously (Ward, 2005).

This research explores the cross cultural interactions of international Middle-Eastern students from Arabic speaking countries in both educational and social contexts.

This chapter provides a brief background to the research topic and sequentially presents the rationale for the research, the aim, research questions and objectives, and an outline of the organisation of this dissertation.

1.2 Background

It is generally accepted that Australia's formal involvement in international education began in 1950 with the foundation of the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Development of developing countries (Back, Davis and Olsen, 1996). As initiator and member of the scheme, Australia was focused to provide educational and technical opportunities for students from East, South and South East Asia. However, since the inception of the Colombo Plan, Australia's stand towards international education and international students has changed dramatically. Changes in government policy and practices resulted in the transformation of international education from aid to trade to internationalisation (Smart and Ang, 1993; DEST, 2003) and consequently this has led to the unprecedented increase of international students in Australia over the past two decades.

The unprecedented increase of international students is not an Australian phenomenon. Verbic and Lasanowski (2007) note that “International student mobility has over the past 10-15 years become an increasingly important part of the global higher education landscape” (p. 3). According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009) approximately 2.8 million students had crossed their national borders for educational purposes in 2007 in contrast to 1.68 million in 1999. This rapid growth in such a short time may be attributed to the changes in the infrastructure and capacity of the tertiary education sectors globally, the insufficient capacity of the education sector in source countries to accommodate their local demands and the higher levels of household income (Verbic and Lasanowski, 2007). Rizva and Teichler (2007) assert that student mobility enhances students’ intercultural understanding and enables students to widen their horizons “through experiencing contrasting academic environments” (p. 1).

The main destinations for international students are countries belonging to the OECD which traditionally enrol 90% of international students. Among these countries Australia, France, Germany, UK and the USA, absorb over 70% of the international student cohort (Verbic and Lasanowski, 2007). During the period 1999-2005 Australia experienced a 42% increase in international enrolments in comparison to the UK and USA which experienced 29% and 17% respectively (American Council on Education, 2006). As a result the USA and UK’s share declined to 22% and 12% respectively, in contrast to Australia where the rate increased to 11% (OECD, 2008). At the same time Germany and France’s share declined to 10%. Table 1 overviews the enrolments of international students in the five top destinations.

Table 1: The top five destinations of international students

Destination	International student enrolments in HE and VET
USA	690,923 (2009-2010) Source: Open Doors and IIE (2010)
UK	369,000 (2008-2009) Source: HESA(2010)
Australia	281,633 (2005-2006)
Germany	233,606 (2007-2008) Source: IIE(2008)
France	266,448 (2008-2009) Source: IIE(2009)

1.2.1 Enrolments of international students in Australia

In the year 2009 there were 631,935 full-fee paying international students in Australia on a student visa (AEI, 2009). Nearly 37% of the international students were enrolled in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector, while slightly less (32.6%) in the Higher Education sector. An additional 21.4% of international students were enrolled in the ELICOS sector. Table 2 presents enrolment data for international students for the period 2007 - 2009.

Table 2: International students' enrolments for the period 2007 - 2009

Sector	2007	2008	2009	% of Total	Growth on 2008 in %
Higher Education	174,577	182,770	203,475	32.2%	12.1%
VET	119,836	175,461	232,475	36.8%	33.3%
ELICOS	101,856	125,727	135,141	21.4%	7.5%
Schools	26,884	28,798	27,506	4.4%	-2.9%
Other	27,406	31,142	33,489	5.3%	7.2%
Total	450,559	543,898	631,935	100%	16.8%

Sources: AEI (2007, 2008, 2009)

In part due to violent attacks against Indian students during 2009, the enrolments of international students from India decreased by 16.8 % in the year 2010. As Table 3 shows, besides the decrease of Indian students' numbers there was also a small

decrease in the number of international students from the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

Table 3: International students' enrolments in Australia from the top five countries

Nationality	2009	2010	% Change	Share of all nationalities
China	157,262	167,767	6.7%	27.1%
India	120,496	100,310	-16.8%	16.2%
Korea	35,656	33,986	-4.7%	5.5%
Vietnam	23,713	25,788	8.8%	4.2%
Thailand	26,380	24,882	-5.7%	4.0%
Other nationalities	267,156	266,386	-0.3%	43.0%
All nationalities	630,663	619,119	-1.8%	100.0%

Source: DEEWR (2011)

From the decrease of enrolments, as Table 4 indicates, the VET and Schools sectors are the ones which experienced the greater decline, while the Higher Education sector is the only sector which experienced an increase in enrolments.

Table 4: International students' enrolments in Australia (2009-2010)

Sector	2009	2010	% Change
Higher Education	226,011	243,591	7.8%
VET	207,985	206,581	-0.7%
ELICOS	137,539	113,477	-17.5%
Schools	27,380	24,235	-11.5%
Other	31,748	31,235	-1.6%
Total in Australia	630,663	619,119	-1.8%

Source: DEEWR (2011)

1.2.2 Major country sources of international students

In more recent times the vast majority of international students in Australia come from Asian countries. As Table 5 indicates, four of the ten major sources of international students kept their ranking order up to the year 2009. Other countries entered the top ten sources in 2008, for example Nepal and Vietnam, replacing other countries. In 2009, as Table 5 shows, Saudi-Arabia became one of the top ten sources

of international students. Prior to 2009, students from the Middle East region were included in the section 'other nationalities' because their numbers were relatively small in relation to students from East and South East Asia.

Table 5: International students' enrolments in Australia (2009-2010)

Nationality	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
China	70,741	81,843	90,048	107,071	127,276	154,777
India	20,749	27,581	38,804	63,604	97,035	120,913
Korea	23,807	26,293	31,142	34,674	35,376	35,708
Thailand	16,320	16,525	17,865	19,987	22,278	26,460
Malaysia	19,994	19,336	19,118	19,874	21,134	Nepal - 24,579
Hong Kong	22,816	21,266	20,424	19,742	18,012	Vietnam - 23,755
Japan	20,038	19,048	17,772	16,077	Nepal - 18,063	Malaysia - 23,103
Indonesia	18,140	16,118	14,999	14,919	16,063	17,867
Brazil	4,731	7,075	10,170	12,545	16,028	17,529
U SA	12,793	12,583	12,038	11,822	Vietnam - 15,931	Saudi Arabia - 12,599
Other nationalities	95,240	98,304	110,100	134,870	156,702	174,645
Total	325,369	345,972	382,480	455,185	543,898	631,935

Sources: DEEWR (2008) for years 2004-2007, AEI (2009a) for year 2008 and AEI (2010) for year 2009

1.2.3 International Middle Eastern students in Australia

Shu and Hawthorne (1996) state that prior to 1991 the Australian Bureau of Statistics, using "the United Nations' geographic definition of the continent of Asia" (p. 71) considered the Middle East as part of Asia and counted the arrivals of international Middle Eastern students with the Asian students arrivals in general. However, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET,1988) reports that in 1988, ninety-four international students from the Middle East were enrolled in formal courses in Australian education institutions and 65 in non-formal courses(cited from Jones,1988 p.31, 33) . But in DEET data, the students were grouped under the section Middle East without clarification of the country of origin. This created doubts whether these students were from countries that this research

refers to as the Middle East. These doubts arise from the lack of consensus about the countries belonging to the Middle East (some include Iran, Cyprus and Turkey).

In the 1997 overseas student statistics, Middle Eastern countries were still under the section 'Asia' but the student numbers had been clarified by the country of origin. Up to that time the number of international students from the Middle East was relatively small. However, in the last decade the number of international students from the Middle East has started to grow strongly (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2008). Austrade (2006) claims that "Since Semester 1, 2002, Australia has experienced considerable growth in enrolments from the countries of the Gulf States, Middle East and, increasingly North Africa" (p. 3). The growth of students from the Middle East in Australia coincides with the decline of enrolments of Middle Eastern students in the USA after the September 11, 2001 terror attacks.

Table 6: International students' enrolments in Australia (2009-2010)

Nationality	September 2003	September 2004	February 2005	February 2006
Bahrain	138	197	167	225
Egypt	162	189	132	325
Iraq	12	18	19	29
Jordan	466	451	310	352
Kuwait	95	96	90	122
Lebanon	425	436	333	382
Oman	625	745	569	589
Qatar	151	232	168	145
Saudi Arabia	235	429	456	997
Syria	52	33	26	33
UAE	420	539	504	670
Yemen	11	8	7	12
Total	2792	3373	2781	3841

Source: enrolments for 2003 and 2004 adopted from DEST (2005) 2005 and 2006 enrolments adopted from Austrade Education Exhibitions (2006).

The *Open Doors* report in November 2004 revealed that the enrolments from the Middle East in America dropped by 10% in the academic year 2003-2004. The report points out that for that academic year the enrolments from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

and UAE have declined by 25%, 25% and 15% respectively. Contributing factors for the decline were visa restrictions imposed by the governments but also homeland security and the safety of the students (*Open Doors, 2004*). As such, the Middle East became an education market for recruitment opportunities for Higher Education institutions in Australia (Nelson, 2003).

Table 7: Enrolments of international Middle Eastern students by nationality across education sectors in 2009

Nationality	Higher Education	VET	Schools	ELICOS	Other	Total
Bahrain	166	67	1	24	27	285
Egypt	157	1649	4	166	7	2,003
Iraq	108	220	2	308	67	220
Jordan	296	253	0	224	10	783
Kuwait	150	16	0	35	27	228
Lebanon	226	656	2	133	5	1,002
Oman	386	124	3	105	56	674
Qatar	38	40	0	23	3	104
Saudi Arabia	3,552	489	13	6,281	1,000	11,335
Syria	36	14	0	25	2	77
UAE	595	359	6	331	164	1,455
Yemen	12	6	0	8	4	30
Total	5,722	3,680	31	8,475	1,309	19,217

Adopted from AEI Middle East (2009)

As Table 7 shows, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Oman are the largest sources of international students from the Middle East in Australia. These countries belong to the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] which also includes Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. The characteristic about these countries is that, apart from being some of the major oil and gas producers, they rely heavily on an international workforce.. According to Davidson and Smith (2008) in all of the GCC countries and especially in the smaller Gulf States, expatriate populations outnumber nationals by more than ten to one in the work place. As a result, young nationals face tough competition for jobs in the private sector (Gill, 2008).

However, over the last decade the governments of the Gulf States have been focusing on building a better educated and qualified national workforce (Davidson and Smith, 2008). Thus, “as part of broader social and economic policies for nationalisation” they provide education scholarships to their young nationals (Gauntlett, 2005, p. 37).

Despite the USA remaining the first preference for students from the Middle East region (AEI Industry Seminars, 2005) their sponsors “attracted by safety and security, diversity and quality of educational offerings, and the comparatively low tuition fees and cost of living” have shown an increasing interest for Australia and Australian education (Gauntlett, 2005, p. 37). As such, in 2009 there were 19,217 students from the Middle East enrolled in Australian education institutions with more than 50% being commencing enrolments for the Year to Date (YTD) 2009 (AEI Middle East, 2009). Although the number of international students from the Middle East region is very small in comparison to students from Asian countries, its growth in such a short time is an indication that the Middle East is “a potentially lucrative education market” (Gauntlett, 2005, p. 38).

1.3 Background to the study

As shown in the previous section, currently international students from Asian countries constitute the vast majority of international students in Australia. However, in the past decade a considerable number of international students from the Middle East have arrived on Australian shores. In this research only Arabic speaking Middle Eastern students are in the sample. This section provides overview of the nature of Middle East culture, values and the education system common to Arabic speaking Middle Eastern students.

1.3.1 *Defining Middle East culture.*

In the literature which refers to the Middle East, the notion 'culture' is surrounded with complexity due to the diversity of definitions. This point arises from the countries that constitute the Middle East. Generally it is accepted, that the Middle East is a region located in SW Asia, between Mediterranean Sea in the West and Indian subcontinent at the East. However, the definitions of the Middle East often include countries which belong to North Africa either because they share similar geophysical characteristics with South Western Asian countries (hot and arid climate) or due to similar cultural heritage based on Islam and Arabic language.

As such, Britannica encyclopaedia defines Middle East as "Geographic region where Europe, Africa, and Asia meet. It is an unofficial and imprecise term that now generally encompasses the lands around the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea — notably Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, and Syria — as well as Iran, Iraq, and the countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Afghanistan, Libya, Turkey, and The Sudan are sometimes also included".

However, *Columbia Encyclopaedia* provides another definition of the Middle East which includes additional countries not identified in the above definition.

Accordingly, Middle East is a "term traditionally applied by western Europeans to the countries of SW Asia and NE Africa lying W of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. Thus defined it includes Cyprus, the Asian part of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, the countries of the Arabian peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait), and Egypt and Libya... The term is sometimes used in a cultural sense to mean the group of lands in that part of the world predominantly Islamic in culture, thus including the remaining states of N Africa as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan".

The lack of precise and specific definition about the countries comprising Middle East, as eluded above, is the cause for the generalisations and pitfalls cited in the literature regarding Middle Eastern culture. The issues with the definition of Middle East culture are briefly considered because of the relevance to this dissertation.

The term 'Middle Eastern culture' is often used in the literature to reflect 'Islamic culture' and/or 'Arab culture'. Despite that traditionally throughout the Middle East, the culture cannot be truly understood without the spiritual heritage of Islam, the region is not culturally homogeneous. It is rather a mosaic of cultures. Thus, the use of the term 'Middle Eastern culture' in the singular is rather problematic. As Carrol (2001) points out "Ethnically, the Middle East is host to many different people including Jews, Arabs, Turks and Persians" so really there is no single 'Middle Eastern culture', but rather a large variety of cultures which encompass many similarities but countless differences as well (p. 575). The most distinctive similarity among the Middle Eastern countries is the Islamic faith. However, it is erroneous to assume that a singular cultural feature can identify a culture.

Problematic is also the interchangeable use of terms 'Middle Eastern culture' as synonymous to 'Islamic culture'. Islamic culture "takes its origins and principles from the main resources of Islam: the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic traditions" (Mostafa, 2006, p. 42). As Weijian (2009) notes Islam is not just a religion but also a whole set of social, economic and cultural systems and it is regarded as the guideline for every Muslim. Islam highlights the importance of family life and the balance between family members (Al-Jamali, 1998; Abukhattala, 2004) and "stresses mercy, kindness and generosity amongst members of Islamic society" (Mostafa, 2006, p. 42). However, although Islam is the official and predominant religion in almost all the Middle Eastern countries, not all the people in the Middle East embrace Islam.

Furthermore, in the literature “The term Arab has erroneously been used interchangeably with the “Middle East” and “Muslim World” (Feghali, 1997, p. 346). From this perspective ‘Middle Eastern culture’ often is perceived as synonymous to ‘Arab culture’. Feghali (1997) attributes the interchangeable use of both terms to the difficulty of the westerners to differentiate between Middle Eastern countries and Arab countries and to the difficulty in defining ‘who is Arab?’ Towards this end she states that “While Arab countries are considered Middle Eastern, not all Middle Eastern countries are Arab” (p.347). Nevertheless, “Westerners frequently group Iranians with Arabs as in spite of the fact that members of the two groups view themselves quite distinct from one another in terms of language, customs, and identity”(Feghali, 1997, pp.348-349). In regards to the definition of ‘Arab’, various scholars arrived to the conclusion that is hard to reach a definition. Feghali (1997) for example claims that “It is easier to specify what an Arab is not rather than what s/he is” (p.349). Similarly Almaney and Alwan (1982) point out that “the term ‘Arab’ becomes strange and baffling when you dig into just what it means” ... because “Arab is not a race, religion, or nationality” (pp.30 -31).

Taking into account the foregoing considerations, for the purpose of this research, the term ‘Middle Eastern culture’ has been used to reflect the culture of the Arabic speaking countries located in the Middle East and in North Africa as well. In these countries Islam is portrayed as the dominant characteristic of their culture.

1.3.2 Culture and values

For all Arabs, family is the central unit of all their social and economic interactions (King-Irani, 2004; Nydell, 2006). As stated in Saudi-Arabia’s Basic Law (constitution) (Article 9) of 1992, “The family is the kernel of Saudi society, and its members shall be brought up on the basis of the Islamic faith, and loyalty and obedience to God,

His Messenger, and to guardians; respect for and implementation of the law, and love of and pride in the homeland and its glorious history as the Islamic faith stipulates”(cited in Al-Turaiqi,2008,p.17).

In terms of Hofstede’s (2001) cultural dimensions, the culture in the Middle East is collectivist. In societies with collectivist cultural orientation, people think in a holistic way and are concerned with group consensus rather than with individual expression and recognition. Group identity, intra-group harmony and cooperation, and priority of the group needs and goals, over purely personal goals, are the attributes which characterize collectivist cultures. In the Middle East the individual’s success is a pride and honour for the extended family and the welfare of the family is above the welfare of the individual. Obligations and responsibilities towards their family members are considered very important and all family members are anticipated to look after one another’s welfare (Nydell, 2006). As Al-Banyan (1980) notes, family cohesion is one of the strongest traditional values of people in Middle Eastern countries.

Besides this, collectivist cultures emphasise obedient submission to hierarchical authority and honour to parents and elderly. The honour, loyalty and reputation of the family members are the cornerstones of the Middle Eastern culture. “One’s honor determines one’s image. The key to saving face is the assiduous avoidance of shame” (Mackey, 1987, p.125). Parents and members of the extended family have responsibility for the proper upbringing of the children according to Islamic culture and to ensure the best education for them. In the Middle East, the fathers and the elders are the decision makers. The father indeed is an authoritarian figure while the mother is the one who spends most of her time with the children. The position of the parents in the society is highlighted by the Islamic faith. Islam also stresses the obligation of the children to treat their parents with respect and kindness and to look

after them when old. In this context it is not enough to provide financial support but to also act with limitless compassion towards them (Ibrahim, 1997).

Generosity, politeness and hospitality are also among the values characterised people from the Middle East. Almaney and Alwan (1982) note that “to a foreigner, the Arabs’ outstanding trait may well be hospitality” (p. 91).

1.3.2 Education

In the educational system of most of the Middle Eastern Arabic speaking countries, religious education comprises a compulsory element in the curriculum. As Berkey (2004) notes, Islam shapes education in the Middle East. For instance, in Saudi Arabia, according to the Basic Law (Article 13) of 1992, education aims at “instilling the Islamic faith in the younger generation, providing its members with knowledge and skills and preparing them to become useful members in the building of their society, members who love their homeland and are proud of its history” (cited in Al-Turaiqi, 2008, p.17). In this respect students in Saudi Arabia and in most of Arab countries spend dedicated time in memorizing, interpreting and understanding the Qur’an (Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission, 1991, cited from Shaw, 2009, p. 64).

Middle Eastern Arabic speaking countries make education available to both boys and girls, as Islam requires equal opportunities for education for both genders. Nevertheless, in some of the Middle Eastern countries, students in late primary, intermediate and senior levels as well as male and female students in higher education attend separate classes, often in separate buildings and are taught by staff of the same gender (Al-Banyan, 1980; Oliver, 1987). Despite their separation, students of both genders follow the same curriculum, except for some subjects which are designed either for males or females.

In the educational system in most of Arab countries, creativity and critical thinking are not encouraged. Specifically, the United Nations' (2005) *Syrian Arab Republic: Common country assessment* report stated that "The curriculum continues to stress rote learning rather than analytical skills development and is not child-centered" (p.47). In commenting on the education environment in Syria, Pickering (2001) notes that "class discussions, particularly those which raise ideas different from professor's, were harshly discouraged" (pp.166-167).

Similarly, the World Bank's (1996) report regarding the education in Egypt also stated that "the system's focus on the enforcement of rules and regulations, rather than on improving student learning, represents a significant factor impeding acquisition of basic skills. Teachers do not organize their work according to their students' learning needs, but rather in accordance with national directives on curriculum and lesson planning. This reinforces mechanistic teaching and rote learning" (p.4). The foregoing intimate that the pedagogy in the Arab World is based on a didactic mode. In this mode of learning, the teacher is the authority in the class and his/her knowledge should not be questioned. Learning involves acquisition of factual knowledge from set of books which contain indisputable texts.

Despite the foregoing, in the recent years the governments of some Arab countries (e.g. Syria, Jordan, Gulf States, etc.) initiated educational reforms which encourage active learning. However, according to Barber, Mourshed and Whelan (2007) for the reforms to have the expected outcomes they need to aim at improving the skills of the students and the teachers as well. The reason as cited by *The Arab Human Development Report*, 2003 is because "Most present-day educators have graduated from institutions that follow an approach to teaching based on rote learning, which is not especially conducive to critical thinking" (p.53).

1.4 Definition of terms

A range of terms and definitions associated with the research topic are used throughout this dissertation. In order to avoid ambiguity and to ensure a clear understanding of the context of the research, the most commonly employed terms are defined below.

Culture

Culture in this dissertation is defined as “The system of understanding characteristics of that individual’s society, or of some subgroup within that society. This system of understanding includes values, beliefs, notions about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and other socially constructed ideas that members of the society are taught are “true” (Garcia, 1994, p. 51). Language, religious beliefs, customs, codes, institutions and works of art are often considered as the main features of any culture (Ladan, 2004).

Internationalisation

For the purpose of this research the definition by Francis (1993) was adopted. It defines Internationalisation as “the process that prepares the community for successful participation in an increasingly interdependent world, fosters global understanding and develops skills for effective living and working in a diverse world” (Francis, 1993, p. 13).

International Middle Eastern students

In this research International Middle Eastern (IME) students are Arabic speaking students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Australian higher education. These students are not citizens or permanent residents of Australia, nor

are they refugees in Australia. All these students are citizens of Arabic speaking Middle Eastern countries who entered Australia on student visas.

Local students

For the purpose of this research Local Students (LS) are students of any origin who are permanent residents in Australia. English is first language and they have completed their secondary education in Australia.

Middle East Arabic speaking countries

The Middle East is a geographical area, with no precisely defined borders, that covers parts of Northern Africa, Southwest Asia and South-eastern Europe. There is disagreement among scholars regarding the countries constituting the Middle East. For the purpose of this research, Middle Eastern countries are considered to be the countries located within the Asian continent and Northern part of Africa and use Arabic as their language of command. These countries are: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, and the Palestinian territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

Other international students

In this research Other International Students (OIS) are students who came to Australia from different regions (excluding Middle Eastern Arabic speaking countries) on a student visa.

Social interaction

Social interaction is the social action that occurs between at least two individuals. For the purpose of this research, social interaction is defined as the communication of ME students with their Australian peers. Such interactions may start in a

classroom setting but further develop outside the classroom setting for either educational or recreational purposes.

Cross-cultural (intercultural) interactions

In this research cross -cultural (intercultural) interactions are defined as the interactions between individuals from two or more cultures.

1.5 Rationale

As considered in Section 1.2, international students are enrolling in Australian Universities in ever-increasing numbers. In fact “nearly one Australian student in every five is a foreigner” (Marginson, 2006, p.1) and “one would assume that foreign student education on this scale must enable significant student mixing”, interactions between Australian and international students are limited (Marginson, 2002, p. 11). A preliminary literature review for this research revealed that the mere presence of a culturally diverse student population in a classroom setting is inadequate to develop cross cultural understanding and friendships.

The preliminary review of the literature also established that a majority of the research in this area has focused on cross cultural interactions of international students from Asian countries that represent the main suppliers of international students. Such research has been conducted mainly in the USA and Canada and explored the interactions of international students with their American peers. However, in an Australian context there is a paucity of research related to international students’ cross cultural interactions especially concerning the interactions between Middle Eastern students and the students of English speaking host nations.

It follows that there is a need for such research because it could provide insights into how this group of international students interacts with the Australian students. Consequently, this research could help identify factors which contribute to their interactions with local students and influence their perceptions.

1.6 Research aim, questions and objectives

Aim

This research aims to explore the interactions of IME students with Local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS).

Research questions

RQ.1

What is the level and the nature of International Middle Eastern students' interactions with local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS)?

RQ.2

What social networks are used by IME students?

Objectives

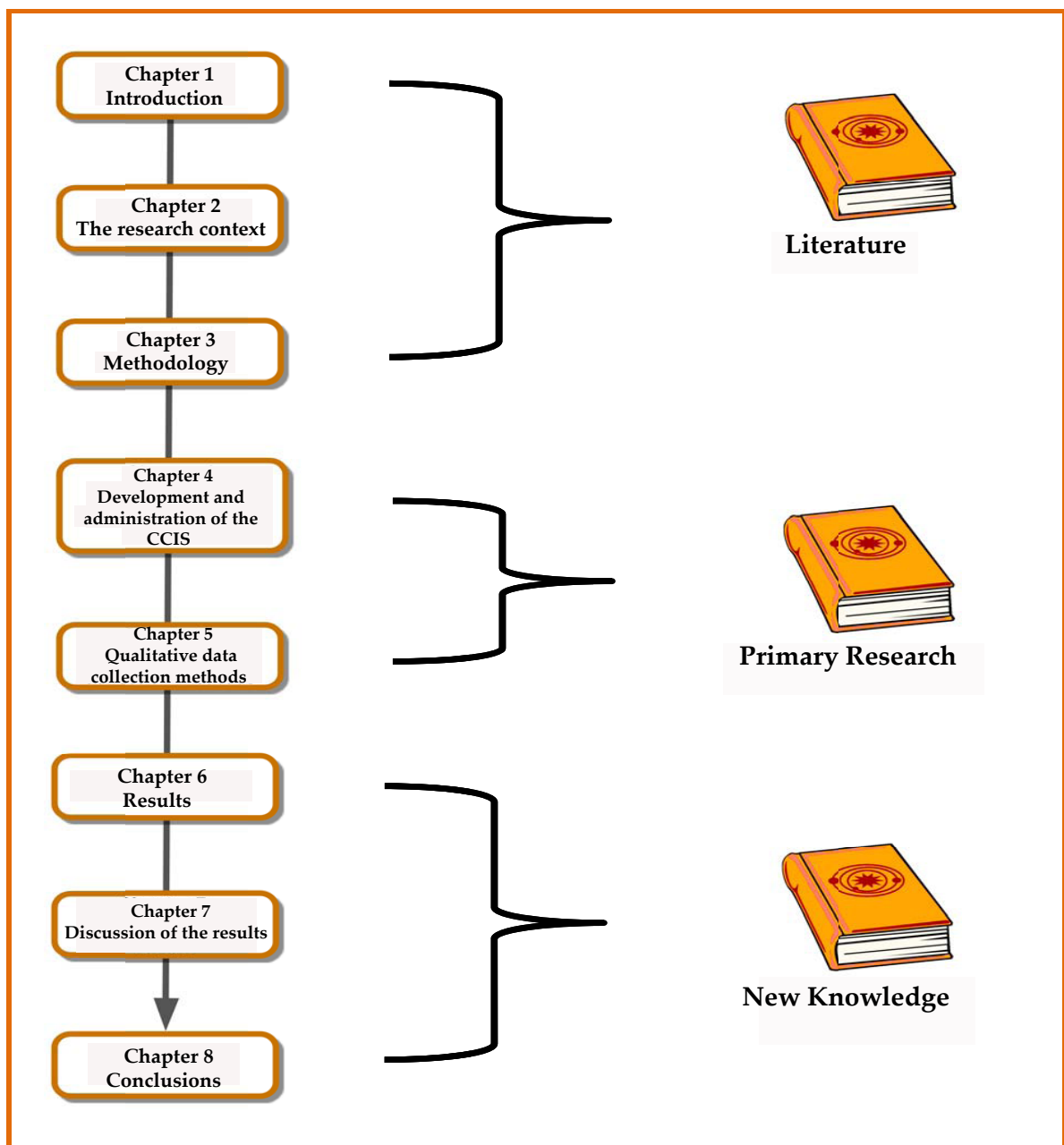
To address each of the research questions the following objectives were used:

1. To undertake a review of literature to identify:
 - aspects and issues related to international students' level and nature of interactions with others.
2. To administer a survey to establish:

- the level and nature of ME students' interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS (RQ.1)
 - the nature of social networks used by IME students (RQ.2).
3. To conduct focus group discussions and interviews to collect data to elaborate upon the findings of the survey in regards to RQ.1 and RQ.2.

1.7 Chapters outline

Figure 1: presents an overview of chapters in this dissertation



Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter has introduced the research topic and provided information about international students in Australia and the importance of interactions between local students and international students. It has also presented the rationale for undertaking this research and states the aim, objectives and research questions for the research.

Chapter 2: The research context

This chapter reviews the literature relating to internationalisation of higher education with respect to the interactions between students from different cultural and educational backgrounds. It explores the benefits and introduces the literature referring to the interactions between local students and international students. It also examines the literature that draws on the development of international students' networks and the functional role of these networks.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter presents in detail the research methodology that was used to examine the stated research questions. It discusses the philosophical paradigms and research methodologies which were considered as possible options for examining the research questions for this research. Reasons underlying the use of mixed method methodology are presented and research design adopted for the research is detailed.

Chapter 4: Development and administration of the CCIS

This chapter presents details of the design, development and administration of the online survey instrument, named CCIS, used in this research.

Chapter 5: Qualitative data collection methods

This chapter details the design, development and administration of the focus group and interview schedules used for data collection.

Chapter 6: Results

This chapter presents the results of the on-line survey instrument (CCIS).

Chapter 7: Discussion of the results

This chapter discusses the results obtained from the online survey and the results of the focus group sessions and interviews in terms of the research questions.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

This chapter provides conclusions from the research, considers recommendations for addressing the findings and suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: The research context

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, in 2009 more than half a million international students were enrolled in various Australian educational institutions. The growth of the international students however is not an Australian phenomenon. It is rather a worldwide phenomenon which is referred to as Internationalisation of Higher Education. As Stier (2006) maintains “internationalisation, in one way or another is about intercultural communication” (p. 5). This research investigates the interactions of the International Middle Eastern (IME) students with the Australian students. As outlined in Chapter 1, Higher Education institutions in Australia over the past decade are enrolling increasing numbers of international students from the Middle East. In 2009, one Middle Eastern country (Saudi-Arabia) was included among the top ten sources of international students in Australia. A preliminary review of literature, however, revealed a dearth of research regarding IME students’ cross cultural interactions. Most of the literature refers to the cross cultural interactions of international students from Asian backgrounds. This is attributed to the fact that international students from Asia constitute the vast majority of international students. In this respect, this chapter has drawn upon the literature on cross cultural interactions of the international students in general. Also, because interactions between local and international students are important prerequisite in achieving internationalisation goals (Leask, 2003), the chapter examines the nature of internationalisation in the Higher Education context.

Specifically, this chapter:

- contextualises the research by considering internationalisation of Higher Education as internationalisation is concerned with intercultural communication
- identifies the literature referring to the level and nature of cross cultural interactions between local and international students in order to address RQ1, RQ1.1 and RQ1.2
- examines the literature on the factors that enhance or impede the level of international student's cross cultural interactions in order to address RQ1.1
- examines the literature referring to social interactions between local and international students to address RQ1.1 and RQ1.2
- examines the literature referring to international students' networks and their purpose to address RQ2 and RQ2.1.

2.2 Internationalisation in higher education

2.2.1 Introduction

This section situates this research in the context of internationalisation of higher education and draws on the literature which reports on the issues concerning the purpose of internationalisation and of changes occurring across the higher education sector as a consequence of the changing nature of international education. In particular this section discusses the benefits associated with the internationalisation of higher education over the past three decades.

In Higher Education the term internationalisation was introduced in the early 1980 and ever since has become an important and widely discussed concept in the literature of higher education (Kehm and Teichler, 2007; Teichler, 2003; van der Wende, 2002) and an important subject in the agendas of national governments,

international bodies, and institutions of higher education (De Wit, 1999). Scholars in the field of higher education have perceived internationalisation as:

- “one of the laws of motion propelling institutions in higher learning” (Kerr, 1990, p. 5)
- “one of the most important features of contemporary universities (Smith, Teichler and van der Wende, 1994, p.1).
- a theme that is becoming increasingly important in regional, national and institutional strategies in higher education (De Wit, 2002, p. 125).

Despite the foregoing internationalisation tends to be a relatively ambiguous term and as such remains a phenomenon with a lot of question marks (Knight, 1997a; Stier 2003). Specifically the questions arise from use of the term by various stakeholders for various purposes and in variety of ways (Knight, 1997, 2005; Stier, 2002). According to De Wit (2002), “as the international dimension of higher education gains more attention and recognition, people tend to use it in the way that best suits their purpose” (p.14). In this light, policy makers are focused on the ideological goals of the internationalisation; the university administrators are focused on the formalities and practicalities of the internationalisation; while educators are focused on the pedagogical issues (Stier, 2003).

2.2.2 Definitions of internationalisation

This section considers a number of definitions regarding internationalisation. This has been done to give a clearer picture on how researchers approach internationalisation and to enable this researcher to establish a definition for this research. Definitions extracted from the literature are as follows:

- “Internationalisation is the whole range of processes by which (higher) education becomes less national and more internationally oriented” (European Association for International Education, 1992, c.f. Knight and De Wit, 1995, p. 15).
- “Internationalisation is the process by which the teaching and service functions of the higher education system become internationally and cross culturally compatible” (Ebuchi, 1990 c.f. De Wit, 2002, p. 113).
- “Internationalisation is the process that prepares the community for successful participation in an increasingly interdependent world, fosters global understanding and develops skills for effective living and working in a diverse world” (Francis, 1993, p. 13).
- “Internationalisation is the process of integrating an international perspective into a college or university system. It is an ongoing future oriented, multi-dimensional interdisciplinary, leadership-driven vision that involves many stakeholders working to change the internal dynamics of an institution to respond and adapt appropriately to an increasingly diverse, globally focused ever-changing external environment “(Ellingboe, 1998, p. 199).
- “Internationalisation concerns multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation” (Arum and Van de Water, 1992, p. 202).
- “Internationalisation is a change process from a national higher education institution to an international higher education institution leading to the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to achieve the desired competencies (Soderqvist, 2002, p. 29).
- “Internationalisation is the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the teaching, research and service function of the institution. An international dimension means a perspective, activity or

service which introduces or integrates an international/intercultural/global outlook into the major functions of an institution of higher education” (Knight, 1994, p. 7).

- “Internationalisation at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education”(Knight, 2003a, p. 6).

This researcher has chosen the definition of internationalisation developed by Francis (1993) as the most appropriate for this research because it reflects the interdependence of the societies and the importance for individuals to acquire skills that would facilitate their cross cultural communication. As eluded to above these skills refer to as cross cultural or intercultural competence, global understanding, and sensitivity towards cultural differences, resilience and cross cultural awareness. In a university community, it would seem that the diversity of classroom constitutes the best environment for the development of these skills through the cross cultural interactions between local and international students. These interactions could help both groups to develop mutual respect and understanding and at the same time could facilitate international students’ integration into the host culture.

2.2.3 Benefits of internationalisation

The thrust of the internationalisation of the higher education in Australia in 1980’s was mainly directed towards the enrolment of fee paying overseas students and the economic benefits derived from such enrolments (Back and Davis, 1995). However, over time it was acknowledged that internationalisation is "important to Australia for its social, cultural and intellectual benefits [yet] at the same time it is also essential to maintain the strong international student market in Australia"(AVCC 2004, pp.22–23).

It is evident from the literature that traditionally, there is an assumption that “when talking about internationalization is that we deal with mobility. In particular, student mobility...” (Teekens, 2005, p.2). This assumption derives from the fact that “student mobility... has been in the past and still is today the most dominant international activity in higher education” (Wachter, 2000 p.130) and an important element in the formation of ‘international classroom’ (Tekkens, 2000). International classroom has the potential to add value in the intercultural dimension of teaching and learning experience of all students because it can convey students’ “appreciation for other cultures and an improved ability to communicate and interact with persons from different backgrounds” (Tekkens, 2000, p.30).

Thus, since 1980’s internationalisation of the higher education has been regarded as equivalent to student mobility, and “very often considered an end in itself, and thus not perceived as in need of any justification” (Wachter, 2003 p.25). According to Tekkens (2005) “the value of mobility is based on the idea (perhaps it is better to say ideal) that international exchange contributes to academic learning, cultural awareness and international understanding, or even peace. But the impact of a study period abroad does not automatically result in these outcomes ... (p.3).

It follows from the foregoing that although student mobility constituted the main activity associated with the internationalisation of the higher education “Internationalisation is not merely a matter of recruiting international students, though the presence of international students is an enormous resource for the university. As stated by Aulakh, Brady, Dunwoodie, Perry, Roff, & Stewart (1997) the aim of internationalisation is to produce graduates capable of solving problems in a variety of locations with cultural and environmental sensitivity (p.15). In this respect internationalisation of the Higher Education enables students to address local issues from an international point of view and vice –versa international issues from local perspective (Fuller, 2009)

This perspective was highlighted by Knight (2003) in the survey *Internationalisation of the Higher Education: Practices and Priorities*. The respondents referred more to the “importance of human development” than to “economic development”. Specifically the respondents from five out of six regions (Asia, Africa, Europe, Middle East, Latin America and North America), cited more frequently “the development of students, staff and teachers” as the most important benefit from the Internationalisation of the Higher Education (p.9). In the same vein De Wit (2002) argues that “internationalisation efforts are intended to enable the academic community to have the ability to understand, appreciate, and articulate the reality of interdependence among the nations and to prepare faculty and students to function in an international and intercultural context”(p.96).

In the literature, the benefits derived from the Internationalisation of Higher Education can be classified into two broad categories:

- Institutional benefits. These benefits related to the opportunities arising for the universities from a business perspective (Ellingboe, 1998).
- Individual benefits. These benefits related to the development of individuals in the sense of international knowledge, skills and attitudes (Ellingboe, 1998; Deardorff, 2004).

Institutional benefits, as discussed by Ellingboe (1998, p. 205) include:

- Ability to function in an international arena
- Ability to achieve international standards
- Ability to compete successfully with other institutions worldwide
- Higher national and international profile which results in attracting a greater number of researchers and students
- Links with institutions around the world with greater opportunities for students and academics
- Diversified student and faculty bodies.

Individual benefits, as discussed by Deardorff (2004, p. 12) include:

- Development of skills, attitudes and knowledge that enable students to interact effectively with people from various cultural backgrounds.
- Exchange of ideas and knowledge
- Social change
- Broadened world view
- Greater global awareness and competence

The foregoing suggests that the encounter with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds leads to the discovering of “differences in perspectives, behaviours and communication styles. As we interact we are engaged in an intercultural communication” (Olson, 2001 cited in Fuller, 2009, p.3). However, as Otten (2000) also suggests the long standing assumption that the frequency and intensity of the encounter could lead to positive attitudes towards other cultures and to the development of intercultural learning, has been proved wrong in many cases. As Otten (2000) notes the diversity of the student body in the classrooms of Higher Education institutes does not automatically necessitate interactions between culturally the linguistically different individuals and certainly does not results in intercultural learning. Tekkens (2005) explains that “The mere consumption of difference does not lead to learning, let alone to changes in attitude” (p.3).

In this context Leask (2009) notes that the realisation of the individual benefits requires a campus environment and culture that clearly motivates and rewards interaction between international and local students inside and outside of the classroom. Leask (2009) explains for the improvement of the interactions between culturally diverse students that it is essential to incorporate international and intercultural dimension into the formal and informal activities of the curriculum. This intimates a need for internationalisation of the curriculum, which constitutes

the “centrepiece of internationalization” (Green and Olson, 2008) which enables both local and international students to become “internationally knowledgeable and interculturally competent” individuals (AUCC, 2007, p. 1).

2.3 Cross cultural interactions

2.3.1 Introduction

This section is concerned with the literature referring to international students’ cross cultural interactions. In this respect, it presents various factors which are identified in the literature as influencing international students’ interaction with the host students.

As eluded above, internationalisation of higher education to a large degree is focused on attracting international students or sending local students in study abroad exchange programs. The underlying assumption is that these activities provide students with an opportunity to meet people from diverse cultural backgrounds and equip them with skills to deal with differences. As Chen (2003) claims, the interdependence of our globalised society requires skilful interactions across cultural and linguistic boundaries. However, in practice the picture is quite different. According to Chang, Denson, Saenz and Misa (2005) the diversity in the student body is inadequate to enhance student’s willingness to interact and exchange ideas with others who are culturally different. A similar view is shared by Wright and Lander (2003) who state that the diversity of student population does not necessarily imply cross cultural interactions.

The grouping of international students in national 'cliques', and their defensiveness to interact with host students is a phenomenon well reported (Tekkens, 2000). In this respect Otten (2003) observes that “many international students group in their national communities or, in a kind of international reservation, for example, the so-called *Erasmus communities*, where European exchange students usually meet other

European students but rarely those of the host country. At the same time, domestic students tend to stay in their established circle of friends" (p. 14). However, it would seem to Volet and Ang (1998) that the lack of interaction between local and international students is "one of the most disturbing aspects of the internationalization of Australian university campuses" (p.5). Due to lack of interactions between local and international students the "ideal of transforming a culturally diverse student population into a valued resource for activating processes of international connectivity, social cohesion and intercultural learning, is still very much that: an ideal" (De Vita, 2005, p. 75).

2.3.2 Factors influencing cross cultural interactions

Various researchers point out that international students through cross cultural interactions with host nationals, become aware of the appropriate behaviours in the host country as local students act as sources of reference (Black and Gregerson, 1991; Bochner, 1981). These studies point out that cross cultural interactions with international students are also equally beneficial for local students because these force students to question their assumptions about others (Hess, 1994) and enhance their understanding of other cultures and points of view (Rai, 2002).

However, social and cultural studies conclude that the level of interactions between international and local students is limited. These studies identified a number of factors which contribute to the reluctance of both students' cohorts to interact and establish friendships. Kudo (2000) classified the factors which influence cross cultural interactions into two broad categories, namely; internal (psychological-physical) and external (physical).

In the internal category Kudo includes factors such as personality, attitudes towards hosts, motivation towards host culture, language competency, social skills and past experiences (psychological factors) and the opportunity to meet the host, the

presence of hosts willing to be friends, time and money (physical factors). In the external category he includes factors such as host attitudes, the nature of the living environment and political factors. Besides these factors, cultural differences, differences in life style and interests, age, gender, length of stay, marital status, values, attitudes, and communication styles, different learning preferences are some of the factors reported often as contributing to the lack of interactions between international and local students.

The remainder of this section considers the major factors that contribute cross cultural interactions as identified from the literature.

2.3.3 Cultural differences

The impact of cultural differences is great because it shapes the intercultural contact between students. The more distant the cultures of international and local students, the more difficult international students find adjusting to the host culture and establishing relationships with the hosts' students (Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Church, 1982; Ward and Searle, 1991). In addition, the greater the cultural distance is, the greater is the preference for co-national interactions (Kim, 1998; Ward and Kennedy, 1993). Samovar and Porter (1991) argue that "people learn to think, feel, believe and strive for what their culture considers proper" (p. 47). Thus differing values, attitudes, and communication styles hinder the social interaction between international students and host members because of lack of cultural bonding.

As Hofstede (2001) reports, individuals who come from individualistic cultures find it easier to adjust to the American culture and establish relationships with American nationals in comparison to individuals from collectivist cultures. For Asian students the cultural differences as well as the conflicts between collectivism and individualism are the major difficulties in adjusting to American culture (Sun &

Chen, 1997). Namely, they cannot “risk the emotional challenge of moving outside their zone of comfort” (Volet & Tan-Quigley, 1995 cited in Volet & Ang, 1998, p.12).

Cultural studies have also shown that interactions between individuals of culturally different backgrounds tend to be more complex and uncertain (Gudykunst and Kim, 2003; Neuliep, 2003) because they do not share the same ground rules of communication and interaction (Matsumoto, Leroux, and Yo (2005). This can explain why both local and international students face difficulties establishing contact with individuals outside their culture but easily establish contact with those from a similar culture. Lewthwaite (1996) states that “Contact with an alien culture is said to tear away at all the familiar bases of one's self, depriving people of their familiar points of reference” (p. 168). Yet cross cultural interactions are the vehicle to learn about cultural differences and how to behave and perform in various cultural contexts (Thomas and Inkson, 2004).

2.3.4 Language competency

Perrucci and Hu (1995) and Huntley (1993) report that international students with poor English spend little time on social activities with host nationals and are less likely to be satisfied with their social interactions. Proficiency in English influences the development of friendships and networks with host nationals (Barker, Child, Jones, Gallois and Callan, 1991). Poor language skills do not only hinder the communication of international students with their host peers but also hampers the opportunity to gain knowledge about hosts’ cultural insights. Moreover, weak English language skills result in weaker academic outcomes, lower success in academic course work and poor progression and retention. Novera (2004) claims that while weak English language skills may prevent international Indonesian students from speaking and mixing with local students, knowing what to talk about is another issue. Similarly, the lower level of command in the English language is a

factor related to a number of negative outcomes. Surdam and Collins (1984) claim that English language skills play a vital role in international students' adjustment. The poorer the skills are, the more difficulties they experience in adapting to the host culture.

2.3.5 Lifestyle differences

Lifestyle differences and interests further inhibit cross cultural interactions. Lifestyle differences are related to the different types of leisure activities that international students and local students prefer. Ti (1997) identifies that "the drinking and partying culture" of some Australian students does not coincide with the preferences of some international students, although there is some evidence indicating that some international students are interested to 'experience the Australian culture'.

In a study of international students in Canada, Walker (1999) reports also that participation in on campus activities influences the establishment of friendships with Canadian students. Participation in club activities such as club meetings and university sponsored dinners were reported as having low importance in the study of Penn and Durham (1978).

2.3.6 Age and gender

A study conducted by Trice and Elliot (1993), indicates that mature, male, degree seeking Japanese students were more likely to desire greater interactions with American students in comparison to younger, female sojourners on a year exchange program. Yet a study conducted by Yang Teraoka, Eichenfiel and Audas (1994) with Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese international female students in the USA, suggests that female students are more likely to establish meaningful friendships with local students than males. However, these researchers report that the age and length of stay in America did not relate to the establishment of friendships and did not predict

students' feelings of alienation. Similarly, studies conducted by Beaver and Tuck (1998) in New Zealand and Owie (1982) in America, suggest no significant differences in levels of alienation among genders. On the contrary other studies on gender and adjustment have found that female students from diverse cultural backgrounds may experience greater difficulties adjusting to host cultures than male students (Pruitt, 1978; McMillan, 1981). As such, the role of gender in adjustment to the host culture is inconclusive and as Perruci and Hu (1995) report, it cannot predict international students' satisfaction with their contact with local students.

2.3.7 Length of stay

The length of stay was considered by Ward, Okura, Kennedy and Kojima (1998) and Ward and Rana-Dueba (1999) as an important aspect in the adjustment of international students. The scholars revealed that the adjustment difficulties reduce as international students become familiar with the norms in the new culture.

2.3.8 Local students' apathy

In Whetten and Song's (1992) interviews with international students at an American university, international students stated that the apathy of American students was the most difficult barrier to overcome. This apathy was explained by participants as American's lack of knowledge of other cultures, lack of attention towards international students, and the impatient attitude of Americans toward international students' language difficulties. The apathy of host students towards interactions with international students is evident in the studies of Smart's et al. (2000) and Volet and Ang's (1998), in Australia and Beaver and Tucker's (1998) study in New Zealand. The former two studies reveal that Australian students are disinterested in intercultural relations with international students and prefer to study with students with similar educational background and same level of language competency. In the case of New Zealand students, Beaver and Tucker (1998) report that host students

are more interested to complete their studies, and then to seek friendships with their international peers.

2.3.9 Learning preferences

Another factor that influences cross cultural interaction is the different learning preferences of local and international students. The differences in learning are attributed to cultural aspects of individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). Ward (2001) explains that students from individualist cultures “are likely to want to ‘stand out’ in the class, ask questions and engage in debate” in contrast to students from collectivist cultures who “are less likely to be verbally interactive in classes and are usually unwilling to draw attention to themselves” and just want to “fit in” (p. 18). The difference in the attitudes and behaviour influences the perception of one another and subsequently hampers the opportunities for interaction (Brown and Daly, 2004).

2.3.10 Marital status

Marital status was also considered as a factor that influences cross cultural interactions. Perruci and Hu (1995) report that married international students were more satisfied in their social interactions with host nationals than single students. However Chapdelaine and Alexitch (1995) and Trice (2004) report that the marital status of international students inhibited the social interactions with host students due to their family responsibilities.

2.3.11 Students’ attitudes

Social studies that have examined the attitudes of students toward peer relationships reveal that students look for friendships with individuals with whom they share similar interests and views. These relationships allow them to identify themselves within a certain peer group. In Globetti, Gobetti, Brown and Smith’s (1993) study of

American student's attitudes towards friendships with minority students, participants revealed positive thoughts about interacting with students who were different from themselves but they revealed also that they found it difficult to initiate a contact. This struggle with initiation of social interaction is often associated with differences in worldviews. As Globetti et al. (1993) explain, students bring various attitudes, worldviews, and values into a cross cultural encounter. In this respect, when students from one culture come to believe that students from other cultures do not agree with their attitudes, worldviews, or values, they become defensive or feel threatened. As a result, they are more likely to be empathetic and sympathetic to in-group members rather than to those from outside the group. In this respect, Broome (1980) suggests that students who initiate social interaction must be open-minded and willing to listen.

Towards this end, Klineberg and Hull (1979) report changes on the attitudes of international students over time. They explain that on their arrival, when the desire for contact with host students is elevated, international students expressed friendly attitudes towards host students. However, after a period of time if their desire was not satisfied their attitude changes and becomes slightly less to average friendly.

A study conducted by Volet and Ang (1998), with both international and local students, reveals that the factor "most responsible for lack of mixing is the cultural-emotional connectedness provided by peers from a similar background" (p. 8). By cultural-emotional connectedness researchers refer to "thinking along the same wavelength, sharing a similar communication style and sense of humour" (p. 8). The lack of interactions, but in a lesser degree, according to Volet and Ang (1998), was also attributed to negative stereotyping of international students and to the ethnocentrism of Australian students. As Volet and Ang (1998) report, Australian students "value the opportunities to socialise in group work [but] their valuing of social aspects did not extend to students from other cultures" (p. 9).

2.3.12 Time availability

The lack of time to pursue friendships with American students as reported in the Yang et al. (1994) study of Japanese, Taiwanese, and Chinese students is the third most often reported reason for the limited interactions with host students behind the limited opportunities of contact with Americans and cultural differences. As students reported, they gave priority to academic work and paid less attention in establishing friendships with hosts.

2.4 Outcomes for cross cultural interaction

2.4.1 Introduction

As outlined in the previous section, the level of interactions between local and international students is low. Various factors were identified in the literature as influencing the cross cultural interactions between international and local students. However, various cultural studies suggest that cross cultural interactions have positive outcomes for both international and local students, while limited interactions are related to some negative outcomes for international students. In this respect, this section presents the literature that is concerned with the outcomes arising from cross cultural interactions from the perspective of international students.

2.4.2 Benefits from cross cultural interactions

Cross cultural interactions provide opportunities for both international and local students to learn about cultural differences and how to behave and perform in various cultural contexts (Thomas and Inkson, 2004). From the perspective of international students, interactions with local students provide them with first hand cultural information and appropriate behaviours in host country. In this respect, local students act as sources of reference (Black and Gregersen, 1991; Bochner, 1981;

Furnham and Bochner, 1986). As King (1995) states, interaction and friendships with people outside their culture “can be a great asset” for international as well as host students because it provides them with the opportunity to learn about different cultures, different approaches, different perceptions and points of view. Such knowledge can help them to establish international networks for future business prospects. Cross culture interactions are equally beneficial for both local and international students because it forces students to question their assumptions about others (Hess, 1994) and enhances their understanding of other cultures and points of view (Rai, 2002) and eliminates negative stereotypes and reduces bias (Michener and Delamater, 1999).

Besides these, cross cultural interactions are often associated with international students’ wellbeing as it contributes to psychological, social and academic adjustment (Ward, 2005; Smart, Volet and Ang, 2000; Saidla and Grant, 1993; Toyokawa and Toyokawa, 2002; Grayson, 2003).

As the literature shows, international students who are involved in cross cultural interactions report:

- Lower depression levels (Klineberg and Hull, 1979)
- Lower stress levels (Berry and Kostovcik, 1983; Olaniran, 1993)
- Positive mood (Furnham and Erdmann, 1995)
- Satisfaction, happiness and self-esteem (Noels, Pon and Clement, 1996)
- Lower alienation scores (Schram and Lauver, 1988)
- Higher adaptation scores (Surdam and Collins, 1994)
- Greater communication competence (Barrat and Huba, 1994; Zimmerman, 1995).

In regards to social adjustment, the literature indicates that international students who are involved in cross cultural interactions:

- “fit in better” (Kagan and Cohen, 1990)
- develop better communication skills (Williams, 2003; Noels, Pon and Clement, 1996)
- enhance their skills in the second language (Williams, 2003; Noels, Pon and Clement, 1996).

In regards to academic adjustment, literature shows that cross cultural interactions are associated with:

- higher grades and higher retention rates (Westwood and Baker, 1990; Boyer and Sedlacek, 1988)
- higher satisfaction with their academic program (Perruci and Hu, 1995; Klineberg and Hull, 1979).

2.4.3 Negative outcomes from the lack of interactions

Various studies suggest that international students, upon their arrival, are open for contact with host students and expect to establish friendships with them (Klineberg and Hull, 1979; Zeng and Berry, 1991; Ward, Berno and Kenned, 2000; Smart, Volet and Ang, 2000). However, these studies report that interaction with a host is limited despite the desire of international students for greater contact. The limited interactions with local students decrease the opportunity for international students to learn social rules and social skills pertaining to the host culture while increases the degree of social difficulty with hosts. Thus, limited interactions result in negative consequences to the international experience of the international students. The difficulties in establishing contact and friendships with host students may lead to

feelings of anxiety, depression and alienation (Hull, 1979; Schram and Lauver, 1988; Chen, 2003 and Trice, 2004) with adverse complications over time (Ward, 2001).

Searle and Ward (1990), who assessed the psychological and socio-cultural adjustment of international students in New Zealand, found that the dissatisfaction in relationships with host nationals, life change and social difficulty are factors that negatively influence the psychological adjustment of international students. Moreover, they reported that cultural distance for local students and expected difficulty and depression also inhibits their socio-cultural adjustment. A study by Berry and Kostovcik (1983) on Malay students in Canada revealed that students who had very few Canadian friends or spent little time with them have suffered greater stress levels in comparison to others.

Heikenheimo and Shute (1986) in their study regarding the interactions of African and Southeast Asian students in Canada, report that those students who were isolated from the host national and also frustrated about their isolation, have faced greater problems in their social and academic adjustment in Canadian culture. Yet, the isolation from American students was not an issue of concern for Sub-Saharan African students and the students from Saudi-Arabia. As Pruitt (1978) claims, only a small minority of Sub-Saharan students “felt at ease” with the American culture while the vast majority by choice were isolated from host students. These students express their preference to be surrounded by peers of cultural similarity. Similarly, Alreshoud and Kocke’s (1997) study of Saudi-Arabian students in America reports that these students have little desire for contact with American students, they live in a close vicinity to each other and create places for worship. Pandian’s (2008) study of Middle East students in Malaysia also reports that despite their low level of interactions with Malaysian students, these students did report feeling of loneliness as a result of low interaction and less local friends. They in fact preferred contact with their co-nationals or other Middle Eastern students. However, as

Pandian (2008) reports, IME students in Malaysia find it easier to establish contact with students from the opposite gender.

2.5 Social interactions between international and local students

2.5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to consider the literature referring to international students' social interactions with local students. Literature reveals that friendships, for international students, are one of the most effective social support systems to overcome loneliness and isolation in a new environment (Schram and Lauver, 1988).

Receiving help from friends:

- enhances their perception of feeling more in control in an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environment (Adelman, 1988)
- helps them to evaluate and make appropriate decisions in the new culture and become independent (Boekstijn, 1988)
- provides them with information about rules, regulations and services in the host country (Kim, 1988)
- helps them to adjust to the academic life in their host country (Boyer and Sedlacek, 1988; Schram and Lauver, 1988)
- decreases cultural stress (Olaniran, 1993).

Beaver and Tuck (1998) suggest that international students express a desire for social contact with local students. However, research findings suggest the predominant support system of international students consists of friends from the same country or international students from other countries. A study by Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) revealed that the preference of international students for co-national friendships is a natural response to the alienation they feel during their adjustment to the host country. As they explain, this is mainly attributed to limited efforts from

the side of international students to reach host students but also to the apathy of host students who “do not feel the need to go out of their way to socialise with the foreign students” (p. 444). The remainder of this section draws on the literature which concerns the level of international students’ social interactions.

2.5.2 Level of social interaction

Literature on the interactions between international and local students increasingly reveals that regardless of the country in which the study is conducted, and regardless of the country of origin of the international students, the level of the interactions is low. In this respect Klineberg and Hull (1979), who investigated the social contact and friendships of 2500 international students in eleven countries, revealed that more than half of the sample reported having close friendships with their co-national or international students from other countries. Similarly, Bochner, Mcleod and Lin’s (1977) study of friendship patterns of Asian international students at the University of Hawaii reported that the vast majority of international students expressed inclination towards social contact with students from the same culture. As these researchers reported, nearly half of the respondents identified co-nationals as close friends and nearly one quarter identified having established close friendships with local students and other international students.

Similarly, Asian international students in New Zealand reported greater preference to interact with their co-nationals. As Chen and Chieng’s (n.d.)(cited in Ward,2001) study reveals, nearly one quarter of students reported having no New Zealand friends. In contrast, a study by Yang, Teraoka, Eichenfiel and Audas (1994) with Japanese, Taiwanese and Chinese international female students in the USA reveal that nearly half of the participants reported having ‘meaningful relationships with their American peers. The students in this study claimed they were feeling

comfortable to disclose personal information to their American friends and they were often invited to their houses.

Some studies also report that international students from European countries find it easier to establish contact with their American peers and are facing lesser difficulties adjusting to American social and academic culture, compared to international students from South America, Asia and Africa (Sodowsky and Plake, 1992; Schram and Lauver, 1988). As Schram and Lauver (1988) maintain, international European students are less likely to experience feelings of alienation and isolation and difficulties in establishing relationships with Americans. This is most likely attributed to the culture similarities, English language skills and the similarities in education. Otten (2003) however, reports that this is not the case with European exchange students in Europe. His study reveals that European exchange students usually interact more with other European students and rarely with the students from the host country.

Trice and Elliott (1993) and Alreshoud and Koeske (1997) who respectively investigated the social interactions of Japanese and Saudi –Arabian students in USA, revealed that the level of their interaction is limited. The former study revealed that Japanese students spend most of their social and study time with their co-nationals while the latter revealed that Saudi-Arabian students ‘seldom’ or ‘sometimes’ socialised with host students during their free time, and in fact they express little desire for contact with American students.

Similarly, Trice’s (2004) study of international graduate student interactions, reported that the frequency of contact with American students varies “tremendously” across the origin of international students. As Trice explains, international students who “looked like and were culturally similar to Americans” interacted with them “at least once a week” (p. 682). Contrarily, those who looked

different and were culturally dissimilar were interacting 'once a semester or less', while most of them interacted with their co-nationals 'at least every other week'. As Trice (2004) asserts, "The extent to which international students spend time socialising with co-nationals may influence the nature and extent of their relationships with American students" (p. 674). The stronger the relationship with co-nationals, the harder it is to establish friendships with host students (Alexander, Workneh, Klein and Miller, 1976).

In Australia, Smart, Volet and Ang's (2000) study reported that none of the interviewed participants had an Australian friend. A study by Burke (1990) also revealed that the majority of international students reported having co-national friends only, while only a small percentage included Australian students in their closest friendship circle. Rosenthal, Russell and Thomson's (2006) study in the University of Melbourne demonstrated also that the vast majority of international students interacted on-campus and off-campus with students from the same cultural background. However, nearly one quarter of the participants reported having 'very much' or 'considerable' social interactions with local students on and off-campus. As researchers demonstrated, the students who mixed more with Australians originated from English speaking countries, Europe, India and South Asia. Thus, the researchers suggested the level of interactions were most likely associated with their language competence.

In a more recent survey by Australian Education International (2006), the vast majority of international students expressed a desire for greater contact. According to this survey more than half of respondents had actively tried to establish friendships with Australians. Moreover, this survey revealed that most of the international students had close friends from their country of residence or other international students, while half of the respondents reported to include Australian students in their list of close friends (c.f Marginson et al., 2010). However, the

survey conducted in 2006 by the United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs reported that more than half of the respondents had friendships either from their own country or with other international students, and nearly one third reported mixing with local students. As nearly half of the respondents reported, “UK students were hard to get to know” (c.f. Marginson, Nyland, Sawir and Forbes-Mewett, 2010).

Collectively, the above demonstrated that the level of international students’ contact is low despite some studies demonstrating international students’ desire for greater contact and friendships with local students. Various factors as discussed in Section 2.4.2 hinder international students’ interactions. The degree that these factors influence international students’ cross cultural interactions determines the formation of their social networks.

2.6 Social networks

2.6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to identify the social networks of international students and the role they play on their experiences in a foreign culture.

2.6.2 The role of social networks

Weiss (1973) notes that “Social networks provide a base for social activities, for outings and parties and get-togethers with people with whom one has much in common; they provide a pool of others among whom one can find companions for an evening’s conversation or for some portion of the daily round” (p. 150). For international students, social networks are valuable support systems which help them to overcome problems resulting from their sojourn to unfamiliar and culturally different environments. Boyer and Sedlacek (1988) assert that social networks

determine international students' adjustment to host culture and to academic demands as well as determines the attainment of their academic success.

International students feel "confident, determined, and independent [when] they have another individual to whom to turn in crisis" (Boyer and Sedlacek, 1988, p. 220). Various studies (e.g. Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001; Ward and Kennedy, 1993a; Ward and Kennedy, 1993b) suggest that the social support provided by students' networks is vital to their psychological adjustment in host culture. DiTommaso and Spinner (1997) find that integration into a social network is the best predictor of lower levels of social loneliness. According to Colb (1976), Searly and Ward (1990) and Copeland and Novell (2002), the support provided by the social networks acts as a shield against stress and has a positive effect on their emotional wellbeing. Caplan (1974) also claims that social networks decrease stress levels and provides individuals with the sense of belonging. Stokes (1985), who explored the relationship between social networks and loneliness, asserts that the density of network rather than the size of the networks enhances the sense of belonging and reduces loneliness.

Several studies (e.g. Bochner et al., 1977, 1985; Furnham and Albinhai, 1985; Furnham and Bochner, 1982, 1986) who have examined the social network of international students, conclude that international students operate within three social groups: co-national, multi-national and local friends. With each of these groups they tend to have different relationships.

2.6.3 Types of networks and their role

A number of different types of social networks can be identified from the literature and these are briefly considered in the remainder of this section.

Co-national networks

Bochner et al., (1977) maintain that a co-national network is the primary network for international students. It is mono-cultural and includes very close friends and other members of the same nationality. The co-national friends enhance their sense of belonging and provide psychological security (Church, 1982; Searle and Ward, 1990). This type of network enables international students to gain information and develop strategies to deal with the cultural norms in the host country (Adelman, 1988). It also acts as a forum where international students can rehearse and practice their own culture (Furnham and Bochner, 1986).

Co-national networks require the use of their native language which “may serve as a symbol of identity and a route to positive distinctness and status” (Ward, Bochner and Furnham, 2001, p. 109) among members of co-national group. According to Furnham and Bochner (1982), mono-cultural networks restate the cultural identity of international students and decrease their level of homesickness and disorientation during the adjustment process. Various studies revealed that a co-national network is very valuable to new-comers in terms of emotional and identity support especially during the adaptation phase. This type of network eases new-comers adaptive stress and loneliness (Furnham and Bochner, 1986) and provides them with information in their native language (Sudweeks, Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey and Nishida, 1990).

However, as Alexander, Workneh, Klein and Miller (1976) suggest, international students’ strong relationships with their co-nationals hinder the establishment of relationships with host students. Hull (1978) points out that international students whose social networks consisted predominantly of co-national best friends, have less frequent contact with American students and tend to report a higher level of discrimination.

Host national networks

Host national networks constitute the secondary network for international students (Bochner et al., 1977). This type of networks “facilitate[s] the academic and professional aspirations of the sojourner” (Bochner, 1981, p.22). Furnham and Bochner (1986), Adelman (1988) and Kim (1988) maintain that networks with host nationals provide opportunities for host and international students to learn each other’s culture and at the same time help international students to obtain the necessary social skills to adjust to the host culture’s norms.

Various studies reveal that social networks with host students are associated with the level of satisfaction with the host culture e.g. (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Klineberg and Hull, 1979) report greater satisfaction in the academic domain (Bochner, 1986) cultural and sensitivity, and greater opportunities for travel and work (Westwood and Barker, 1990).

Multicultural networks

Bochner et al. (1977) assert that international students establish networks with international students from other countries mainly for recreational purposes and entertainment needs as well as support since they share mutual problems. However, Bochner et al. (1976) and Furnham and Bochner (1986), maintain that multicultural networks are small, often superficial and rarely lead to friendships.

2.7 Conclusions

This chapter demonstrated that:

- there is extensive literature on the interactions between international and local students (Ward, 2001). However, the majority of literature considers international students as a homogenous group of students (Peacock and Harrison, 2007)
- there is very limited research literature that specifically concerns International Middle Eastern students' interaction with host students.

This chapter has identified that:

- international students interact mainly with their co-nationals (Volet and Ang, 1998; Furnham and Bochner, 1982), while the level of cross cultural interactions between local and international students is low despite the fact that the benefits of such interactions are considerable (Volet and Ang, 1998; Ward, 2001; De Vita, 2003; Smart et al., 2000).
- cross cultural interactions are deemed very beneficial for international students (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Klineberg and Hull, 1979; Bochner et al., 1976).

However, the literature on cross cultural interactions has more typically concerned itself with the experiences of international students and has rarely explored cross cultural interaction from the perspective of local students (Ward, 2001; Smart et al., 2000).

The foregoing review intimates a need for more research concerning the following areas:

- ways in which International Middle Eastern (IME) students communicate/interact with local students and other international students

- identification of the issues which or hinder facilitate IME students' friendships with other students and people
- the types of networks used by IME others and the role of these networks.

The next chapter presents the methodological approach used to gather data addressing the RQs, as stated in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological approach and design used for this research. In doing so, it firstly examines the philosophical assumptions underlying the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, and then provides reasons for positioning the research within the interpretivist paradigm. In addition, this chapter defines and explains quantitative and qualitative methodologies to establish a case for using these methodological approaches to explore the stated research questions. Further, this chapter explains the research design and defines and explains the use of the survey, focus groups and interviews. Finally, the selection of the research sample, its characteristics and the ethics involved in this research are discussed.

3.2 Philosophical framework

3.2.1 Overview

The research is a management tool essential to examine a given problem (Ticehurst and Veal, 2000). It is designed to answer the research questions following certain rules that guide the decisions taken at all the stages of the research process. It starts with the formulation of the questions, choice of the methodology and methods, selection of the sample and interpretation and reporting of the findings and conclusions.

According to Krauss (2005) and many other researchers it is important for the researchers to identify at the very beginning of the research process, their ontological and epistemological assumptions since these assumptions directly affect the design and execution of the study. This brings into consideration the research paradigm to

be used. In this respect Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Crotty (1998) point out that the selection of the research paradigm is up to the researcher. They assert that paradigms are neither right nor wrong, as long as the researcher demonstrates the usefulness of the selected paradigm. Nevertheless, before a particular piece of research is undertaken, it is important for the researcher to understand the underlying assumptions behind 'valid research'. This will enable the researcher to justify the methodologies and methods employed in the research design (Myers, 1997). In this context, research design is referred to as the approach that a researcher will adapt to conduct the research.

Maxwell (2005) argues that the research design is affected by the researcher's paradigmatic stance. The paradigmatic stance, as considered in the next section, refers to the researcher's preferences towards views about the nature of reality (ontology), the relation between the variables (epistemology) and to the selection of appropriate methods (methodology) to conduct research (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

As these preferences represent the basis of a research process, the researcher needs to make explicit the paradigm the research will draw on and "be knowledgeable about the philosophical issues embedded in research and their pragmatic implications" (Bettis and Gregson, 2001, p. 2). According to Crotty (1998) this implies that the paradigm adopted to conduct the research will inform the theoretical stance of the research as well as the methodology and methods used. However, Lincoln and Guba (2000) assert that today's plethora of paradigms provides the opportunity "for interweaving of viewpoints, for the incorporation of multiple perspectives, and for borrowing or bricolage where borrowing seems useful, richness enhancing, or theoretical heuristic" (p. 167).

3.2.2 Research paradigms: theoretical considerations

The term 'paradigm' is a term whose meaning has changed over time. It was initially used in scientific research by Khun (1962) in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. As Khun indicates in this work, a paradigm is a set of linked assumptions about the world which is shared by a community of scientists investigating that world. Such a set of assumptions provides the conceptual and philosophical framework for any study. Khun (1962) defines paradigm as an "implicit set of interlaced theoretical and methodological beliefs" (p. 36). Since then various researchers have provided alternative definitions for paradigm. For example, Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state that paradigm is "a loose collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts, and propositions that orientates thinking and research" (p. 30). Guba and Lincoln (1994) define a paradigm, as "a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts" (p. 107). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define paradigm as the "basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation, not only in choices of method, but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (p. 105). Likewise, Bryman (2004) defines paradigm as "a cluster of beliefs that dictates for the scientists what should be studied, how research should be done, how results should be interpreted" (p. 453). All of the foregoing definitions imply that paradigm guides the entire research process and provides directions and principals regarding the approach, methods and techniques of carrying out research within its philosophical framework.

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) consider that three questions need to be addressed to guide research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), the researcher's responses to three fundamental and interconnected questions determine his world views i.e. the paradigm choice. Therefore:

- the ontological question is: What is the form and nature of reality and what can therefore be known about it?
- the epistemological question is: What is the nature of the relationship between the knower and the would-be-knower and what can be known?
- the methodological question is: How can the enquirer (would-be-knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? (p. 108).

On the basis of how these questions are addressed, two main belief systems or worldviews usually prevail: a conventional belief system referred to also as positivist, scientific paradigm or hard paradigm, and a constructivist belief system referred to also as naturalistic, hermeneutic, interpretive paradigm or soft paradigm. In this dissertation the terms positivist and interpretivist paradigm will be used for these two belief systems.

Positivist and interpretivist paradigm hold opposing views in relation to the nature of the reality and about what constitutes knowledge. Both paradigms are traditionally associated with different research methodologies, namely they utilise different means to acquire knowledge. As such a positivist paradigm, as noted by Bogdan and Taylor (1975) “seeks the *facts* or *causes* of social phenomena with little regards for the subjective state of individuals” (p. 2) and is traditionally associated with quantitative research. However, as Bogdan and Taylor (1975) point out, interpretive paradigm which “is concerned with *understanding* human behaviour from the actors own frame of reference” (p. 2), is traditionally associated with qualitative research. This association is the reason for the qualitative/quantitative debate that started more than twenty years ago and dichotomised the researchers into purists and pluralists and is considered in Section 3.3.3.

Table 8 presents the two paradigms as described by Guba and Lincoln (2005). It refers to the differences between positivist and interpretivist paradigms regarding

the assumptions about the nature of reality, the relationship of the researcher and the research participants and the methods for data collection and analysis.

Table 8: Positivist and Constructivist/Interpretivist basic belief systems

Positivist beliefs	Constructivist/Interpretivist beliefs
Ontology-naive realism Reality is objective There is one true reality	Ontology - the nature of the reality is relative, local, specific and co-constructed. What is known is transactional and subjective. There are multiple realities.
Epistemology - a positivist Paradigm believes that an observer is detached from what is being studied The results are objective	Epistemology - the observer and what is studied are related and have an effect on what is observed. It is not possible to separate the observer from what is observed. The results are a subjective interpretation of the observations.
Methodology - the aim of the positivist methodology is to verify hypotheses using chiefly quantitative methods and manipulated experiments	Methodology - the aim of the Constructivist/Interpretivist methodology is hermeneutical or dialectical requiring a cyclic iterative process of data collection, analysis and interpretation. This process then leads to the emergence of a revised interpretation of the observations.

Adapted from (Guba & Lincoln, 2005)

It is important for the researcher to understand the essential differences and characteristics of the two paradigms. As Dobson (2002) notes “[the] understanding [of] different philosophical positions provides the researcher and the practitioner with the power to argue for different research approaches and allows one confidently to choose one's own sphere of activity” (p. 3). Further, Bettis and Gregson (2001) indicate that researchers should be knowledgeable about the philosophical assumptions concerning their research and the pragmatic implications of these assumptions. From this perspective the following section presents the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the positivist and interpretivist paradigms with a view to establishing the basis of adapting interpretivist paradigm.

3.2.3 Ontological and epistemological assumptions of positivist and interpretivist paradigms

In section 3.2.2 it was outlined that it is important for the researchers to identify at the very beginning of the research process, their ontological and epistemological assumptions. As pointed out by Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) “without nominating a paradigm as the first step, there is no basis for subsequent choices regarding methodology, methods, literature and research design” (p. 2). For this purpose, this section sheds light on the ontological and epistemological assumptions of positivist and interpretivist paradigms as a background to the stance and assumptions made by the researcher in this study.

Positivist paradigm

It is well documented in the literature that the positivist paradigm is rooted in natural sciences and emphasises experimental scientific observations to explain and test cause-effect relationships of a phenomenon (Creswell, 1994; Babbie, 2001; Eisenhart and Howe, 1990; Husen, 1988; Symon and Cassell, 1998). Positivists consider that knowledge is gained through sciences and more explicitly through mathematical sciences (Smith, 1983). Thus they assume that social phenomena “should be treated in the same way that physical scientists treat physical phenomena” (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14) and with this logic they incorporate the methods of natural sciences into social science to study humans and their societies (Blaikie, 1993).

According to the positivist paradigm there exists one reality which “...ontologically is prior to the existence and consciousness of any single being” (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p. 4), it has no inherent meanings and is driven by generic laws; hence all people experience the world in the same manner (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Lee, 1992; Olson, 1995). Reality for positivists exists independent from the objects of the

investigation and, “is ever unchanging and external to the inquirer” (Agostinho, 2005, p. 6.). This implies that researchers must remain detached from the research participants in order for the research to be unbiased (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Guba and Lincoln, 1996). As pointed out by Guba and Lincoln (1994), under the positivist paradigm the “inquiry takes place as through a one way mirror” (p. 110), where the researcher neither influences the phenomenon nor is being influenced by it.

Indeed, within positivist epistemology “the explanations emerge from interactions between the researcher and his subjects where the researcher, by definition, dominates the relationship (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 2002, p. 63). This relationship enables the researchers to “discover one sided things” thus “to get only answers to those questions” they have asked (Rowan, 1973, p. 210).

Positivists maintain that the reality in the social science enquiry should be objective. Objective reality implies that the real causes of social scientific outcomes must be time and context-free in order for the inquiry to be valid and reliable. In fact, generalisations of the outcomes are desirable and possible (Nagel, 1986). Under the positivist paradigm the goal of social scientists is to learn more about how the social world works in order to control or predict the phenomenon under investigation. In this respect, the phenomenon under investigation needs to be tested until a cause/effect relationship between the variables is somehow established (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Burrell and Burrell, 1991). Thus, positivists start the research with hypotheses or theory, and through deductive strategies they confirm or reject the pre-determined hypotheses (Parahoo, 2006).

Towards this end, positivists utilise rigorous methods of data collection and analysis because they argue knowledge can only be proved through empirical means and not through argumentations.

Interpretivist paradigm

According to Giddens (1992; 1993), in the interpretivist paradigm the researcher's approach is to reflect upon, rather than respond to, external stimulus as physical phenomena do. Thus, in using the interpretivist paradigm the meanings individuals assign to social phenomena may differ from individual to individual. As pointed out by a number of researchers (e.g. Kelly, 1963; Lincoln and Guba, 1985), when reality is considered subjective it is then determined by each person's perception of what is real. According to Krauss (2005) "[interpretivists] do not assume that there is a single unitary reality apart from our perceptions. Since each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us experiences a different reality" (p. 760).

Consequently, for interpretivists, reality is "multiple socially constructed" and can change over time depending on the knowledge that individuals have gained (Bryman, 2001,2004).

Moreover, interpretivist researchers seek to understand the characteristics of the language (Miles and Huberman, 1994); hence they investigate the concept of meaning that participants assign to the phenomenon under study. As Schwandt (2000) states: "We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth" (p. 197). Thus, because meaning "lies in cognition not in elements external to us" (Lythcott and Duschl, 1990, c.f. Krauss, 2005, p. 760), researchers involved in social research must immerse themselves into the situation and be part of it rather than remain outsiders. Only then can they gain a "holistic view of the surroundings and the actors" (Anastasia, 2006, p. 4). According to Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), "reality, as well as our knowledge thereof, are social products and hence incapable of being understood independent of the social actors (including the researchers) that construct and make sense of that reality" (p. 13).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1996), “it is impossible to separate the enquirer from the enquired into” (p. 163). This is the case because both researcher and researched participants are integral parts of the research process (Holloway, 1997). As pointed out by Hooks, Davey and Coy (2002) within the interpretivist paradigm the researcher (enquirer) and the research participants (enquired), work together in an iterative manner, shaping the research as it is being undertaken. Knowledge building within interpretivist paradigm starts with observations rather than hypothesis, and ends with contextual knowledge rather than theoretical knowledge that are universal and replicable. As Denzin and Lincoln (2008) assert, interpretive research is “guided by the researcher’s set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (p. 31). Hence researchers consciously or unconsciously reflect on the phenomenon of their own beliefs (Merriam, 1988). As Giddens (1993) asserts, the collection of data takes place in “double hermeneutic” i.e. research participants interpret their experiences and communicate their interpretations to the researcher and then the researcher interprets participants’ interpretations and tries to make sense of the meanings that participants assign to their experiences, influenced by the his/her world assumptions.

Indeed the interaction of the social actors in interpretivist paradigm “creates the data that will emerge from the inquiry” and “the findings of an investigation are the literal creation of the inquiry process...” (Guba and Lincoln, 1996, p. 163). However, since data contains the subjective realities of the researcher the outcomes of the research are “value-bound rather than value-free” (Guba and Lincoln, 1985, p. 37) and thus cannot be generalised. As pointed out by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) within interpretivist paradigm “...meaning arises out of social situations and is handled through interpretative process; behaviour and thereby data are socially situated, context-related, context-dependent and context rich” (p. 177).

Table 9 summarises the predispositions of positivist and interpretivist modes of enquiry. It can be seen that both approaches can be viewed as distinctive forms on the basis of a philosophical and methodological perspective.

Table 9: Predispositions of Positivist and Interpretivist modes of enquiry

Quantitative mode	Qualitative mode
Assumptions Social facts have an objective reality Primacy of method Variables can be identified and relationships measured Etic (outsider's point of view)	Assumptions Reality is socially constructed Primacy of subject matter Variables are complex, interwoven, and difficult to measure Emic (insider's point of view)
Purpose Generalisation Prediction Causal explanations	Purpose Contextualisation Interpretation Understanding actors' perspectives
Approach Begins with hypotheses and theories Manipulation and control Uses formal instruments Experimentation Deductive Component analysis Seeks consensus, the norm Reduces data to numerical indices Abstract language in write-up	Approach Ends with hypotheses and grounded theory Emergence and portrayal Researcher as instrument Naturalistic Inductive Searches for patterns Seeks pluralism, complexity Makes minor use of numerical indices Descriptive write-up
Researcher Role Detachment and impartiality Objective portrayal	Researcher Role Personal involvement and partiality Empathic understanding

(Adapted from Salazar, Crosby and DiClemente, 2006, p. 153)

Researcher's position

Based on the foregoing section this researcher has taken the view that reality does not exist out there in the universe but is a product of human mind. Concerning this research, International Middle Eastern (IME) students, the subject of this investigation, develop their behaviours, attitudes and perceptions reflecting on their experiences, values, culture and education rather than by following generic laws as natural phenomena do. On the basis of their subjective realities they assign different

meanings to their cross cultural interactions. As articulated by Giddens (1992, 1994), it is difficult to isolate people from their actions in order to control and predict the results of this research and identify the cause/effect relationships between predefined variables.

Furthermore, this researcher assumes that her role is to explore the subjective realities of IME students' social world and then to demonstrate the meanings they assign to their cross cultural interactions. However, because these subjective realities have not been developed in a vacuum but rather are "socially constructed" (Mertens, 2005, p. 12), the researcher must immerse into the participants' world. In this world the researcher "do[es] not remain as speechless mankind but opens ears to listen and speak to give a value connecting the known and the knower" (Shashidhar Belbase, 2007, n.p). This implies that the researcher's subjective reality consciously or unconsciously enters the research scene and as a result the research findings contain not only the subjective realities of the observed, but also the subjective realities of the observer. These ontological and epistemological assumptions position the researcher within the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretative approach of this research is further underpinned by the use of focus groups and semi-structured interviews to collect data.

Paradigm choice

In adopting either one of the paradigms, as discussed above researchers have to consider whether or not their approach addresses the aim of the research and consequently the research questions. Lee (1992) argues that choice of the paradigm depends on the "aims of the enquiry and the various roles of the researcher and the research-respondent relationship (p. 88). In addition, Sayer (1992) argues that the choice of the approach must be "appropriate to the nature of the object under study and the purpose and expectation of the study" (p. 4).

In the previous section it was established that the researcher's worldviews are compatible with the philosophical assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm. The aim of this study, as stated in Chapter 1, is to explore the cross cultural interactions between IME students and Australian students. This aim intimates that the research is to be exploratory in nature and thus the researcher is seeking to obtain an in-depth understanding of the meanings IME students assign to cross cultural interactions with their Australian peers rather than producing "measurement of their characteristics and behaviours" (Wainwright, 1997, p. 2). Stebbins (2001) maintains that researchers "explore when they have little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering" (p. 6). This is the case with this research as shown in Chapter 2.

In this light "what is", "what are" and "how do" research questions as stated in Chapter 1 were developed. These types of questions entail descriptive rather than prescriptive research (Creswell, 1998). As Williams (1998) argues, exploratory and descriptive research is primarily associated with interpretivist paradigm. Holstein and Gubrium (2005) point out "Interpretive practice engages both the *hows* and the *whats* of social reality; it is centred in both how people methodically construct their experiences and their worlds, and in the configurations of meaning and institutional life that inform and shape their reality-constituting activity" (p. 484).

3.3 Selection of research methodology

3.3.1 Introduction

According to Remenyi and Williams (1995), research methodology is the practical framework within which research is to be conducted. Traditionally this practical framework is influenced by the ontological and epistemological approaches adopted

by the researcher. Hughes (1990) states that “every tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world” (p. 11). Similarly, Crotty (1998) maintains that all the components of the research are interconnected, thus, the paradigm within which the research is situated needs to inform the theoretical stance of the research as well as the methodology and methods to be used. Furthermore, Mertens (2005) asserts that a “researcher's theoretical orientation has implications for every decision made in the research process, including the choice of method” (p. 7). Somekh and Lewin (2005) define methodology as both “the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken” and as the “principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research” (p. 346). Walter (2006) argues that methodology is a research’s frame of reference which is influenced by the “paradigm in which our theoretical perspective is placed or developed” (p. 35).

As indicated in the previous section, this research needed to adopt an interpretivist paradigm because its ontological and epistemological assumptions coincide with this researcher’s world views and also with the aim and the research questions developed to study IME students’ cross cultural interactions. The linkage between methodology and the research paradigm as concluded above implies that the methodology for this research, in order to be aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, should preferably be hermeneutical /dialectic in nature. As such, the research should be conducted using qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

However, as eluded in Chapter 2, IME students’ cross cultural interactions with their Australian peers constitute an area which has not been extensively researched. The researcher had to decide whether to follow traditional doctrines of interpretivist paradigm that confine her to either a qualitative or quantitative approach, or to apply both approaches within interpretivist paradigm. In addition, the researcher

has to decide whether the mono-approach would provide the researcher sufficient information to explore the phenomenon under investigation or use a dual approach.

In the research literature, it would appear that researchers' opinion is diverse about the most appropriate approach to use. Both approaches in a single study have been inappropriate because they rest on different ontological and epistemological assumptions and therefore require different instruments for data collection and analysis (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 1989); while other researchers emphasise that research methodology must be independent of the research paradigm and only be related to the research questions. Among them Simmons (1994) maintains that research methods should be informed by the nature of the research and that the research question must indicate the methodology and methods to be used. In this respect Patton (1990) argues that the research question should be the factor determining the research methodology and that the researcher should not be bound to see the world with one set of lenses.

From the same point of view Miles and Huberman (1984) hold the view that the research process should be guided by the research objectives and that researchers should be open to a "blend of epistemologies and procedures" (p. 20). In a similar vein Reichardt and Cook (1979), Patton (1990) and Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) promoting epistemological and methodological pluralism, contend that research approaches should be mixed in ways that offer the best opportunities for answering important research questions. Despite the fact that Guba and Lincoln (1985) perceived qualitative and quantitative approaches as incompatible, in a later statement in 1989 both researchers argue that "[b]oth qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm [and that] questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm" (c.f. Casebeer and Verhoef, 1997, p. 4).

The 'bridge' over different research paradigms is outlined by Dzurec and Abraham (1993) when they point out that "the objectives, scope and nature of inquiry are consistent across methods and across paradigms" (p. 75). Similarly, Halfpenny (1997) argues that "paradigms or approaches are logically independent from procedures" and that qualitative and quantitative data are not fundamentally different, in the sense that each involves "stripping away content and context from the richness of lived experience" (p. 12). He concludes that researchers should not be restricted to particular methods just because these methods are associated with their "favourite paradigm" but rather they should be more imaginative in selecting the procedures to conduct the research.

Furthermore, various researchers (e.g. Creswell, 2003; Punch, 1998; Stebbins, 2001) deem that interpretivist paradigm is not synonymous to qualitative research and that the stereotyping of qualitative research as an inductive research concerned with generating hypotheses and theories, and the quantitative as deductive, concerned with hypotheses and theory testing (Brannen, 1992) is not the entire truth. In support of these views Miles and Huberman (1994), claim that "[B]oth types of data can be productive for descriptive, reconnoitring, exploratory, inductive and opening-up purposes. And both can be productive for explanatory, confirmatory and hypothesis-testing purposes" (p. 42). Similarly Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) maintain that both qualitative and quantitative approaches can involve deductive and inductive reasoning and that both research approaches can fall from exploratory to confirmatory. They further assert that "the reasoning process does not dictate the research paradigm" and that "research objectives drive the research methods used" (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005, p. 3).

Likewise, Krauss (2005) maintains that "[T]he heart of the quantitative-qualitative 'debate' is philosophical, not methodological" (p. 759) while Mackenzie and Kneipe (2006) assert that "some paradigms may appear to lead a researcher to favour

qualitative or quantitative approaches, in effect no one paradigm actually prescribes or prohibits the use of either methodological approach”(p. 7). They also hold the view that both perspectives need to be applied in order for the research to be fully effective.

Curlette (2006) believes also that data collected using qualitative techniques can be used to support conclusions reached by quantitative data and vice versa. As Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) state “differences in epistemological beliefs (such as a difference in beliefs about the appropriate logic of justification) should not prevent a qualitative researcher from utilising data collection methods more typically associated with quantitative research, and vice versa” (p. 15).

Therefore, this researcher deems that since there is a dearth of research on the interactions of this particular cohort of students, a methodology needs to be used to enable the researcher to tackle the problem in depth and breadth. This can be achieved with the adoption of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Both methodologies have their strengths and weaknesses and as such the researcher can capitalise on the strengths of each methodology to overcome each one’s weaknesses (Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Bryman, 1992; Creswell, 1994; Greene et al., 1989; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

3.3.2 Use of qualitative and quantitative methodology

Introduction

In the previous section it was concluded that both numbers and words can better inform the research. Furthermore, the choice of paradigm does not exclude interpretivist researchers using surveys or positivist researchers using interviews. This section provides a brief explanation about the tenets of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in order to establish the purpose of each methodology in this research.

Quantitative research

Quantitative research originates from the natural sciences and is concerned in observing and measuring phenomena or behaviours in an objective manner (Cormack, 1991). It is defined as “a formal, objective, systematic process in which numerical data are utilised to obtain information about the world” (Burns and Grove cited by Cormack, 1991, p. 140). Taking into consideration that quantitative research looks for “distinguishing characteristics, elemental properties and empirical boundaries” (Horna, 1994, p. 121), this approach is apt to measure the phenomenon with “how often”, “how many”, “how much” and “to what extent” questions (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Nau, 1995).

Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) assert that the goal of the quantitative research is to identify “general trends in populations” (p. 585). In this respect a “quantitative researcher treats social phenomena as a set of interconnected variables, and every social phenomenon is the result of interactions between these variables” (Libarkin and Kurdziel, 2002, p. 78). A quantitative researcher designs instrument(s) that can describe the phenomenon under study at a given time or over a period of time and gather volumes of information from large samples of the population. The goal of quantitative research is to produce data in a quantified form that would identify the beliefs and understandings, and would provide demographic information about the sample. However, the quantitative instrument is unable to describe the phenomenon under study in as much depth and detail as qualitative does.

Qualitative research

Qualitative research originates from the social sciences and is concerned with studying human life, behaviour, beliefs and the social world surrounding human beings (Morgan, 1983; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Smith (1987) suggests that qualitative research is founded upon the concept of *verstehen* i.e. empathetic

understanding. This concept is used by Weber, a German idealist philosopher, and refers to the social scientist's attempt to understand both the intention and the context of human action. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) explain *verstehen* as an “ability to reproduce in one’s own mind the feelings, motives and thoughts behind the actions of the others” (p. 14).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define qualitative research as “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 17). Moreover, Holloway (1997) defines it as “a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live [and aims] to understand the social reality of individuals, groups and cultures” (p. 2). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as “multi-method in its focus...[which] stud[ies] things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring them” (p. 2).

The use of qualitative methodology in this research enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding, rather than only surface knowledge, of the interactions of IME students with their Australian peers. As Maxwell (1992) claims, the focus of the qualitative research is “understanding particulars” rather than “generalising to universals” (p. 296) as quantitative research does. In addition, a qualitative researcher, as the instrument for data collection, has the ability to uncover and interpret mechanisms behind behaviours and meaning-making (Gerhardt, 2004). As Wilber (1997) points out the construction of meaning is an active process that involves the inter-relationship between subject and object i.e. between researcher and participants. This implies that the outcome of qualitative research contains the views of the participants, in their own words “as felt and undergone” but also the subjective views of the researcher who translates the participants’ perspectives.

Similarities between quantitative and qualitative research

Despite the fact that both methodologies originate from different disciplines, have different goals and produce different types of data, taken from a research perspective “quantitative and qualitative research rest on rich and varied traditions ...and both have been employed to address any research topic” [Trochim (2006) on line].

In regards to the data, Trochim (2006) asserts that “all qualitative data can be coded quantitatively” and that “all quantitative data is based on qualitative judgment”. Moreover, Halfpenny (2005) argues that “the terms ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ pose a barrier to the researcher because they link data with particular paradigms”. He maintains that “both qualitative and quantitative data are constructed from raw experience; both reduce and transform experience; both require interpretation” (c.f. Dale, 2005, p. 2). In this respect Giddings and Grant (2006) assert that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods can be used within any research paradigm. The following section shows how both methodologies have been used to address the research questions.

3.4 Mixed methodology

3.4.1 Introduction

The term mixed method methodology is used interchangeably in the literature with the terms multimethod research and mixed model research despite the fact that these three terms have distinctive differences. Tashakkori and Teddie (2002) differentiate the three terms. They assert that multimethod research implies the use of two data collections from the same tradition; mixed model research refers to the mixing of both approaches in many or all stages of the research; while mixed

methods research implies the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in data collection and analysis stage.

Mixed methods research as a “third methodological movement” originates from the “paradigm wars” in which proponents of positivist and interpretivist paradigms were debating in regards to superiority of the one or the other paradigm. In this debate some researchers deemed that despite the ontological and epistemological differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches, each one is unique and valuable. They deemed also that both approaches can be used together to measure different or overlapping aspects of a single phenomenon, producing a more holistic view of the phenomenon, and a greater in depth and detailed understanding of the issues under investigation (Creswell, 2003; Morgan, 1998). From their point of view, quantitative approach, which is concerned with identifying and measuring variables to predict, control, describe, generalise, test hypotheses, and/or identify cause/effect relationships (Higgs, 2001) can be used together with the qualitative approach which is concerned with studying beliefs, value systems, and meanings ascribed by individuals regarding the phenomenon under study (Hammell, 2002).

Creswell (2003) defines mixed method methodology as “one that involves gathering both numeric information (e.g. on instruments) as well as text information (e.g. on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information” (p. 20). Furthermore, Teddie and Tashakkorie (2003) define mixed methods “as research designs using qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques in either parallel or sequential phases (p. 11). Likewise, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (p. 17). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) further contend that “[T]he goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from

the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both in single research studies and across studies” (p. 15).

3.4.2 The use of mixed method research

Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) identify five purposes for conducting mixed method research: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion. They assert that every mixed methodology can be classified by fulfilling one or more of these purposes. Triangulation in the mixed method research is “seeking convergence and corroboration of the findings from different methods that study the same phenomenon” while “complementarity is seeking elaboration, illustration, enhancement and clarification of the findings from one method with results from the other method” (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004, p. 770). In addition, the mixing of the methods for development refers to the use of one method to inform the other, while mixing for the purpose of initiation refers to the discovering of unexpected issues that would lead to reframing of the research questions (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004). Finally, mixing of the methods may have the purpose of expansion i.e. the use of different methods for different aspects of the research in order to “extend the breadth and range of the study” (Greene et al., 1989, p. 259).

Similarly, Hammond (2005) and Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Melhuish, Taggard, and Elliot (2005) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998), emphasise that a key advantage of mixed method research is the validation of the results of one method with the results of the other. Another key advantage of mixed method approach is that it allows the expansion of the scope of the study since it considers other aspects of the phenomenon, and as such, facilitates the discovery of new or paradoxical factors that could advance the knowledge base (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Curlette (2006) argues that “beliefs from the qualitative aspect of a mixed methods

research design can be combined with data from the quantitative side of the research to reach a belief statement about the existence of a finding from the qualitative study” (p. 345). Hunt (2007) asserts that since mixed methods use both inductive and deductive scientific methods and have multiple forms of data collection, they produce eclectic and pragmatic reports.

Punch (2004) asserts that combining the two approaches in a single study can “capitalise on the strengths of the two approaches [and] compensate for the weaknesses of each approach” (p. 246). This purpose is what Johnson and Turner (2003) term as fundamental principle of mixed methods research. In favour of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study are other researchers (e.g. Frechtling, Sharp and Westat, 1997; Duffy, 1987) who assert that application of one method narrows the perspective of the research while the combination of both approaches sharpens our understanding of the research findings.

3.4.3 Mixed method research design

Overview

According to Creswell (2003) mixed methods research can utilise sequential or concurrent research designs as is summarised in Table 10.

Table 10: Mixed methods strategies and designs

Sequential strategies	Concurrent strategies
Explanatory design: QUAN → qual	Triangulation: QUAN + QUAL
Exploratory design: QUAL → quan	Nested: QUAN → qual is embedded QUAL → quan is embedded

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2003)

Sequential mixed methods design is the design in which one type of data provides the basis for the collection of another type of data. This design is concerned with

addressing one type of question (qualitative or quantitative) by collecting and analysing both types of data. Sequential design can be exploratory or explanatory. The former “is characterised by an initial phase of qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by a phase of quantitative data collection and analysis. Therefore, the priority is given to the qualitative aspects of the study”. The latter design “is characterised by the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Priority is typically given to the quantitative data, and the two methods are integrated during the interpretation phase of the study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 5).

By contrast, concurrent mixed method design “is a multistrand design in which both QUAL and QUAN data are collected and analysed to answer a single type of research question (either QUAL or QUAN). The final inferences are based on both data analysis results. The two types of data are collected independently at the same time or with a time lag” (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003, p. 705). For the purpose of this research sequential mixed methods design was used, and more specifically, explanatory design. In this respect, the quantitative data was initially collected and then was used to develop the focus groups and interviews schedules.

As this research aims to explore IME students’ interactions with Australian students, a mixed methods research approach is needed to allow the researcher to describe their experiences within the context of the wide range of issues that may affect their interactions. The use of a mixed method approach is needed as it can provide a comprehensive view of the issues that cannot be explored by relying on a single approach. As indicated above, mixed methods can strengthen the quality of the research findings. Consistent with the interpretive paradigm, this research’s intent is to develop an understanding of the realities of the IME students’ diverse experiences.

Theoretical perspective used

As stated above, the use of mixed methods methodology implies that both quantitative and qualitative data are collected either in phases (sequentially) or at the same time (concurrently). In the context of this research, however, the sequential mixed method design was adopted because this researcher proceeded first with the administration of the online survey instrument, as outlined in Chapter 4, and then used the findings to develop the focus group and the in-depth interview schedules.

Creswell (2003) claims that when the data is collected sequentially the researchers, based on their interests and the objectives of the research, can proceed firstly with either the qualitative or quantitative data. He further states that if the researcher's intentions are to explore the topic, then, qualitative data is collected in the first phase, followed by the quantitative phase. If the researcher's intentions are to explain the phenomenon under study, then quantitative data is collected in the first phase and the researcher then proceeds with the qualitative phase. In this research, the researcher proceeded first with the quantitative phase and, for this purpose, has developed an on line survey instrument as shown in Chapter 4. The researcher deemed that due to the limited information regarding the topic, a survey instrument developed from the themes identified in the preliminary literature review would provide a good lead to this research. A preliminary analysis of the data from the quantitative phase provided the platform for the researcher to proceed with the qualitative phase.

Apart from the sequence of the data collection methods, the researcher considered also the priority, or the weight, of quantitative and qualitative data. As Creswell (2003) maintains "The priority might be equal, or it might be skewed toward either qualitative or quantitative data" (Creswell, 2003, p. 212). However, in this research the priority was skewed towards the quantitative data. As shown in Chapter 4 the

quantitative phase concerned collection of demographic characteristics of IME students in Australia, the level and the nature of their interactions with Australian students, the activities that IME students interacted with Australian students and the factors that influence their cross cultural interactions. Such data formed the basis for developing the focus group and in-depth interviews schedule. As Creswell (2003) maintains, when priority skews towards quantitative data, then qualitative data can assist the interpretation of the quantitative findings. He further asserts that qualitative data can assist in exploring certain results in detail or explain unexpected results.

3.5 Research Design

3.5.1 Introduction

Research design can be thought of as the *structure* of research - it is the “glue” that holds the research project together (Trochim, 2002, online). McMillan and Schumacher (1993) assert that the research design is a plan to obtain evidence to address the research questions. According to Creswell (1994), a research design it “begins with the selection of a topic and a paradigm” (p. 1).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) refer to the research design as “a flexible set of guidelines that connects theoretical paradigms to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting empirical material” (p. 28). This “flexible set of guidelines” includes five sequential steps (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The researcher’s first step is to locate the research within either qualitative interpretative research or within quantitative verifiable research. The second step refers to the selection of a suitable paradigm that is capable of informing and guiding the research, while the third step involves linking the selected paradigm to the empirical world through methodology. The fourth and fifth steps are related to the selection of appropriate data collection and analysis methods correspondingly.

Research methodology

For the purpose of this research both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are used as shown in section 3.3.2. The reasons for the use of both approaches are derived from the fact that very limited research has been conducted regarding the cross cultural interactions of IME students worldwide. Therefore, the researcher holds the view that in order to examine the topic in depth and in breadth both methodologies need to be employed. Both research approaches can complement or supplement each other and provide the research with rich and thick data.

Frechtling, Sharp, and Westat (1997) state the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches in addressing the research questions sharpen our understanding of the research findings. This researcher deems that “[N]ot all questions are best addressed by qualitative methods” (Rowan and Huston, 1997, p. 1444) or vice versa. Although qualitative methods are invaluable for the exploration of subjective interpretations of the IME students, equally invaluable are the quantitative methods in addressing the research questions, and in providing the research with rigid and objective data. A full and meaningful description of the phenomenon can be achieved when researchers supplement quantitative data with qualitative description (Barnett, 1953).

Creswell (1998) states that research questions *how* or *what* are seeking descriptions of what is going on, and thus qualitative research is needed to address these research questions. In addition, he maintains that research questions such as *how many*, *who*, *how much*, *where*, or *when* are seeking factual information, thus, quantification is required. Table 11 shows how quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used in this research.

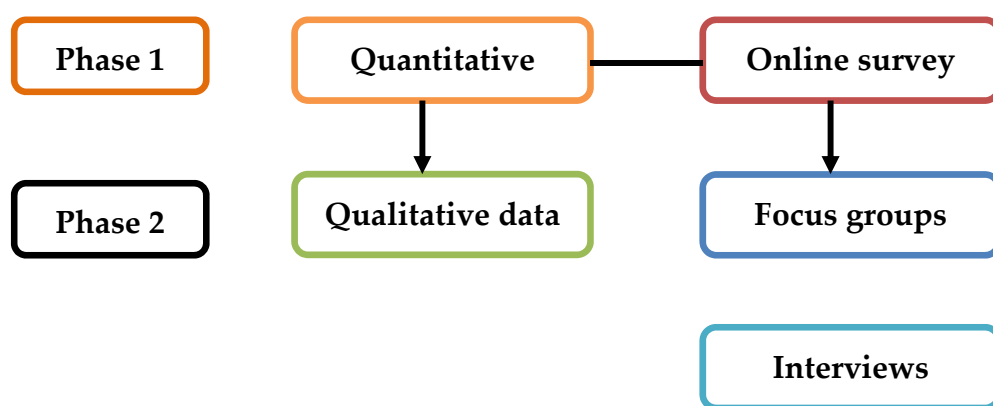
Table 11: The use of quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address RQs

Research Questions	Quantitative methods	Qualitative methods
RQ1 - What is the level and nature of International Middle Eastern students' interactions with local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS)?	<p>The use of survey to determine the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frequency of IME students interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS • number of their friends from each category • level of difficulty in their interactions with LS, ME and OIS • importance of interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS • frequency of activities IME students interact more frequently with LS, other ME students and OIS • places where IME students' interactions occur with LS, other ME students and OIS. 	<p>The use of focus groups and interviews to seek explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on issues concerning preferences for certain activities • on issues concerning preferences for going to certain places.
RQ2 - What social networks are used by IME students?	<p>The use of survey to determine the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • composition of IME students networks, the level of difficulty in establishing networks with others • purpose and level of and importance of networks • factors influencing interactions 	<p>The use of focus groups and interviews to seek explanation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • factors that influence use of networks and composition of networks • of the purposes of using certain networks

3.5.2. Description of the research design

As outlined above, this research used sequential mixed methods research design to collect data to address the research questions presented in Chapter 1. The research design, as Figure 2 shows, includes two phases: the Quantitative phase and the Qualitative phase.

Figure 2: Phases of the research design



Due to the limited research on IME students' interactions, this research proceeded first with the quantitative phase because it is apt to collect volumes of information from large numbers of participants within a short time. The qualitative phase which

followed aimed at exploring in depth the data collected through the quantitative phase, and as such to complement its findings.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, as shown in Figure 3.1, a survey method was used to collect quantitative data. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher and was administered online as detailed in Chapter 4. The survey instrument was designed to explore IME students' cross cultural interactions. As shown in Table 3.4, it was intended to gather information about:

- the types of activities IME students engage in with Australian students
- the frequency of these activities
- IME students' living arrangements and the frequency of the interactions in the place of living with other students
- the composition of IME students' networks
- the issues that influence the development of friendships with Australian students
- IME students' perceptions of Australian students and western culture, and the issues that influence these perceptions.

Phase 2

Phase 2, as shown in Figure 3.1, was undertaken following data collection and a preliminary analysis from Phase 1. For this phase a sub-sample from the survey participants was randomly selected to participate in focus group discussions and interviews. These two data collection methods are qualitative in nature and, as stated in Table 3.3, provide the researcher with an opportunity to gain in-depth information in regards to their experiences with local students, their need to interact

with local students, their networks and the importance of these networks for emotional, social and studying support.

The following section defines and explains the selection of each of these methods.

3.6 Data collection methods

3.6.1 Introduction

This section overviews the data collection methods used to address the research questions. In this respect, it briefly discusses the use of the online survey instrument, the focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Details of the design and development of the online survey is presented in Chapter 4, while the design and development of focus group and interview schedules are presented in Chapter 5.

3.6.2 Survey instrument

“Surveys provide a systematic and structured method for acquiring information on the same topic from a large group of people in a short amount of time”, (Gerhardt, 2004, p. 27, 28). Zickmund (2003) asserts that surveys are designed to measure knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and opinions. Researchers who use surveys are interested in identifying the causes of the phenomenon. Thus, in this research, the survey provides data about the frequency of IME students’ interactions, the nature of these interactions, the issues facilitating or inhibiting their interactions and their perceptions of Australian students. It also attempts to identify possible relationships between the demographic factors and the level and nature of their interactions, as well as possible relationships between demographic factors and perceptions. In the context of this research, the online survey has been used because it was considered to be an effective data collection method that provides quick and inexpensive

information about the population. Details regarding the design, development and administration of the survey instrument are provided in Chapter 4.

3.6.3 Focus groups

Krueger (1988) defines a focus group as a “carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions in a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment” (p. 18). Powell et al. (1996) defines focus group as a “group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research” (p. 499).

Cunningham (1993) asserts that focus groups provide researchers with an opportunity to investigate further the phenomenon and collect data that would not be obtainable using other data collection methods. However, the key advantage of the focus groups is the interactions among the participants in the discussions related to the topic of the study (Morgan, 1997). These interactions foster more creativity and elicit a range of issues, ideas, behaviours and experiences which were not feasible in the survey method. Merton et al. (1990) assert that focus groups “yield a more diversified array of responses” (p. 135). The purpose of the focus groups in this research was twofold. Firstly, focus groups were used to examine in-depth the meanings of data discovered in the survey, and secondly, to identify issues that were not raised in the survey.

Details concerning the design and development of the focus groups schedule are presented in Chapter 5.

3.6.4 Interviews

Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1990) categorize in-depth interviews as “focused or semi-structured interviews” (p. 89). In-depth interviews imply a series of face-to-face, detailed discussions with selected participants from the sample of the

research participants. They are more informal and less committed to a particular agenda and since they are conducted with the participation of the researcher and one participant at a time, elicit vivid information of participants' perspectives and source out information not gained through other methods (Gillham, 2000). Powel (1989) regards face-to-face interviews "as an interpersonal-role situation in which an interviewer asks respondents' questions designed to obtain answers pertinent to the objective of the study" (p. 109).

The purpose of the interviews in this research is considered to be important because the one-to-one discussions assist participants to disclose information that would not be disclosed during the focus groups discussions. Specifically, information referring to their interactions with the opposite gender was deemed as an important item for further discussion during the in-depth interviews.

The design and development of the interview schedule is detailed in Chapter 5.

3.7 Study sample

3.7.1 Introduction

This section describes the selection and description of the samples used in this research. Trochin (2006)[on line] defines sampling as "the process of selecting units (e.g. people, organizations) from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize our results back to the population from which they were chosen". Neuman (2003) asserts that well executed selection of study participants enables the researcher to measure variables from a smaller set of cases and to generalise the outcomes to all cases. In selecting the sample the researcher needs to take into consideration the profile of the sample needed to be the same as the profile of the study population (De Vaus, 2002). The process of sample selection is discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.7.2 Selection of the sample

According to de Vaus (2002), “[A] sample is obtained by collecting information about only some members of the population” (p. 70). He defines a sample as “a subset of the population” (p. 364). However, he claims that before selecting a research sample it is important the researcher properly defines the population from which the sample is to be selected. Thus, in the context of this research the population of interest are IME students who are enrolled in Australian universities. For the purpose of this research, as shown in Chapter 1, “IME students are students who are permanent residents in any Arabic speaking country and who are in Australia on a student visa”. These students might attend undergraduate and postgraduate courses, or may be currently enrolled in LOTE and foundation courses. The sample for the survey was selected randomly from email lists that the researcher obtained from the respective Arab countries’ embassies. These email lists contained the email addresses of all scholarship students enrolled in Australian universities. A “Random selection means choosing a sample in such a way that each of the population has an equal chance of being selected” (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001, p. 211). Due to time and money constraints the sample for the focus groups and interviews, as shown in Chapter 5, was selected purposively and included students who were living in Melbourne.

3.7.3 Description of sample

The sample of IME students in this research in their majority are coming from the Gulf States and Oman. All of these students have a government scholarship. As such, their tuition fees and living expenses are covered by their respective governments. As scholarship recipients, students from these countries are not allowed by their sponsors to do any paid work in Australia whilst studying. As discussed in Chapter 6, the majority of the sample consists of males enrolled in

undergraduate courses, postgraduate courses or in ELICOS and foundation courses. The sample participants share common language and culture. All speak Arabic and their level of English language skills differ. Implications of the language issue were addressed with the translation of the on-line survey into Arabic.

3.8 Ethical issues

Neuman (2003) claims that ethics is described as concerns with the procedures that a moral research involves. This research followed the principles advocated in the Code of Ethics for Research developed by the Australian Association for Research in Education.

Ethical clearance was obtained by the CQU Human Research Ethical Clearance Committee in April 2008 prior to data collection. It was concerned with the protection of the participants' confidentiality in all data collection methods, and the protection of the participants from harm and distress.

To comply with the ethical requirements, the researcher in order to protect the anonymity of the focus groups and interviewed participants, used pseudonyms. Prior to data collection, research participants were also provided with an Information Sheet where the purpose of the research was explained and the voluntary nature of their participation was underlined.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has justified the selection of the interpretivist paradigm as the 'best fit' to address the aim and research questions in this research. Furthermore, it has discussed the selection of the mixed methods methodology as the most appropriate methodology to collect data on IME students' interactions by utilising an online survey instrument, focus groups and in-depth face-to-face interviews. The following two chapters relate to the development design and administration procedures for the data collection instrument used.

Chapter 4: Development and administration of online survey instrument

4.1 Introduction

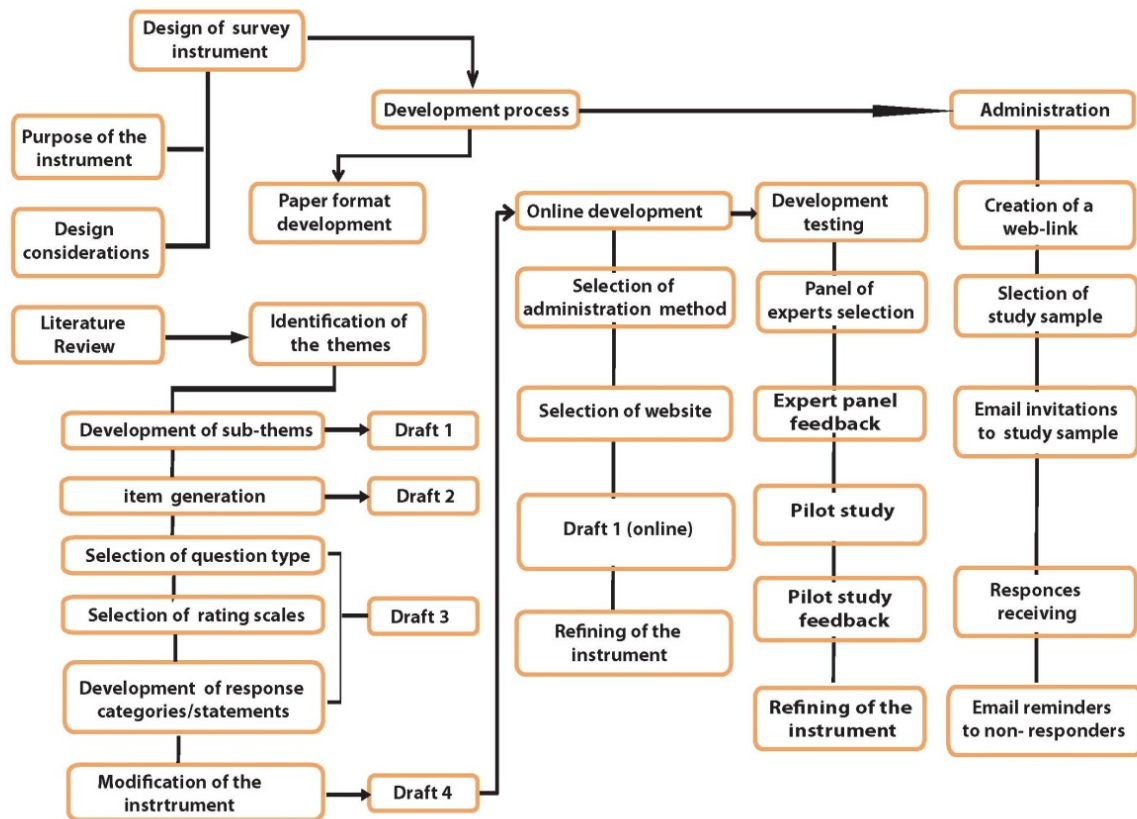
Chapter 3 considered the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpinned this research. An interpretivist paradigm was selected as a suitable paradigm to conduct this research, and a mixed methods methodology was justified as a suitable methodology to address the research questions. This required the use of three data collection instruments. This chapter is concerned with the design, development and administration of the online survey instrument called Cross Cultural Interaction Survey (CCIS).

4.2 Online survey instrument

4.2.1 Introduction

This section is concerned with the design, development and administration of an online survey instrument, named Cross-Cultural Interaction Survey (CCIS). The development of the survey instrument for this research was deemed necessary as such previously used and validated instrument did not exist. Figure 3 overviews the process needed in the development and administration of CCIS.

Figure 3: The development process of the survey instrument



4.2.2 Purpose of the instrument

The survey instrument was designed to explore the interactions of IME students with their Australian peers enrolled in Australian higher education institutions and thus to address Research Questions 1 and 2 stated in Chapter 1. Selection of the survey as the first medium of data collection is attributed to the fact that in the literature, as shown in Chapter 2, there is a scarcity of information regarding the interactions between IME students and Australian students. As such, the survey explored:

- the frequency and nature of the activities they interacted with local students (LS)

- their living arrangements and the frequency of the interactions in the place of living
- the composition of the International Middle Eastern (IME) students networks
- the factors influencing the development of friendships with the LS
- perceptions about LS and the issues influencing these perceptions.

As outlined in Chapter 3, this research has used a mixed methodology in order to obtain a deeper understanding regarding the interactions of IME students with their Australian peers. Thus, a further purpose of the survey is to enable the researcher to identify areas which need to be investigated further with the qualitative mode of research.

4.2.3 Design considerations

In selecting the research approach this researcher was guided by the research questions and the subject under investigation. Zikmund (2000) and Zikmund and Babin (2007) assert that instrument design is one of the most decisive stages in the research process since it is concerned with the translation of the research objectives into a series of questions that would address the research aim. Luck and Rubin (1987) emphasise that a well formulated instrument facilitates the gathering of accurate and complete information about the research problem. In this respect, in the design of the CCIS this researcher considered the following aspects:

- Format of the instrument
- Structure of the instrument and length
- Scale of measurement
- Ethical requirements of CQUniversity

Format of instrument

In regards to the format of the instrument, considerations were given whether to use a paper format or on-line format. The online format was considered as a more appropriate way to administer the survey instrument for the following reasons:

- All IME students in the sample use the internet to complete their university work and to correspond with their families and friends.
- The use of an online survey is a “cheap, fast and effective” way to contact the participants (Gedney, 2003).
- It simplifies the process for data analysis more so than if a paper format was used. Use of a paper format would require data to be coded manually. In this respect Gunn (2002) notes that web-based surveys enable faster response rates, easier processing of data error, checking capability and a higher quality dataset that allows the pre-coding of responses and prevents inconsistency of answers and errors which occur through transcription of the answers from a paper to an electronic format. This is the case for this research as it used the data analysis facility provided by Zoomerang software (Zoomerang.com) as discussed below.
- More accurate and reliable data can be collected. In this respect Reaney, Pinder and Watts (2002) claim that electronic surveys due to their “highly structured forms” can prevent respondents “from giving multiple responses to a particular question or submitting the questionnaire before all questions have been answered”(p. 3). This feature of the on-line survey minimises the mistakes that could violate the research protocol, and as such increases the ability of the instrument to yield more usable data than the traditional paper administered instrument.

Despite the foregoing, it is acknowledged that there are issues concerning use of the online survey. For example Blackstrom and Nilsson (2003), and Yun and Trumbo (2000) warn researchers about the hidden costs of maintaining a reliable website and the importance of obtaining accurate e-mail addresses. Others, for example Dillman (2000), and Sheehan (2002) are concerned with the sample bias in online surveys since they are restricted to the sample that has access to the internet. However, for this research this is not applicable since, as mentioned before, the internet is widely used by all IME students.

De Vaus (2002) identifies three ways that the internet can be used for administering online surveys: “with email, via Web pages and a combination of email and web” (p. 124).

Structure of the instrument and length

The number and type of the questions in the survey instrument were issues the researcher needed to address. The number of questions refers to the length of the instrument. However, “[T]here is no correct length to a survey: they should be as long as needed within the constraint of respondent attention span “(Garson, 2008, p.4). Castle, Brown, Hepner and Hays (2005) assert that short and very general instruments may be proved to be less useful than longer and detailed instruments. Furthermore, Dillman (2000) asserts that the length depends on the nature of the sample and the topic under investigation. He claims that short questionnaires may produce a low response rate because respondents may consider it too trivial or superficial.

In the context of this research where limited research is done, a short and very general instrument would confine the research to fewer issues while a longer and more detailed instrument may identify issues regarding IME students’ interactions that would not be able to be raised through a short and general instrument. As such,

a longer survey was deemed to be an appropriate option for this research. Garson (2008) notes “a trade-off between survey length and item response rate” and attributes the increase in “the rate of missing values” to the tiredness of respondents in completing long instruments” (p. 5). He advises researchers to divide the survey into sections since this gives participants a sense of progress and to notify the participants about the time required for its completion. However, De Vaus (2002) maintains that the evidence suggesting the foregoing relationships are mixed and often opposing. He states that although “there will be a point at which length will affect the response rate...we simply do not know the thresholds at which length on its own affects response rate” (p. 112). Further he maintains that the length of a questionnaire “will probably become a relatively unimportant factor in determining response rate” if researchers “pay attention to the other aspects of survey design and ensure that they minimise respondents’ burden” (p. 113).

Indeed to minimise respondents’ burden of the long instrument this researcher selected closed-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are useful “when the questionnaire is long or people’s motivation to answer is not high” and when the questionnaire is self-administered, as is the case in this research (De Vaus, 2002 p. 100). In addition, closed-ended questions were deemed suitable for this research for practical reasons: they can be easily standardised, and the data gathered through this format can be easily coded and statistically analysed (Fink, 2002).

Initially the instrument was to be administered in English. The researcher being aware of IME students’ language barrier ensured the English language for the instrument was made plain and simple and the instructions for completion were clear. However, later it was decided to include an Arabic translation. This was considered important since the research sample also included IME students enrolled in ELICOS and Foundation classes. These students were all recent in commencing their studies and were proven to have a lower level of English language command.

The use of a translated version was considered as a way to minimise the burden of understanding the questions. In addition, closed-ended questions in the translated version were assumed as a more suitable format for three reasons:

- they evoke specific, straightforward and quantifiable answers from the respondents
- they require minimum effort to be completed
- they do not require the answers to be translated from Arabic to English. Such translation could create a major hurdle for the researcher in terms of time and money.

Scale of measurement

In relation to measurement scale, it was decided to use a five point Likert scale. Likert scale is widely used in social sciences to measure constructs such as attitudes, images and opinions. Abdel-Kader and Dugdale (2001), and Oppenheim (1992) note its popularity is attributed to the fact that:

- scales are relatively easy to construct
- it offers more choices to the respondents to indicate precise information
- it facilitates the quantification of responses and as such their statistical analysis has established validity.

In this research Likert scale intervals between the responses ranged from:

- “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”
- “very important” to “not important at all”
- “never” to “very often”

Ethical requirements

In social research, ethical considerations are important issues as the objects in this type of research are human beings. Psychological harm such as stress and emotional distress can be prompted by sensitive issues and previous emotional experiences (Van Manen 1990). To comply with CQU's Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines it was essential for the researcher to inform the participants about the aim of the research and the security of their anonymity, as well as their right to withdraw from the research at any time. In addition, following the requirements of CQU's Human Research Ethics Committee it is important for participants to consent their participation by signing the Consent Form (see Appendix A). Approval for the research was obtained from this committee (Project No. H07/02-011). However, the nature of the online survey precluded the signing of a consent form by participants. Thus to comply with the ethics guidelines the researcher sent the Information Sheet and the Consent Form as an attachment to participants email addresses. Participation in the online survey instrument acted as implied and informed consent to participate in the survey.

4.2.4 Development process of the CCIS

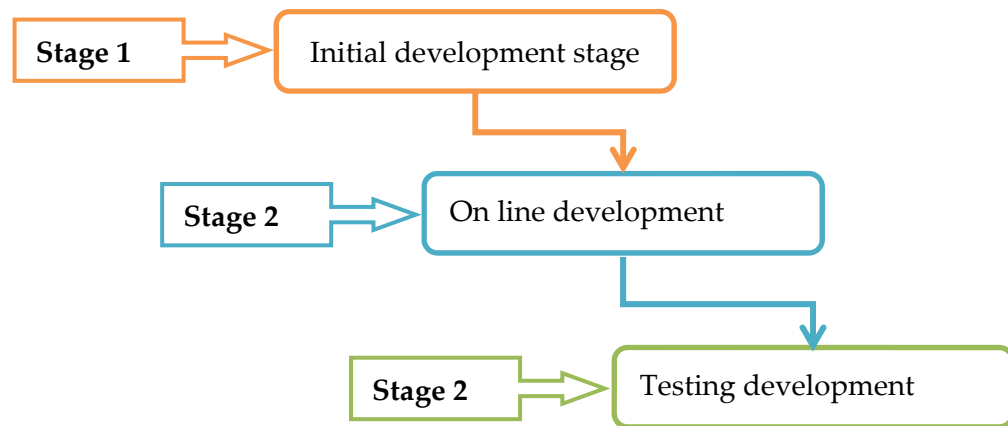
Introduction

The review of literature in Chapter 2 identified five themes that were relevant to explore interactions between local and international students. These are as follows:

- Interactions/communication with others
- Student networks
- Students' social/home environment
- Students' study/learning environment
- Perceptions about local students/western culture

The development process of the survey instrument comprised three stages as shown in Figure 4

Figure 4: Development stages of the survey instrument



The following sections provide details regarding the procedures undertaken in each of the three stages of the survey instrument development.

4.3 Initial development stage

At the initial development stage, themes identified in the literature review related to cross cultural interactions in relation to the research questions. This stage of the development of the survey instrument was carried out through four drafts:

- Draft 1 - Generation of sub-themes based on the themes identified in the Literature Review
- Draft 2 - Generation of a pool of items from the sub-themes
- Draft 3 - Paper based version of the instrument
- Draft 4 - Refining of the paper-based version of the instrument

Each of these drafts contained a number of iterations which were reviewed by at least two people - the supervisor and one academic in the field.

Draft 1

Initially a draft was developed for the purpose of obtaining ethical clearance from CQUniversity's Human Research Ethics Committee. This draft was developed based on the themes that were identified from a preliminary literature review; specifically on the themes:

- Interactions with local students
- Perceptions of IME students about local students

Despite the fact that this questionnaire complied with CQUniversity's Human Research Ethics Committee requirements, in regards to data collection it was covering only a part of the issues related to the current research. Following a detailed literature review, as presented in Chapter 2, themes identified are presented in Appendix B.

The purpose of this draft was to prepare a list of sub-themes from which survey questions, addressing the research questions, could be developed.

Draft 2

The sub-themes prepared in Draft 1 were used to prepare Draft 2. The purpose was to generate specific items based on the sub-themes. For example the sub-theme 'Types of interactions' was used to prepare draft survey items as shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Themes and sub-themes for “Types of interactions”

Theme	Sub-theme	Items
Interaction/ communication	Types of interactions with local students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social • Recreational • Educational • Personal /psychological needs 	I socialise with local students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On campus social situations • Off campus social situations I interact with local students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In sporting activities • In organised excursions I interact with local students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In study groups • In doing assignments • In exams revision • In explaining subject topic I interact with local students for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My personal development • Psychological support

Preparation of the items was done through a brainstorming session with the supervisor and a colleague. Based on sub-divided themes the researcher developed the first pool of items. In Draft 2 the demographic questions, which in the first draft were positioned in the first section of the questionnaire, were moved to the last section of the questionnaire. This was deemed important because of the belief that participants’ attention is high at the beginning of the questionnaire, but it may fall near the end. Therefore the questions referring to the research are better placed at the start as they need more thought. Two iterations were done for Draft 2. The first iteration was concerned with the development of items referring to Research Question 2 which needed to be more extensively developed in Draft 2. Also in Draft 2 extra items were included to fully address Research Question 1. In addition, the initial Draft 2 had a number of items that were too broad and hence were excluded. There were also items overlapping between the themes and these items were moved to the themes that they were most related with. In the second iteration of this draft it was deemed important to include items in the questionnaire that explored the

interaction of IME students not only with local students, but with other IME students and international students from other regions.

Draft 3

The purpose of this draft was to develop a Microsoft version of the survey that addressed each of the themes using Likert scales and that addressed each of the research questions. A further series of questions relevant to the research questions needed to be developed in order to collect information to fully address the research questions. A further iteration was done so that the survey had six sections as follows:

Section A - Interaction and communication with others

Section B - Student networks

Section C - Your life

Section D - Study habits

Section E - Perceptions about others

Section F – Demographics

Each section contained between 7-15 questions that addressed specific research questions. The challenge was to reduce the number of items but still to cover all the related aspects. As such, the initial Draft 3 underwent a number of iterations. The first was concerned with the following:

- Inclusion of extra items in response categories
- Inclusion of questions addressing the frequency of the interactions in relation to three types of activities (educational, social, recreational) in Section A
- Rephrasing the content of some questions in order to be simple and easy to understand.

The above matters were deemed important to address. De Vaus (2002) claims that the method of instrument administration “affects the type of questions that can be asked” and in self-administered questionnaires, as is the case with this instrument, researchers “need to concentrate on clarity and simplicity” (p. 94). He further maintains that in an internet administered instrument, as is the case with this instrument, the researchers should avoid complex and difficult questions since these may impact negatively on the response rate. As such, the first iteration was followed by a second iteration of Draft 3. The iterations of the survey were concerned with:

- Simplifying the language used in some items
- The exclusion of repetitive and vague items
- The exclusion of some vague item responses and their substitution of more specific
- The further synopsis of questions
- The change in the response categories layout, from horizontal to vertical position, because this enables the researcher to include a larger number of responses
- Sequencing of the items
- The development of choice responses in some of the demographic questions
- Changing the format of some items so that the questions have similar format to allow ease of answering questions and to improve the appearance of the questionnaire
- Moving the scales from horizontal position to vertical position throughout the whole questionnaire for the same reasons identified above
- The numbering of items by section was substituted by continued numbering throughout the questionnaire.

All the foregoing issues were addressed through discussions with the supervisor.

Draft 4

The purpose of Draft 4 was to further address the foregoing issues and refine the items needed to be used, and to decide how items are to be presented in terms of Likert scales for item responses. At this draft the survey was given the name 'International Middle Eastern Students' Interaction and Communication Inventory' (IMES ICI). This draft was concerned with:

- The way to use the same type of rating scales for items
- How to simplify the content of some questions
- The removal/modification of some complex questions
- The removal of some questions relevant to this research that could be better addressed by obtaining qualitative data
- The use of the same list of activities in response categories for questions with the same context
- Changing the order of some items
- Excluding items already covered in other sections
- Including extra items in response categories.

It was decided the above alterations would be done in the following stage of the development i.e. in the online stage. Three iterations were required before the instrument was developed on-line.

4.4. Online development stage

4.4.1 Overview

The purpose of this stage was to develop the instrument for its online administration. At this stage the survey questionnaire was transferred into the Zoomerang online Survey web site. Zoomerang is a subscription survey creation site that allows the user to create customised surveys.

4.4.2 Logistics for software use

The Zoomerang web site allows the user to customise the “look” of their survey with different backgrounds and colour schemes as well as to select from different question formats that range from multiple answers, one answer, open ended questions, ranking questions, rating scale (one answer or matrix) and yes/no questions etc.

When composing questions, the user firstly selects the type of question format from the provided variety. When the question type format is nominated the user enters the particular question and the responses if required. In the case of a matrix type question the researcher needed to nominate the number of the rating scale options and then enter the rating scale into the provided space. This process is repeated until all questions have been entered into the site. The researcher can then select from two available options: to allow participants to take the survey once, or to allow it to be taken multiple times per computer. In this survey research the first option was selected.

In addition, Zoomerang includes other features such as:

- Back button behaviour - this prevents respondents from going backwards in a survey to change responses on previous pages
- Language choice - this allows creating surveys and accepting responses in many languages
- Mandatory question message - this allows creating surveys where all or some of the questions are mandatory

In regards to the administration, Zoomerang offers the following three options:

- Create a Web link for an email message - and a link to the survey in the creators own email message

- Create a link for a web page - create a link for another website that directs participants to the survey
- Send a link to an email list - Zoomerang will send the link to the survey in an email message to the prospective participants.

Initially, only the back button behaviour was used in the online pilot testing.

However the missing responses during the pilot testing of the instrument (see Section 4.5.3) proved that in order to avoid discarding uncompleted surveys, the researcher had to make all of the questions mandatory. In addition, the language choice feature was selected after the pilot testing of the instrument considering the decision to include students from ELICOS and Foundation courses in the main study.

While the survey was developed the status of the site was 'Ready'. This implies that apart from the researcher, no one else would have access to the survey. The status of the site changed to 'Active' when the development process was completed and the instrument was deployed for data collection in either pilot testing or the main study.

For the administration of this survey the web link for an email message option was selected. The researcher as such, developed a web link (URL) and created a message. The message was sent with the web link to the email addresses of the prospective participants through the researcher's email system. This option also enabled the Zoomerang system to store the data once it was received from the respondents. This data could then be exported in a spread sheet format or as a HTML document.

4.4.3 Preparation of the online survey

The Microsoft Word version of the survey instrument was used to transfer the questions into the server. When transfer was complete the researcher prepared an introductory letter in the 'Edit your web greeting' page. In this page the researcher welcomes the survey takers and informs them about the aim of the research and the purpose of the survey instrument. In this section the researcher also defined the three groups of students with whom IME students may interact. This letter appears as the first page of the instrument.

In consultation with her supervisor the researcher renamed the instrument to Cross Cultural Interaction Survey (CCIS). In addition, in this draft it was deemed important to inform the participants in the introductory letter that the researcher had obtained ethical clearance from CQUUniversity's Human Research Ethics Committee.

Once all issues were addressed the CCIS was ready for the development testing stage. Selected screens of the CCIS are presented in Figure 5 and Figure 6 for Questions 2 and 46.

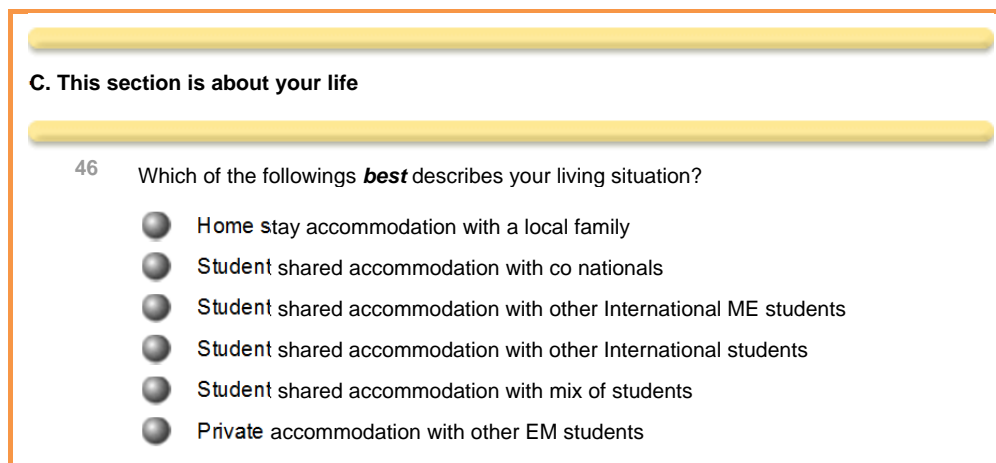
Figure 5: Questions which require participants' preference in every item.

Cross cultural interaction survey (CCIS)
A. This section is about your Interactions/communication with others

Please use the following scale to indicate the *extent* of your face to face contact with the following groups of students **on campus**.

	1 Daily	2 Several times per week	3 Weekly	4 Monthly	5 Rarely
Local students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
International M.E students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other international students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 6: Questions which require the selection of one item only from the pool of items



The image shows a screenshot of a survey interface. At the top, there is a yellow header bar. Below it, the text "C. This section is about your life" is displayed. Another yellow bar is below this text. The question number "46" is followed by the text "Which of the followings **best** describes your living situation?". Below the question, there are six radio button options, each preceded by a grey circle:

- ☐ Home stay accommodation with a local family
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with co nationals
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with other International ME students
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with other International students
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with mix of students
- ☐ Private accommodation with other EM students

Participants in the survey accessed the CCIS through a web link forwarded to them by the researcher using an email message. The first page of the instrument appears on the screen which contains the information about the research. The participants then first need to click on the “Agree” section if they wish to participate.

4.5 Development testing

4.5.1 Overview

The purpose of this stage of development of the CCIS is to check the validity and reliability of the research instrument; namely to establish whether or not the CCIS can provide the researcher with both valid and reliable data.

Validity of an instrument relates to whether the instrument is ample enough to collect all the information needed to address the research questions and is appropriate for the research sample (Radhakrishna, 2007). As Joppe (2000) states, the validity of an instrument “determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are” (c.f. Golafshani, 2003, p. 599). Reliability of an instrument, on the other hand, refers to the consistency of the results. Joppe (2000) defines reliability of an instrument as:

“... [T]he extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study” (c.f. Golafshani, 2003, p. 598). A research instrument is considered as reliable when the results of the study can be reproduced under similar methodology on repeated occasions (De Vaus, 2002). As De Vaus (2002) notes “If people answer a question the same way on repeated occasions then [the instrument] it is reliable” (p. 54). In a reliable instrument the items that reflect the same construct provide similar results (Trochim, 1999).

To test the validity and reliability of the CCIS the researcher firstly sought the feedback of a panel of experts and then pilot tested the instrument with a small sample of IME students. The use of the panel of experts and pilot testing respondents was deemed important to ensure the content validity of the instrument. Burns and Grove (1993) state that content validity can be obtained from three sources: literature, representatives of the relevant populations, and experts.

4.5.2 Pilot study

Pilot studies are concerned with content, wording and structure of the questions and scales. They save time, money and frustration because they provide an early indication about possible errors that, left unaddressed, could void the entire analysis (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). Sudman and Bradburn (1982) claim that a “pilot study can be used to indicate questions that need revision because they are difficult to understand and it also indicates questions that may be eliminated” (p. 284). Additionally, Anderson and Gerbing (1991) state that pilot testing is an important step in the scale development because it may detect invalid measures. Thus, De Vaus (1993) suggests: “Do not take the risk. Pilot test first” (p. 54).

Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) maintain that “[O]ne of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether

proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated” (p. 1). They conclude that although a pilot study does not guarantee the success of the main study, it increases the likelihood of its success. Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) assert that the pilot study maximises the internal validity of an instrument since it identifies ambiguities and difficult questions that may cause misinterpretation of the needed information.

4.5.3 Use of panel of experts

The role of the panel of experts in reviewing the CCIS was to address both content and construct issues as shown in Table 13. It can be seen that a specific role was afforded to panel members when consulted for their expertise.

Table 13: The role of the panel of experts

Composition of panel of experts	Role of panel of experts
<p>Researcher’s supervisor</p> <p>Two university lecturers - one of whom was involved with IME students</p> <p>Two postgraduate students</p>	<p>To provide comments in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clarity of the instructions • The construction of the questions (e.g. question wording, scales used) • The extent important issues were addressed • The extend items measure the identified concepts

Panel of experts’ protocol

The protocol of instrument administration to the panel of experts was as follows:

- The researcher sent an email to the three academics and the two postgraduate students. The email contained a letter addressed to the panel of the experts and the web link to access the CCIS. In the letter the definitions of local, ME students and other international students were provided. In addition, the

research questions and the themes based on which the research instrument was developed, were presented.

- The researcher sought for the experts to provide her with their comments in relation to the clarity of the instructions, the construction of the questions including the wording and the scales used, the extent that all important issues relating to the topic was addressed and the extent to which items on the instrument measure the identified concepts.

Panel of experts' feedback

The feedback received from the panel of experts included a number of points for improvement. These improvements namely concerned the clarity of wording in some questions. One of the experts suggested that the wording in questions 42 and 43 was confusing. The initial questions were as follows:

- What cultural similarities influence the establishment of face-to-face networks with Local Students?
- What cultural similarities influence the establishment of face-to-face networks with other international students?

As a result of this feedback both questions were modified as follows:

- What customs influence the establishment of face-to-face networks with Local Students?
- What customs influence the establishment of face-to-face networks with other international students?

Other recommendations related to missing instructions for the completion of questions 35, 36, 37, 42, and 43 and some typing mistakes. The experts suggested that all important issues relating to the topic were included and addressed the posed

research questions and all relevant dimensions of the concepts identified in the literature were measured.

4.5.4 Pilot study for this research

The pilot study was conducted with the participation of seventeen International ME students from Arabic speaking countries. This sample “resembles the types of people to whom the questionnaire will be finally given” (De Vaus, 1996, p. 103). The participants were selected randomly from the list of students provided to the researcher by the cultural attaché offices of respective Middle Eastern countries’ embassies in Australia.

The students were contacted personally by the researcher via telephone and the purpose of the pilot study was briefly explained.

Taking into consideration that the number of IME female students is lower than the number of IME male students, the ratio of male/female students in the pilot study was 13:4 respectively. The researcher initially aimed for a ratio of 10:7 but this was not feasible because female students from Arabic countries started to arrive in Australia beyond year 2006. However, at the time the pilot study was conducted the majority of the female students were enrolled in either English language courses or foundation studies. These levels of study do not include Australian students. In addition, due to cultural imperatives the initial idea was to divide the sample into three groups - a group with 4 female participants and two groups of 6 and 7 male students. The instrument was administered online and in a paper format. Explicitly, nine of the male participants completed the paper format version while the remaining four of the male participants and four females completed the online format version. The purpose of doing so is to compare the feasibility of each version.

Pilot study protocol

Each pilot testing session proceeded as shown in Table 14, with the presence of a native Arabic language speaker who briefly explained the content of the information sheet and consent form.

Table 14: Protocol for administering the CCIS for pilot testing

1.	Welcome students to the pilot study.
2.	Provide participants with information regarding the research and its purpose.
3.	Inform participants about obtaining ethical clearance before the commencement of pilot testing of the instrument.
4.	Provide participants with a copy of the Consent Form (see Appendix C) and explain its purpose.
5.	Ask participants to sign the consent form.
6.	Explain the purpose of the research and the definitions of Local students, International ME students and Other International students.
7.	Provide participants with a letter explaining the purpose of the pilot study and the importance of their feedback.
8.	Give participants the "Survey Feedback Form". Ask participants to read the Survey Feedback Form (see Appendix D) and familiarise themselves with the requirements
9.	Explain the sections of the survey instrument and the purpose of timing each participant
10.	Ask participants if they have any questions. Answer the questions if any.
11.	Provide each of the participants with a light blue coloured paper card. On this card the researcher has written the items 7, 8, 9 and 10 and 12 of Section B "specific issues" of the Survey Feedback Form and was asking participants to identify problematic questions. On this card the duration of instrument completion was also to be recorded by the researcher.
12.	Administer the online version and paper format version at the same time.
13.	Start timing each participant with a stopwatch and ask participants to notify the researcher upon completion of the survey.
14.	When all participants complete the survey instrument, the researcher explains the scores up to that stage .
15.	Ask participants to complete section A of the "Survey Feedback Form" and to transfer the findings from the cards into section B of the feedback form.
16.	Collect feedback forms and evaluate the CCIS with participants
17.	Ask participants for further questions
18.	Thank participants for taking part in the study

The overall duration of meetings with the pilot study participants was approximately one hour and fifteen minutes as shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Overall duration of the CCIS pilot testing

Procedures	Duration in minutes
Logistics	10 minutes
Completion of the CCIS	30-40 minutes
Completion of the Survey Feedback Form	(mean time) 10 minutes
Evaluation of the CCIS with the participants	20 minutes

The participants at this stage of pilot testing were asked to provide their feedback by completing the “Survey Feedback Form” as presented in Appendix C. This form referred to the following issues:

- Clarity of instructions
- Clarity of questions
- Layout of questions
- Length of the instrument
- Language used
- Length of the questions
- Scales used

Once the meetings with all pilot study participants were concluded the researcher transferred the responses of the participants who had completed the paper based format into the Zoomerang software. This software contains a feature that enables the researcher to preliminarily analyse the data collected. This preliminary analysis helped the researcher to:

- check the completed instrument for missing responses
- check each question of the completed instrument for variety of answers
- identify whether the instrument contains questions that have not been answered repeatedly (this may imply that these questions were not well understood by the pilot testing participants and they need to be simplified before the main study is conducted).

Further, the researcher took the following actions:

- Transferred the comments and suggestions of the pilot study participants, as recorded in the Survey Feedback Form, in the “Overall Survey Feedback Form” presented in Appendix D.
- Discussed the comments with her supervisor.
- Modified the CCIS taking in consideration the comments of the pilot testing participants.
- Calculated the mean time for the instrument completion (35 min) in order to decide whether it is reasonable.

Feedback from the pilot study participants'

The overall response from feedback received from the pilot study participants in regards to the “General issues” in the feedback form was very positive, and only minor issues in the use of the CCIS were identified. Specifically, participants indicated the following:

- Missing instructions as how to answer questions 29 and 30
- Items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 were too long, too similar or unnecessary
- Questions 35 and 37 were identical
- Questions 42 and 43 were confusing
- Exclusion of the “other language” value in questions 6 and 7.

The foregoing resulted in changes being made to the CCIS. These changes were discussed with the researcher’s supervisor and are presented in the following section.

Modifications to the CCIS

The questions which were problematic according to pilot study participants were modified as follows:

- Questions 6 and 7: the value “other language” was excluded
- Questions 8, 9, 10, 11,12,13,14 and 15: the number of the response items was decreased by excluding items that considered having similar meaning
- Question 37 was excluded because it was a repetition of question 35
- Questions 42 and 43 were rephrased.

In addition further changes were implemented as follows:

- Decreased the responses in some of the questions in section B of the survey instrument
- Added an extra item in question 63 in the demographic section of the CCIS to include not only undergraduate and postgraduate, but also students in ELICOS and foundation courses
- Modified the scales in questions 18, 19, 20, 25, 27, 32, 33, 34, 53, 54 and 55 which used four alternative responses to include a fifth alternative (neutral response)
- Changed the initial scale in questions 39, 44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 56 and 57 to include a ‘Very extremely’ response.

The modification of the scales was deemed important because:

- scales with an even number of points do not have a midpoint and as such participants are forced to choose from the provided ones
- the findings of the survey instrument could be more readily analyzed for statistical differences using an odd numbered scale.

Furthermore, some minor editorial changes suggested by the researcher's supervisor were made to the CCIS and then it was translated into Arabic language by an academic who is a native speaker of Arabic language. The Arabic translation was placed beside the English. The English version of the CCIS can be found in Appendix E.

4.6 Description of the survey instrument CCIS

The CCIS consists of 67 closed ended questions and a single question (see Appendix E). It is divided into the following six sections:

- **Section A:** *Interaction and communication with others* contains 20 questions (1-20)
- **Section B:** *Student networks* contains 24 questions (21-44)
- **Section C:** *Your life* contains 4 questions (45-48)
- **Section D:** *Study habits* contains 4 questions (49-52)
- **Section E:** *Perceptions about others* contains 4 questions (53-56)
- **Section F:** *Demographics* contains 11 questions (57 -67)

The open ended question sought from participants to raise issues in relation to their cross cultural interactions in Australia.

4.7 Administration of the CCIS

The instrument as presented in Appendix E was administered online for data collection on 1 April 2009 via the Zoomerang.com internet survey software. The web page administers questionnaires and involves placing the survey on a web server and inviting the research sample to visit the web to answer the questions. Invitations were sent to the email addresses of 600 IME students studying in Australia. The

email addresses of the students were obtained from the cultural attaché offices of respective Arab countries' embassies in Australia. In the email invitation the researcher included the link via which they could access the instrument and sought from participants to send the completed surveys back to her by 15 April 2009.

Ballantyne (2004) however asserts that often emails not relevant to the recipients are trashed as spam. This may influence the response rate. To avoid this, this researcher obtained assistance of the cultural attaché offices of the respective Arab countries' embassies in Australia. This researcher deemed that if students are notified about the research by their governmental authorities they will not be reluctant to complete the survey. However in the first week only a few completed surveys were returned to the researcher. The low level of completion is attributed either to IME students indifference for something not directly concerning them, or their reluctance to participate in something unfamiliar. In the meantime, email reminders were sent several times to the IME students. The total number of responses received was 152. The composition of the participants is 121 males and 31 females.

4.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the design process of the online survey instrument CCIS used in this research to collect data regarding IME students' cross-cultural interactions. The description of the version of the CCIS in this research, as well as details concerning the procedures of the administration of the CCIS are also presented. Chapter 6 presents the results from the administration of the CCIS.

Chapter 5: Design and development of focus group and interview schedules

5.1 Introduction

As eluded in Chapter 3 this research used a mixed methods methodology in order to explore the interactions of IME students with local students in breadth and depth. Chapter 4 considered the design, development and administration of CCIS, the on-line survey instrument used to collect quantitative data. This chapter firstly considers the design, development and administration of the focus group schedule. The remaining of the chapter then considers the design, development and administration of a semi-structured interview schedule.

5.2 Focus group schedule

5.2.1 Overview

A focus group method is a qualitative data collection method where individuals are brought together to discuss a particular topic, issue or concern. Focus groups are usually conducted in a social setting under the supervision of a moderator who provides the framework and the structure of the meeting, and who integrates open-ended questions to promote discussion (Morgan and Krueger, 1998). Focus groups engage people in brainstorming and generate ideas through dialogue with each other in an “interactive conversational” rather than “prior standardised” mode (Lee, 1993, p. 110). However, a “focus group is not a freewheeling conversation among group members; it has a focus and clearly identifiable agenda” (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook, 2006, p. 45).

The key feature that distinguishes focus groups from the other types of qualitative data collection methods is the interaction or synergy between the participants during the discussion. This interactivity makes focus groups “particularly useful for exploratory research where relatively little is known about the phenomenon of interest” (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p. 15). As Bloor (2001) states “the group is a socially legitimated occasion for participants to engage in “retrospective introspection”, to attempt to collectively tease out previously taken for granted assumptions” (p. 5-6). Kitzinger (1994) describes this form of interaction in the following terms: “participants do not just agree with each other. They also misunderstand one another, question one another, try to persuade each other of the justice of their own point of view and sometimes they vehemently disagree”(p. 113). Indeed the synergy in focus groups allows participants to explore the underlined assumptions that possibly unconsciously influenced the development of their beliefs, opinions and attitudes (Weeden, 2005).

In the literature, a focus group is defined as:

- “[A] carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Krueger, 1988, p. 18).
- “a form of group interview that capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data” (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 299).
- “basically group interview[s] although not in the sense of an alternation between the researcher’s questions and research participants’ responses. Instead, the reliance is on interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher, who typically takes the role of the moderator” (Morgan, 1988, p. 9-10).

5.2.2 Purpose and use of focus groups

Purpose of the focus groups

Gall, Gall and Borg (2003) claim that focus groups involve in-depth, open-ended group interviews of individuals who have been assembled for specific purposes. Various researchers explain the purpose of the focus groups as follows:

- Krueger (1994) claims that the purpose of the focus group is to obtain qualitative data which will “provide insights into the attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of participants (p. 19).
- Cunningham (1993) asserts that the purpose of the focus groups is to assist researchers “to investigate further, to solve problems and to gather data which could not have been obtained in other ways” (p. 93).
- Ogunbameru (2003) states that the purpose of the focus group is “to promote self-disclosure among participants, and it has been found that people have a greater tendency for self-disclosure when the environment is permissive and nonjudgmental” (p. 2).

In spite all the above identified purposes “[F]ocus groups are useful when it comes to investigating *what* participants think but they excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do” (Morgan, 1988, p. 25). In this research focus groups were used to explain the findings of the online survey instrument.

Use of focus groups

Behind the use of focus groups as a data collection method lies the philosophy that individuals’ attitudes, beliefs and opinions are not formed in isolation but are socially constructed and are linked to the wider social context within which they emerge (Kitzinger, 1994). This implies that attitudes, beliefs and opinions are not

fixed and constant properties (Sobreperez, 2008) but rather are formed and reformed in the light of new information and according to the situation individuals find themselves (Potter, 1998). In this sense focus groups are “the forum for interaction which synthesizes and consolidates differing accounts and underpins group consensus” (Sobreperez, 2008, p. 182). As Morgan (1988) states “[W]hat focus groups do best is produce an opportunity to collect data from groups discussing topics of interest to the researcher” (p. 21).

In this respect Stewart, Shamdasani and Rook (2006) assert that the “live encounters with a group of people will yield incremental answers to behaviour questions that go beyond the level of surface explanation” (p. 11). Focus groups can produce “data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group (Morgan, 1998, p. 12). In the same vein, Bloor (2001) states that the objective of focus groups “is not primarily to elicit the groups’ answers but rather to stimulate discussion and thereby understand (through subsequent analysis) the meanings and norms which underlie the group answers” (p. 43). Kitzinger (1994) maintains that the synergistic approach occurring in the focus groups generates insightful information and that “when focus groups dynamics work well the participants work alongside with the researcher, taking the research in new and often unexpected directions” (p. 299).

Kitzinger (1994) also points out that people’s knowledge and attitudes “often remain untapped by more conventional data collection techniques” because they “are not necessarily neatly encapsulated in reasoned responses to direct questions” (p. 108) but rather formed and reformed through the various types of communication that people use in their daily life. Tapping into these types of communications helps researchers to identify people’s values and norms (Kitzinger, 1994). In this essence, focus groups are “fundamentally a way of listening to people and learning from

them” (Morgan, 1998, p. 9). As Rossman and Rallis (1998) note “[P]eople often need to listen to others’ opinions and understanding to clarify their own” (p. 135).

Walston and Lissitz (2000) note that focus groups “are most useful when all members participate and when members feel free to disagree, so that the full range of experiences and opinions of the group are expressed” (p. 476). As pointed out by Gall et al. (2003) the use of focus groups encourages participants to express feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that would not have been expressed if one-to-one interviews were used. Moreover, Neuman (2003) claims that focus groups are useful when researchers want to explore topics or issues about which little is known, and is a valuable data collection method for the researchers who want to explore the deep-rooted beliefs, attitudes and opinions of the participants regarding the research topic.

Traditionally, focus groups are used as a data collection method either in the exploratory or descriptive stages of research. In the exploratory stage, focus groups can assist researchers to gain information about the topic of interest, and on the basis of this information, assist to develop a questionnaire. In the descriptive stage, focus groups can help researchers to interpret survey responses. As Johnson and Christensen (2004) note, focus groups “are especially useful as a complement to other methods of data collection” (p. 186).

Although focus groups as a data collection method can provide rich and meaningful context, they need to be well planned to achieve the most optimal and desirable outcomes. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that researchers should pay attention to issues such as the content of the discussions, the number of groups needed, the number of people included in each group and their composition of the focus groups. As Grudens-Schuck, Lundy-Allen and Larson (2004) maintain, if focus groups are “employed for the right purposes, using the right procedures” they can produce data of high quality (p. 5).

5.3 Design of the focus group schedule

5.3.1 Introduction

As was explained in Chapter 3, quantitative and qualitative methods are used sequentially in this research. Specifically, focus group sessions were held following the administration of the survey instrument. Merton & Kendal (1946) maintain that if focus groups are conducted mid-way through mixed method research methodology, they can assist researchers to interpret survey responses - as is the case for this research.

Krueger (1988) proposes the following phases in the development of a schedule, namely:

- Conceptualisation
- Interview
- Analysis and reporting

This is the approach that has been used, as presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Development of the focus group schedule

Phases	Prerequisites
Conceptualisation	The purpose of conducting focus groups The number of the focus groups The size of the focus groups The composition of the focus groups
Interview	The development of questions The role of the interviewer The sampling procedures The protocol of the focus group schedule
Analysis and reporting	<u>Analysis:</u> Words Context Internal consistency Specificity of responses Identification of big ideas <u>Reporting:</u> Raw data Descriptive statements Interpretation

The preceding approach has been used in this research. The remainder of this section considers each of these phases in terms of the approach used in this research.

5.3.2 Conceptualisation phase

Purpose of the focus groups

Section 5.2.2 presented a number of views of some prominent researchers regarding the purpose and use of the focus groups. In light of this information the purpose of having focus groups is to interpret in greater depth the findings of the survey instrument. Explicitly, this researcher considers that focus group sessions are intended to fulfil three purposes in this research. Firstly, focus group sessions “will yield a more diversified array of responses” (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1990, p.153) that will enable this researcher to gain information not only about IME students’ level and nature of interaction with and perceptions about Australian students, but also to relate their personal experiences with their behaviour and opinions. As pointed out by Morgan (1998) “the conversations in focus groups can be a gold mine of information about the ways that people behave and the motivations that underline these behaviours” (p. 58). Secondly, this researcher believes that in focus groups sessions IME students, using their own vocabulary, will refer to issues that are important to them in regards to their interactions with local students. These can be matters not asked about in the survey. Thirdly, this researcher believes that focus groups will help her to identify issues that will become the source of questions for the in-depth semi-structured interviews that follow. These interviews are intended to explore more in-depth issues and matters which were not considered in the focus groups and/or new issues and matters that arose from the focus groups sessions.

Specifically in this research, focus group sessions are intended to:

- gain deeper understanding of the issues that IME students identified in the survey as playing an important role in regards to their interactions
- obtain a deeper understanding about IME students' beliefs and perceptions about and experiences with, local students
- encourage the "voice of the students" to articulate their beliefs, attitudes and perceptions in more depth using open ended questions
- identify through the interaction among the participants, issues most raised in the survey that IME students consider to be important.

After the purpose of having focus groups was established, the next step was concerned with the number of focus group sessions and their composition.

Number and composition of focus groups

The literature suggests that there is "no minimum or maximum number of focus group sessions recommended" (Israel and Galindo-Gonzalez, 2008, p. 2).

Despite this, the number of focus group sessions:

- "depends upon the nature and complexity of the subject under investigation and the use for which the data generated by the focus group are to be employed" (Powell and Single, 1996, p. 501)
- the distinctiveness of the target sample (Krueger, 1994; Morgan, 1988, 1993; Stewart, Shamdasani and Rock, 2007) and
- the aim or purpose of the study (Krueger, 1988)

Although there are not ground rules regarding the number of the focus group sessions, researchers over the years have used a number of "rules of thumb". These rules according to Morgan (1997) "are most useful as a point of departure in the planning process" however in practice their application depends from the purpose of the focus groups. Stewart et al. (2007) maintain that most social studies use no

less than two focus groups and no more than four. Towards this end Krueger (1998) asserts that the greater amount of data comes from the first two focus groups and the data collected after that is a repetition. However, Stewart et al. (2007) suggest that the complexity of the questions and the composition of the sample are means that researchers should take into consideration when deciding the number of the focus group sessions. According to them, complex questions and heterogeneous sample require more focus group sessions in comparison to simple questions and homogenous sample.

Nevertheless, Cameron (2005) also maintains that the number of focus group sessions depends on the saturation, i.e. the point that the themes discussed in the sessions are repeated and no new information is shared. However, due to time limitation of the researcher this option is not feasible. As such, in deciding how many focus groups are necessary for this research, the researcher took into consideration Morgan's (1988) approach. According to him "one important determinant of the number of groups is the number of different subgroups required...if there are several distinct population segments...you may want or need to run separate groups in each" (p. 42).

In the context of this research, under the umbrella 'IME students' are included students who come from different Arabic speaking countries, and as such they belong to different subgroups. In addition, the researcher took into consideration that due to cultural imperatives, the interaction among the participants in focus groups will be greater if the members of the groups belong to the same gender. Initially the research deemed to conduct the following four focus groups:

- Focus group with male students from Oman aged 20-25
- Focus group with female students from UAE aged 20-25
- Focus group with male students from UAE aged 20-25

- Focus group with male students from UAE aged 26 and over

Size of the focus groups and duration

In the literature, the number of participants in the focus groups is often determined by the purpose of the study, the nature of the topic, the knowledge of the participants in the topic and the number of questions that focus group schedule includes. Thus, if the purpose of the focus groups is to understand participants' behaviour, attitudes and beliefs about a complex topic in which participants are knowledgeable and more questions are to be included in the schedule, fewer participants are recommended (Morgan, 1993).

When it comes to the right number of participants for a successful focus group outcome, there is no consensus among the researchers. Kitinger and Barbour (1999) recommend 8 – 12 people, Lindlof (1995) 6 – 12 people, Krueger (1988) 6– 8 people, while for Morgan (1988) the ideal size is six to ten people, although he maintains that fewer than six participants in each group is acceptable as long the group is relatively homogenous.

On the basis of the above information this researcher deemed that in the context of this research, six participants in each focus group would be the ideal number for the following reasons:

- The duration of focus groups was intended to be about 90 minutes. On this basis and taking into consideration that participants' level of command of the English language possibly varies, they may need extra time to understand the question and respond; thus it is not feasible to include more than six participants in focus group sessions.

- The discussion may be contaminated by the group dynamics (the participants with better communication skills in English language may dominate the discussion) if a focus group contains less than six participants.
- Six participants, with generally homogenous background, allow higher participants' involvement.

5.3.3 Focus group schedule

Overview

As noted above, the duration of each focus group session will be approximately 90 minutes. For this timeframe the researcher aimed to develop a set of questions which will encourage participants to interact and solicit the required information. In this light, three drafts of focus group questions were prepared. The first draft of questions for the focus group sessions was derived from the themes identified in the preliminary literature review, and which were used to develop the initial survey instrument. However, since the purpose of the focus groups is to explain in depth IME students' responses in the CCIS instrument, the questions for the focus group session, following the expansion of the themes included in CCIS, were expended too. The following sections discuss the generation of questions for the focus group sessions.

Draft 1

The researcher drafted a first set of questions for the focus groups sessions in conjunction with an initial draft of the survey questionnaire in order to obtain ethical clearance from CQUniversity's Human Research Ethics Committee. This draft contained questions which mainly referred to the interactions of the IME students with the Australian students and their perceptions about them i.e. the two themes that were initially identified in the preliminary literature review. In addition, it

contained some demographic questions. This list of questions is shown in Table 17 following.

Table 17: Questions for focus groups

1.	Have you ever travelled abroad apart from Australia?
2.	Have you studied in another country or countries apart from Australia?
3.	Do you speak any other language apart from Arabic?
4.	How long have you been in Australia?
5.	What is your program of study?
6.	How many Australian students are attending classes with you?
7.	Do you interact with them?
8.	Did you develop any friendships with Australian students? If yes, where did you meet them?
9.	Why did you become friends?
10.	How much time do you spend together?
11.	Do you spend time in recreational activities?
12.	Have you ever asked Australian students for help with academic activities?
13.	How would you describe your interactions with Australian students?
14.	In your opinion, is it easy to interact with Australian students? If yes, please explain. If not, please provide reasons.
15.	What are the benefits derived from your interactions with Australian students?
16.	What are the challenges you have had to overcome in becoming friends with Australian students?
17.	Since you became friends, have you changed your perceptions towards them?
18.	Have interactions with Australian students influenced the development of your personality?

Draft 2

Draft 2 was developed following identification of the themes that were used in the development of CCIS. The specific themes used for items generation were as follows:

- Interaction/communication with others
- Student networks
- Your life
- Study habits
- Perceptions about others

In consultation with her supervisor, the researcher developed a pool of items around these themes. These items needed to address the research questions presented in Chapter 1, and secondly, serve the purpose of the focus groups as outlined in Section 5.3.2.

Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) suggest that in developing questions for focus groups, the researchers must consider two principles:

- questions [to] be ordered from the more general to the more specific; and
- questions of greater importance should be placed early, near the top of the guide, while those of a lesser significance should be placed near the end (p. 61).

They maintain that very specific questions about the topic at the beginning of the focus group interview may dispatch the discussion to very focused and narrow areas of interest. However, starting the focus group interview with general questions and moving towards more specific questions, engages participants quicker. As such, in Draft 2 the researcher arranged the questions in a sequence from general to more specific following the recommendations of Krueger (1988) who suggests that a good questioning strategy is the one which gets the group off to a good start, focuses on key questions and provides closure. He asserts that focus groups' questions should include the following types of questions:

- Opening question
- Introductory questions
- Transition questions
- Key questions
- Ending/conclusion question

Furthermore, Morgan (1988), Krueger (1988), Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) and others suggest for the questions to be of open-ended format. Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) state that this format allows participants to answer from a variety of

dimensions and if well-constructed can elicit maximum data. In addition they suggest the inclusion of probes. "Questions that include words such as how, why, under what conditions, and similar probes suggest to respondents that the researcher is interested in complexity and facilitating discussion" (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p. 65). In addition, probes help researchers to better understand the meanings behind participants' responses. However Krueger (1988) states that although the purpose of probing questions in the focus groups schedule is to stimulate further discussion, the researchers should avoid prolonging the discussion around probes. Furthermore he suggests that "Why" probes should be rarely used in the focus groups is because these types of questions" forces[s] participants to provide quick answers that seem rational or appropriate to the situation" (p. 62). In this draft few "why" probe questions were included because it was considered that "why" probes help the group delve deeper into a topic. As such Draft 2 of the focus group schedule was prepared on this basis.

Draft 3

Draft 2 of the focus groups schedule contained 36 questions. This number of questions was far too large to be considered in the 90 min duration of the focus group sessions. Stewart et al. (2007) claim that a focus groups schedule which includes too many questions is "more like a within-group survey than an interactive discussion" (p. 11).

The purpose of Draft 3 was to decrease the number of questions so that the focus group sessions would be about 90 minutes. In Draft 3 the researcher took into consideration the recommendations of Krueger (1988) and Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) regarding the number of questions that are possible to be discussed during the focus groups interviews. The former suggests that the questions for focus groups interviews should be less than ten and more preferably five or six, while the latter suggests that the interview guide may consist of less than a dozen questions.

However, as shown in Table 18 following the number of questions in Draft 3 was significantly decreased but was not near to the recommended number. This is because the researcher held the view that in order to cast a light on the results of the lengthy survey instrument about a topic which is under-researched more questions are needed than maybe usually the case.

Table 18: Draft 3 of focus groups schedule

Function of questions	Focus group schedule questions
Introductory questions	1. Why did you choose Australia to study?
Transition questions	2. From your experience to date, was Australia a good choice to study? 3. What do you think of local students? 4. How different is Australian Education from your previous experiences?
Key questions	5. How did you meet local students? 6. Do you consider it necessary to interact with local students? 7. Do you consider your culture very different from that of local students? 8. Please tell me instances where local students have tried to be helpful. 9. What experiences have you had as a student that upset you? 10. Who do you find easier to interact with: female students or male students? 11. Do you miss doing things with your family? 12. Do you value that in Australia you are on your own and free to do things differently? Things that you would not do in your country? 13. Have had to change your habits to do things differently? 14. Do you like to study alone or in a group of students? 15. How important is it for you to have networks of students? 16. Is your network of students growing or staying the same?
Conclusion questions	17. Do you recommend study in Australia to your friends? 18. How do you overall, rate your experience in Australia?

Draft 3 questions, as shown in Table 19, were allocated around the themes identified in the literature review in Chapter 2.

Table 19: Allocation of the questions to the themes identified in the literature

Themes	Key Questions (by number)
A. Interaction/communication with others	5, 6, 8, 9, 10
B. Study networks	(8, 10), 13, 15, 16
C. Your life	11, 12, 13 (9)
D. Study habits	14
E. Perceptions	7 (6, 10)

(The numbers in brackets represent the questions overlapping between the themes).

The researcher's role in the focus group sessions

The role of the researcher in the focus group sessions was that of moderator. Moderators play a vital role not only during the discussion sessions, but also at the commencement and the completion of the session. As Tashakkori and Teddie (2002) state, the moderator must keep the discussion among focus group members “focused on the topic on the related issues that may lead to useful insights”, while Krueger and Casey (2000) state that the moderator’s role is to re-focus the focus group sessions on issues relevant to the topic of interest when the discussion diverges from it.

Focus group samples

In this research, IME students are the only data collection source. These students, to a large degree, share common cultural and religious backgrounds, however, their opinions, attitudes and beliefs in regards to cross cultural interactions with Australian students may vary. Morgan (1997) suggests that the goal of sampling in focus groups is “homogeneity in background and not homogeneity in attitudes” (p. 36). Thus, although random selection of focus group participants in general is not advisable, for the purpose of this research it initially seemed possible. Specifically, the researcher thought to select the participants for focus groups randomly from the participants who completed the CCIS instrument. These participants were randomly selected from the list that this researcher acquired from

the cultural offices of respective embassies that are responsible for IME students in Australia. Random selection of participants from those that completed the CCIS was practically deemed infeasible because:

- The sample for CCIS included IME students enrolled in universities all around Australia. Random selection of participants implies that the researcher may select participants that live and study in various Australian cities since none of the questions in CCIS refers to the city of living. Thus random selection of participants for focus groups from the participants who completed the CCIS is logistically infeasible and practically requires time and money.
- The sample for CCIS included IME students enrolled in Australian universities in different levels of education such as ELICOS courses, foundation studies, and undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. However, in focus groups the participants will be selected among the students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. This is because the researcher assumes that the students enrolled in these degrees probably have a higher competency in English language in comparison to the IME students enrolled in English language courses and foundation studies.
- In addition, IME students belong to different sub-groups. Therefore, the researcher considered that in order to gain clear information about the attitudes of these sub-groups, the best option was to include them in groups based on their country of origin. However, including IME students in different groups on the basis of their country of origin means that the researcher had to conduct countless focus groups sessions.
- The researcher also took into consideration that, due to cultural imperatives, it was necessary to segment focus groups participants on the basis of gender. Homogeneity in respect to gender may allow the free flowing of conversation,

but also the identification of the differences in perspective among both genders (Morgan, 1997).

To address these issues the researcher took the following actions. Firstly, she excluded from the list acquired from the cultural offices of respective embassies all students enrolled in universities other than metropolitan Melbourne. Secondly, she excluded from the list the IME students, who at the time focus groups were conducted, were enrolled in ELICOS courses and foundation studies. Thirdly, the researcher deemed it important to conduct focus groups with students, who in their majority, share similar religious backgrounds.

Location

The focus group was conducted in the researcher's place of residence at the time most available for the participants.

Recording instrument

The focus group sessions were recorded using an MP 3 recorder and were transcribed immediately after each session was completed.

5.4 Interview schedule

5.4.1 Overview

The review of literature indicates that interviews can take various forms and cover a wide range of practices (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). LeCompte and Preissle (1993) for example list six types of interviews: standardised interviews, in-depth interviews, ethnographic interviews, elite interviews, life history interviews and focus groups while Cohen and Manion (1994) group the interviews into structured interview, unstructured interview, non-directive interview, and focused interview.

However, Kvale (1996) asserts that the type of interviews used in qualitative and quantitative research differs on “the openness of their purpose, the degree of their structure, the degree they are exploratory or hypothesis testing...” (c.f. Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2003, p. 270). He further claims that the main difference among the types of interview lies in the degree of structure, which in turn reflects the purpose of the interview. David and Sutton (2004) refer to structure as “the degree to which the form and order of questions asked are kept identical from interview to interview” (p. 87).

The literature suggests that interviews can be classified as: structured or standardised; unstructured or un-standardised and semi-structured interviews or semi-standardised (Gray, 2004). In structured interviews the degree of structure is high, the purpose of the interview is to generate quantitative data about the participants’ feelings and the researcher uses the same set of questions in the same sequence. This type of interview takes the form of a survey with pre-set, standardised, usually closed-ended questions and is suitable for the quantitative research.

In unstructured and semi-structured interviews, however, are the types of interviews that are used in qualitative research and in this research particularly. The researchers that employ qualitative interviews as data collection use a low degree of structure in their conversations with the participants, predominantly open-ended questions which are focused “on specific situations and action sequence in the world of the interviewee” (Kvale, 1983, p. 176). The low degree in structure enables researchers to see the phenomenon under study through the interviewees’ lenses, to understand their perspectives and explain how and why they come to hold this perspective. As Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003) claim, the purpose of these interviews is to consider the participants’ “unique, alternative feelings about a particular matter” (p. 270).

Both semi-structured and structured interviews:

- reflect the constructivist epistemology i.e. knowledge is “generated between humans, often through conversations” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 267)
- aim to explore the attitudes, behaviour and opinions of the participants about the phenomenon under study
- are suitable data collection methods for a qualitative research.

In the literature, a qualitative interview is referred to as “a conversational partnership” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p. 11), as a “conversation with a purpose” (Burgess, 1984, p. 102) and as “social encounters” (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002, p. 3).

5.4.2 Qualitative interview

In the literature qualitative interview is defined as:

- “Any person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind” (Kumar, 1999, p. 109).
- “[A]n interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasises the social situatedness of research data.” (Kvale, 1996, p. 14).

Punch (2005) asserts that interviews, besides focus groups, are one of the main data collection methods in qualitative research and one of the most powerful ways in “accessing people’s perception, meanings, and definition of situations and constructions of reality” (p. 168). In the course of this research, the researcher conducted individual face-to-face interviews with IME students, adapting a combination of conversational informal interview and interview guide approaches.

Purpose of the qualitative interviews

In the context of this research, an in-depth understanding of motives and rationales that underline IME students' experiences regarding their interactions need to be explored. The researcher is concerned about using interviews to "gather descriptions of the life world" of IME students' (Kvale, 1983, p. 174), in the participants own words that would enable her to "add an inner perspective to outward behaviour" (Patton, 1987, p. 109).

More specifically, a qualitative interview is used to:

- consolidate and validate the meanings of the responses made by IME students in the focus groups and explain in depth their responses in CCIS
- get deeper into IME students' motivations to interact with local students and explore their experiences
- probe IME students' individual answers to specific questions in face-to-face communication
- collect "fascinating contextual or other information" (Wisker, 2001, p. 165).

Use of the qualitative interviews

As in-depth interviews have been employed as a follow-up to focus group interviews this implies that IME students, after sharing their experiences, attitudes and beliefs in the group dynamics, are able through in-depth interviews to elaborate on an individual basis. Such an approach "allow[s] researchers to gain initial group data which produces an overall group narrative and then seek more data specific components of the narratives" (Hesser-Biber and Leavy, 2005, p. 211). According to Morgan (1996) researchers use both methods when the research questions require both "breadth and depth" (p. 134). Likewise, Hesser-Biber and Leavy (2005), state that "in-depth interviews provide greater depth from individual respondents while focus groups can give researchers a great range of responses" (p. 211). Based on this

range of responses, the researcher can develop the interview guide as is the case with this research.

In this research, in-depth interviews, as a follow up to focus groups, enabled the researcher to:

- “go back and gain more data where needed in order to best answer the research questions” (Hesser-Biber and Leavy, 2005, p. 212)
- explore in depth and verify the data collected through focus groups regarding their cross-cultural interactions in order to develop the interview guide
- examine the difference in IME students’ attitudes, experiences and beliefs in both individual and collective settings
- identify the issues that did not surface during focus groups.

5.4.5 Design of the interview schedule

The interview schedule for this research was designed in three stages:

- The development of the interview schedule
- The administration of the interview schedule
- Reporting and analysis

These aspects are considered in the remainder of this section.

Development of the interview schedule

The goal of the in-depth, semi-structured interviews is to investigate in detail particular areas relevant to the IME students’ cross-cultural interactions, and also relevance to the research questions and objectives. Similar to the focus group discussions where many of the questions have been derived from the preliminary analysis of the completed survey instrument, the questions for the interview

schedule emerged mainly from the analysis of the focus group discussions, and to a lesser extent from the survey data.

According to Kvale (1996), the semi-structured interview schedule should be prepared in advance before the initial interviews take place, and should be focused on themes rather than a sequenced script of standardised questions. The themes for the interview schedule in this research have been focused on the salient issues identified in the analysis of the focus group discussions.

Questions for the interview schedule

The questions for the semi-structured interviews schedule were developed using the themes identified in the analysis of the data collected through focus group sessions.

These themes refer to the:

- motivation of IME students to interact with the Australian students
- experiences of IME students regarding interactions with the Australian students
- factors IME students considered as important when interacting with the Australian students
- perceptions of IME students about Australian education and the Australian students.

To address these themes the researcher has developed a set of questions as shown in Table 20. These questions enable the researcher to gather in-depth information that would verify and clarify the themes identified previously in the data analysis of the survey instrument (CCIS) and focus group about IME students' cross cultural interactions.

The questions in the interview schedule are open-ended questions because these type of questions “allow the participants to provide personal experience that may be outside or beyond those identified in the close-ended options” (Creswell, 2002, p. 205). In addition, open-ended questions permit probing that enable researchers to go deeper into participants’ responses and enrich the data (Patton, 1987).

Table 20: Interview schedule for this research

Type of questions	Questions	Probes
Introductory	What is your country of origin?	
	Have you ever visited or lived in another foreign country with your family?	Which country (ies)
	Is this the first time you have been away from your family?	
	Before your arrival did you ever meet any Australians?	If yes, how?
	Why did you choose Australia to study?	
	Has anyone recommended Australia?	
Key questions	Do you have any Australian friends?	If yes, where did you meet them? How much time do you spend with them? If no, why?
	What do you think about Australian students?	Can you give me an example of the sort of activities you do with the Australian students? What do you think are the main reasons for IME and Australian students to interact?
	Tell me about an instance where an Australian student was helpful/unhelpful to you.	How this did made you feel about Australian students?
	Could you please tell me with whom do you prefer to study?	Please explain the reasons.
	If you have difficulties with an assessment task whom do you approach first?	Please explain
	What do you enjoy most/least when interacting with the Australian students?	
	Have you ever been a part of a study group with local students?	If yes, who selected the group members? How did you feel being part of this group? How did Australian students behave? If you have never been a part of study group with local students how does this make you feel?
	If you had a chance to select the members of the study group, who you would prefer to include?	Why?
	Do you like spending time with Australian students off- campus?	If yes, what is your opinion about them? In your opinion what are the key drivers for interactions? What are the main barriers?
	Do you believe Australia was a good choice?	Explain
Concluding questions	Have you recommended Australia to friends?	

Selection of the participants

In this research some of the participants for the interviews were selected from the IME students who participated in the focus groups. The researcher specifically asked the students whether they wanted to participate further in this research after the completion of each focus group. The students who agreed to participate further in this research provided the researcher with their contact numbers and the researcher then contacted them one week prior to the interview to inform them about the time and place of the meeting. However, others were friends with some of the participants in the focus group and when asked, they were keen to participate.

Number of interviews

Cohen et al. (2003) asserts that in regards to the number of interviews there “is not a simple rule of thumb, as this depends on the purpose of the interview” (p. 278). Moreover, Johnson (2002) claims that “[T]he number of interviews needed to explore a given research question depends on the nature of that question and the type of knowledge the interview seeks” (p. 113). Therefore, the researchers may conduct as many interviews as necessary to collect the information they seek (Kvale, 1996). “Determining adequate sample size in qualitative research is ultimately a matter of judgement and experience”, maintains Sandelowski (1995, p.179). However, she argues that the size should not be small because it would be difficult to achieve data saturation, theoretical saturation, or informational redundancy but at the same time, the sample should not be so large because it would be difficult to undertake a deep, case-oriented analysis. Therefore, since the purposes of in-depth interviewing is not to make generalisations but rather to provide in-depth data that would supplement the data collected through the focus groups and survey instrument, only a small number of respondents were required. This decision was made following consultation with the supervisor. Thus, this researcher conducted seven interviews

with: two students from UAE, two students from Oman, one student from Libya, one student from Bahrain and one student from Palestine.

The administration of the interviews

The interviews for this research were conducted following the administration of the focus group schedule. The interview administration had 3 components:

- Pre-interview phase
- Interview phase
- Concluding phase

Pre-interview phase

At this phase the researcher had to ensure that before the commencement of the questioning (interview phase) participants had:

- a clear idea of why *they* have been asked
- basic information about the purpose of the interview and the research project of which it is a part
- some idea of the probable length of the interview and that it would be electronically recorded (explaining *why*)
- a clear idea of precisely where and when the interview will take place (Gillham, 2000, p. 38).

The protocol used for the pre-interview phase is presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Interview protocol used in this research

1.	Welcomed the participant and introduced herself
2.	Explained the purpose of the study
3.	Informed participants that for this research the researcher has obtained ethical clearance from CQUni's Human Ethics Committee
4.	Informed participants that their participation is voluntary and that their anonymity will be protected by using pseudonyms
5.	Provided participants with the information sheet in order to give a brief idea regarding the research
6.	Asked participants to sign the consent form
7.	Informed the participants about the length of the interview (around 60 minutes)
8.	Asked participants for their permission to audio and video record the interview
9.	Explained the purpose of recording the interview
10.	Informed participants that there are no correct or incorrect answers
11.	Asked participants if they have any questions
12.	Proceeded with the next phase

Interview phase

After the interview schedule protocol was explained to each participant, the researcher started the audio recorder and commenced the interview. In order for this stage to run smoothly the researcher was well prepared in advance before the beginning of the questioning process and knew not only the questions but also their sequence (Busha and Harter, 1980). The interview process was as follows:

- general questions at the beginning of the interview
- more specific questions about participants' interactions with local students.

The general questions were easy to answer questions and aimed to introduce participants to the interview climate. The specific questions were "straightforward descriptive questions" which aimed to help participants in building a sense of rapport with the researcher (Radcliff, 2007). In the words of Glesne and Peshkin (1992) "rapport is tantamount to trust, and trust is the foundation for acquiring the fullest, most accurate disclosure a respondent is able to make" (p. 79).

The specific questions as such were organised in the following order:

- Experiences/behaviour questions
- Feelings questions
- Opinion/ beliefs questions

The experiences/behaviour questions were asked first because the researcher deemed that by asking participants about their experiences with local students first it was more likely to identify how these experiences have influenced their motivation to interact with local students and their feelings towards local students. As Radcliff (2007) notes “[B]y having participants first describe their experiences, they will more likely be able to recall their corresponding feelings” and “ground their feelings in the context of their experiences” (p. 63). The opinion/belief questions aimed to explain IME students’ motivation to interact with local students and also their perceptions about them.

In the course of each interview, probes were also used to verify, clarify and fill missing information, and also to get longer and more detailed information (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). During the interview process the sequence and the wording of the questions in the interview schedule were followed to a large degree. However, there were some cases in which questions were either re-worded or were further explained to the participants, and cases where the sequence of the questions was changed as a result of the participants responses.

Concluding phase

Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes. After all questions in the initial interview schedule were addressed, the researcher:

- concluded the recording
- thanked participants for their time

- reassured participants about their anonymity and the confidentiality of the information
- notified them that a copy of the transcribed interview will be available to them for comments
- enclosed the audio tape in an envelope and recorded the date of the interview and name, email address and phone number of each interviewee.

5.5 Summary

This chapter documented the processes used in this research in the design, development and administration of focus groups and interview schedules. Chapter 6 presents the results of the use of these instruments.

Chapter 6: Results

Foreword

Survey data

This chapter presents the results from the administration of the online survey instrument, CCIS. The end of the chapter provides a summary of the results.

Focus group data

It has been planned to conduct four focus group sessions as shown in Chapter 5. However, the researcher experienced considerable difficulties in establishing four focus groups. The problems experienced were as follows:

- Female students from UAE aged 20-25 initially agreed to participate; however at the time when the focus group sessions were conducted the students changed their mind.
- Male students from the UAE aged 26 and over agreed to participate. However, when focus group sessions were conducted they did not attend the session. Reasons given by the students were that they were studying for exams and immediately following the exams, left to their countries for three months.
- Male students from Oman aged 20-25, initially agreed to participate; however, when the focus groups were conducted they explained that they were busy with their studies.

As a result only one focus group was conducted and this session comprised of four students from UAE aged 19-25. The students were all enrolled in undergraduate courses in four different universities in Melbourne.

Interview data

In total eight interviews were undertaken. The participants were as follows:

- Three students from Libya, male, aged 30-35
- One student from Jordan, male, aged 30-35
- Two students from UAE, male, aged 22 and 25
- One student from Bahrain, male, aged 24
- One student from Qatar, male, aged 22

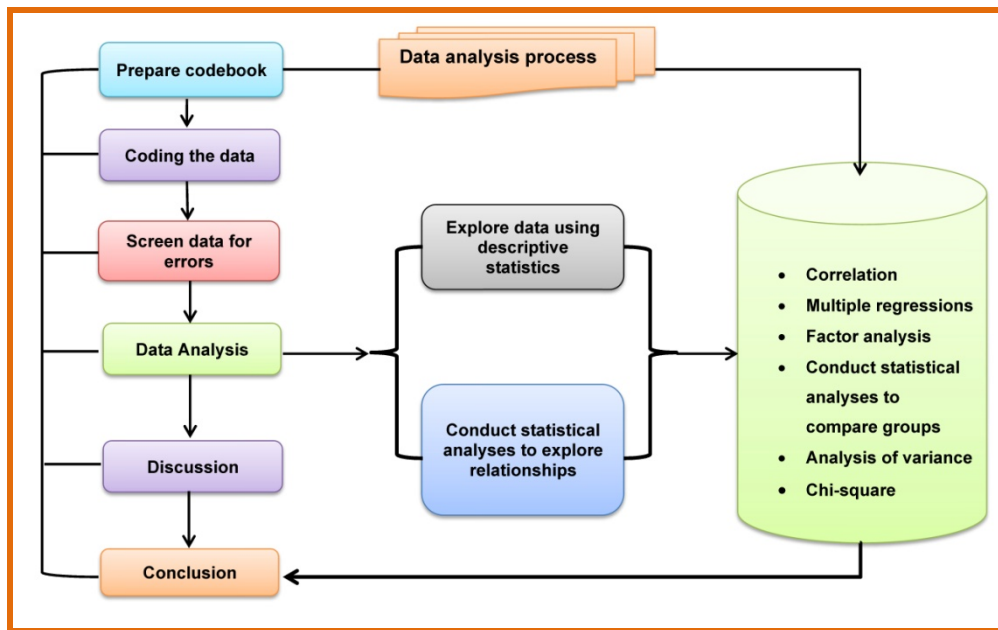
Reporting of focus group and interview data

For both the focus groups and interviews the results were transcribed by the researcher. The data from these sources has not been presented in the results chapter. Instead the results have been used in chapter 7 as a way of clarifying, explaining and supporting the survey results. This approach has been consistent with the methodology for this research as considered in chapter 3.

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 discussed the design, development and administration of the CCIS to collect data to address the research questions presented in Chapter 1. This chapter however, is concerned with the analysis of the data collected via the CCIS. For this it uses the statistics package SPSS. Figure 6.1 shows the steps taken to convert the data into a format that SPSS could recognise. It also shows the statistical tests used to analyse the data.

Figure 7: The data analysis process used in this research



6.2 Data preparation

6.2.1 Introduction

Preparation of the survey data involves the creation of the codebook and screening of data for errors and missing responses. The former process was carried out before data entry into SPSS while the later immediately after the information was entered into SPSS.

6.2.2 Creation of the codebook

Creation of the codebook involved converting the data obtained from each research participant into a format that could be recognisable by SPSS. This process, as shown in Table 6.1, includes the following:

- assigning an ID to each survey
- assigning a unique variable name in each item or question
- assigning a numerical code in each response

As Table 22 shows, creation of the codebook started by assigning an ID for each survey. The ID corresponds to a particular research participant and allows researchers to go back and check for errors in data entry or for missing responses. Then, each item in the questions included in the Sections A, B, C, D, E and F of the CCIS, as shown in Appendix E, was given a unique variable name and each response a numerical code.

The majority of questions in the CCIS have pre-coded responses (e.g. 1-daily, 2-several times a week, 3-weekly, 4-monthly, 5-rarely). However, in section F there are four questions which include the 'Other' category. In these instances codes were noted and allocated during the data entry process.

Table 22: Codebook example

	Variable	SPSS Variable name	Coding instructions
The codebook	Identification number	ID	Number assigned to each survey
	Face-to-face interactions with local students on campus	Q2	1-daily, 2-several times per week, 3-weekly, 4-monthly, 5-rarely
	Face-to-face interactions with ME students on campus	Q2a	1-daily, 2-several times per week, 3-weekly, 4-monthly, 5-rarely
	Face-to-face interactions with other international students	Q2b	1-daily, 2-several times per week, 3-weekly, 4-monthly, 5-rarely
	Gender	Gender	1- Male 2- Female
	Age	Age	1 - Other 1 - 19-24 2 - 25-30 3 - 31-36 4 - 37-42
	Status of study	Status of study	1 - English/Foundation 2 - Undergraduate 3 - Postgraduate

Following completion of the codebook, the data was transferred into a Microsoft Excel file and then imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences Windows version 17.0 (SPSS 17.0).

6.2.3 Data cleaning and screening process

The process of cleaning and screening was conducted to check for missing responses and possible errors. As eluded in Chapter 4, all questions in the CCIS (except question 68) were assigned a “mandatory” status in order to avoid missing responses. However, among the 169 collected questionnaires, 17 questionnaires were considered incomplete as the respondents completed only Section A of the CCIS. During the cleaning process the incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the final dataset.

Furthermore, the data were checked for possible errors that may have occurred during the data entry and/or coding of the variables. The search for errors in the coding of variables required checking each variable for values that fall outside of the possible range of values. In doing so, the frequency of each variable was checked. Table 23 shows an example of the output generated when the categorical variables, age, gender and marital status were checked for errors.

Table 23: Values of the variables: age, gender and marital status

		Age	Gender	Marital status
N	Valid	152	152	152
	Missing	0	0	0
Minimum		1	1	-1
Maximum		3	2	2

The values of tested variables were checked against the codebook and all fell within the range of possible scores, and therefore these variables were free from errors. Besides this, all of the individual items that constitute the scales were checked as well. Table 24 shows the maximum and minimum values of items that make up the scale in Q.2a.

Table 24: The minimum and maximum values of items in the scale used in Q2

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
IME students' face-to-face contact with Local Students on campus.	152	1	5	3.27	1.185
Valid N (listwise)	152				

The minimum and maximum values of the scales in this example all fall within the range of possible scores when checked against the codebook. Thus, the scale is free from errors.

6.3 Analysis of the demographic data

6.3.1 Introduction

This section presents the analysis of demographic questions listed in Section F of the CCIS which are concerned with age, gender, marital status, study status, country of origin, standard of English, length of stay and year currently enrolled. As shown in Chapter 2, these variables are among the factors that have impacted on the level of interactions and the formation of the face-to-face networks between local and international students.

6.3.2 Results of the Demographics of the sample

Gender

As shown in Table 25, the vast majority of the sample participants in this research are males. They constitute 79.6 % of the total number of the respondents whilst females constitute only 20.4% of the total.

Table 25: Frequency of respondents by gender

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Male	121	79.6	79.6	79.6
Female	31	20.4	20.4	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Age

According to Table 26, more than half of the sample (53.3%) belongs to the age group 19-24, whilst 35.5% and 11.2% belongs to age groups 25-30 and 31-36 respectively.

Table 26: Frequency of respondents by age

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid 19-24	81	53.3	53.3	53.3
25-30	54	35.5	35.5	88.8
31-36	17	11.2	11.2	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Marital status

As shown in Table 27, nearly three quarters of the respondents (73.7%) are single while one quarter (25%) have reported as being married.

Table 27: The Frequency of respondents' marital status

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid Married	38	25.0	25.0	25.0
Single	112	73.7	73.7	98.7
Other	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Status of study

Table 28, shows that the majority of respondents (67.8%) are currently enrolled in undergraduate courses while 17.8% and 14.5% are enrolled in English/Foundation and postgraduate programs respectively.

Table 28: Frequency of respondents by status of study

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid English/Foundation	27	17.8	17.8	17.8
Undergraduate	103	67.8	67.8	85.5
Postgraduate	22	14.5	14.5	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Length of stay

This variable initially included five categories. However, because only a few people in the sample fall in some of the categories, in consultation with my supervisor it was decided to collapse the number of categories to three, as shown in Table 29. According to Table 29, 54.6% of respondents have been in Australia 2-3 years, while 35.5% reported they have been in Australia for one year or less. A smaller percentage of students reported their length of stay to be more than 3 years.

Table 29: Frequency of respondents' length of stay

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid one year or less	54	35.5	35.5	35.5
2-3 years	83	54.6	54.6	90.1
more than 3 years	15	9.9	9.9	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Standard of English language command

This variable initially included four categories. However, because only a few people in the sample fall in some of the categories, in consultation with my supervisor it was decided to collapse the number of categories to three, as shown in Table 30. Table 30 shows that the majority of the participants (66.4%) reported very good and good level of English language.

Table 30: Frequency of respondents' standard of English language

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid poor	8	5.3	5.3	5.3
average	43	28.3	28.3	33.6
good or better	101	66.4	66.4	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Country of origin

With respect to the country of origin, the respondents come from 11 Middle East Arabic speaking countries. As Table 31 shows, the majority of respondents come from the UAE (50%) followed by Oman (24.3%). The remaining countries have a relatively small representation in the sample.

Table 31: Frequency of respondents by country of origin

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid UAE	76	50.0	50.0	50.0
Saudi Arabia	11	7.2	7.2	57.2
Oman	37	24.3	24.3	81.6
Jordan	4	2.6	2.6	84.2
Syria	1	.7	.7	84.9
Lebanon	2	1.3	1.3	86.2
Egypt	9	5.9	5.9	92.1
Qatar	5	3.3	3.3	95.4
Bahrain	5	3.3	3.3	98.7
Palestine	2	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	152	100.0	100.0	

6.4 Analysis of IME students' interaction/communication with others

6.4.1 Introduction

This section presents the results of Questions 2-21 in Section A of CCSI. It examines IME students' face-to-face contact with local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS). Specifically, it presents the results relating to the level of IME students' face-to-face contact with the three categories of students on-campus and off-campus, the number of their friends, the frequency of their contact in various activities, places and the various purposes of interactions with LS other ME students and OIS.

6.4.2 Description of IME students' interactions

Q.2: *Please use the following scale to indicate the extent of your face-to-face contact on-campus with the following groups: Local students (LS), International ME students (ME) and Other International students (OIS).*

Based on the information provided in Table 32, 12.5% of IME students interact 'Daily' with LS on-campus, 32.9% interact 'Daily' with OIS, while 37.5% interact 'Daily' with other ME students. Meanwhile, 38.8% and 22.4% of IME students reported having respectively 'Several times per week' and 'Weekly' interactions with LS. Moreover, 15.8% and 34.2% of IME students' reported having respectively 'Several times per week' and 'Weekly' interactions with other ME students while 28.3% of IME students reported having 'Several times per week' and 'Weekly' interactions with OIS.

Table 32: The frequency of IME students' interactions on-campus with LS, ME and OIS

Face-to-face contact on-campus			Responses by Category			Total
			LS	ME	OIS	
Rarely	Count		16	14	4	34
	% of Total		10.5%	9.2%	2.6%	7.5%
Monthly	Count		24	5	12	41
	% of Total		15.8%	3.3%	7.9%	9.0%
Weekly	Count		34	52	43	129
	% of Total		22.4%	34.2%	28.3%	28.3%
Several times per week	Count		59	24	43	126
	% of Total		38.8%	15.8%	28.3%	27.6%
Daily	Count		19	57	50	126
	% of Total		12.5%	37.5%	32.9%	27.6%
Total		Count	152	152	152	456
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Cross tabulations were performed to identify whether or not IME students' frequencies of face-to-face contact on-campus with the three categories of students differ by the status of study (SOS), the length of stay (LOS) in Australia and the level of English language command (LOE). In addition, Chi square tests were conducted to explore the relationship between IME students' face contact on-campus with LS, ME students and OIS in relation to SOS, LOS in Australia and SOE command. Tables 33, 34 and 35 present the overall results regarding the association of SOS, LOS

and SOE on IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with the three different groups of students.

Influence of status of study (SOS)

The results in Table 33 show that IME students in English/foundation studies and those enrolled in undergraduate courses reported having primarily 'Several times per week' face-to-face contact on-campus with LS. However, postgraduate IME students reported having 'Monthly' contact with LS. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' status of study and their face-to-face contact with LS on-campus.

In regards to face-to-face contact with ME students, Table 33 shows that IME students in English/foundation and undergraduate levels of study reported primarily having 'Daily' contact with this group of students. However, IME students in postgraduate level of study reported having primarily 'Weekly' contact with other ME students. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' status of study and face-to-face contact with ME and LS students.

Regarding IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between IME students' status of study and face-to-face contact on-campus with OIS.

Table 33: Influence of the status of study (SOS) on IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with LS, ME

Categories	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	English/foundation	Several times per week contact most often	Significant p. value=.037
	Undergraduate	Several times per week contact more often	
	Postgraduate	Monthly more often	
ME	English/foundation	Daily contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
	Undergraduate	Daily contact more often	
	Postgraduate	Weekly contact more often	

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of length of stay (LOS)

Table 34 shows that IME students who have been in Australia for up to three years reported having primarily 'Several times per week' face-to-face contact on-campus with LS. However, IME students who have been in Australia for more than three years reported having 'Daily' contact with LS. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' LOS and face-to-face contact with LS on-campus.

Moreover, Table 34 shows that IME students who have been in Australia for one year or less and over three years reported having primarily 'Daily' face-to-face contact on-campus with other ME students. However, IME students who have been in Australia for two - three years reported having 'Weekly' contact with other ME students. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' LOS and face-to-face contact with other ME students.

Concerning IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between IME students' LOS and face-to-face contact with OIS.

Table 34: Influence of length of stay (LOS) on IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with LS, ME

Categories	Length of stay	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less	Several times per week contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
	Two – three years	Several times per week contact more often	
	Three years and over	Daily contact more often	
ME	One year or less	Daily contact more often	Significant p. value=.022
	Two – three years	Weekly contact more often	
	Three years and over	Daily contact more often	

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of standard of English (SOE)

According to Table 35, IME students with a poor and good or better standard in English language command reported having primarily 'Several times per week' face-to-face contact on-campus with LS. Moreover, those with an average standard in English language reported having primarily 'Monthly' contact with LS. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' standard of English language command and face-to-face contact on-campus with LS students.

Table 35 also indicates that IME students with poor and average standard in English language command reported having primarily 'Daily' contact with other ME students, while students with good or better English language skills reported having 'Weekly' contact with other ME students. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' standard of English language command and face-to-face contact on-campus with ME students.

In regards to IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between IME students' standard of English language command and face-to-face contact on-campus with OIS.

Table 35: Influence of standard of English (SOE) on IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with LS, ME

Categories	Length of stay	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	Poor	Several times per week contact more often	Significant p. value=.002
	Average	Monthly contact more often	
	Good or better	Several times per week contact more often	
ME	Poor	Daily contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
	Average	Daily contact more often	
	Good or better	Weekly contact more often	

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Q.3: Please use the following scale to indicate the extent of your face contact off-campus with the following groups: LS, other ME students and OIS.

According to Table 36, 30.3% of IME students reported having 'Daily' interactions off-campus with ME students while only 14.5% and 7.9% reported having 'Daily' interactions with OIS and LS respectively. In addition, 32.9% and 30.3% of IME students respectively reported having 'Weekly' interactions with OIS and ME students while 28.9% reported having 'Weekly' interactions with LS. However, nearly one third of the participants reported 'Rare' face-to-face contact with LS off-campus.

Table 36: The frequency of IME students' interactions off-campus with LS, ME and OIS

Face-to-face contact off campus			Responses by Category			Total
			LS	ME	OIS	
Rarely	Count		43	8	18	69
	% of Total		28.3%	5.3%	11.8%	15.1%
Monthly	Count		14	18	23	55
	% of Total		9.2%	11.8%	15.1%	12.06%
Weekly	Count		44	46	50	140
	% of Total		28.9%	30.3%	32.9%	30.7%
Several time per week	Count		39	34	39	112
	% of Total		25.7%	22.4%	25.7%	24.56%
Daily	Count		12	46	22	80
	% of Total		7.9%	30.3%	14.5%	17.54%
Total	Count		152	152	152	456
	% of Total		33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

To establish whether or not IME students' frequency of face-to-face off-campus contact with the three different groups of students is influenced by the SOS, LOS and SOE, cross-tabulations were performed. Furthermore, Chi square tests were conducted in order to indicate the relationship between IME students' face-to-face contact off-campus with LS, other ME and OIS. The overall results of the cross-tabulations' findings are presented in Tables 37, 38 and 39.

Influence of status of study (SOS)

According to Table 6.16, IME students enrolled in English/foundation courses reported having primarily 'Several times per week' face-to-face contact with LS off-campus while those enrolled in Undergraduate courses reported having 'Weekly' face-to-face contact off-campus with LS. However, IME postgraduate students reported having 'Rare' contact with LS off-campus. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' status of study and face-to-face contact off-campus with LS.

In regards to IME students' face-to-face contact off-campus with ME students, Table 37 shows that 'Daily' contact has been primarily reported by students enrolled in English/foundation level of study. However, IME students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses have reported respectively 'Weekly' and 'Rare' face-to-face contact with other ME students off-campus. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the IME students' status of study and face-to-face contact off-campus with ME students.

As shown in Table 37, IME students enrolled in English/foundation courses have primarily reported having either 'Daily' or 'Weekly' face-to-face contact off-campus with OIS. However, IME students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses reported having primarily 'Weekly' and 'Rare' contact off-campus with OIS,

respectively. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the status of study and face-to-face contact off-campus with OIS.

Table 37: Influence of the status of study (SOS) on IME students' face-to-face contact off-campus with LS, ME and OIS

Categories	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Several times per week contact most often Weekly contact more often Rare contact more often	Significant p. value=.031
ME	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Daily contact more often Weekly contact more often Several times per week contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
OIS	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Daily and weekly contact more often Weekly contact more often Rare contact most often	Significant p. value=.038

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Influence of length of stay (LOS)

According to Table 38, IME students who have been in Australia for one year or less and for three years and over reported having primarily 'Weekly' face-to-face contact with LS off-campus. However, IME students who have been in Australia for two – three years reported having primarily 'Rare' contact with LS off-campus. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the length of stay and face-to-face contact off-campus with LS. A Chi square test for independence however, indicated no significant association between IME students' length of stay and face-to-face contact off-campus with other ME students and OIS.

Table 38: Influence of length of stay (LOS) on IME students' face-to-face contact off-campus with LS

Category	Length of stay	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less Two – three years Three years and over	Weekly contact more often Rare contact more often Weekly contact more often	Significant p. value=.019

Legend: LS-Local students

Influence of standard of English (SOE)

According to Table 39, IME students with a poor standard of English language reported having primarily 'Several times per week' contact with LS off-campus. However, IME students with average English language skills reported having primarily 'Rare' contact with LS off-campus while those with good or better, 'Weekly'. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' standard of English and face-to-face contact off-campus with LS.

Concerning IME face-to-face contact with other ME students, Table 39 shows that IME students with very good and good English language skills reported having primarily 'Weekly' contact off-campus with ME students. However, those with average and poor English language command reported having 'Daily' contact with other ME off-campus. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the standard of English and face-to-face contact off-campus with ME students.

In regards to IME students face-to-face contact off-campus with OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between the standard of English and face-to-face contact off-campus with OIS students.

Table 39: Influence of standard of English (SOE) on IME students' face-to-face contact off-campus with LS, ME

Categories	Standard of English	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	Poor	Several times per week contact more often	Significant p. value=.034
	Average	Rare contact more often	
	Good or better	Weekly contact more often	
ME	Poor	Daily contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
	Average	Daily contact more often	
	Good or better	Weekly contact more often	

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Table 40 compares the Chi square tests for IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus and off-campus with LS, ME and OIS in relation to status of study (SOS), length of stay (LOS) and standard of English (SOE). According to Table 40, there is a statistical association between IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus and off-campus with LS and SOS, LOS and SOE. Table 40 also shows that IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus with other ME students is statistically associated with the SOS, LOS and SOE while IME students' face-to-face contact off-campus with other ME students is statistically associated with SOS and SOE but not with LOS. Concerning IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus and off-campus with OIS, Table 40 shows that the on-campus contact is not statistically associated with the SOS, LOS and SOE while the off-campus contact is statistically associated only with the LOS.

Table 40: Comparison of the Chi Square tests for IME students' face-to-face contact on-campus and off-campus with LS, ME and OIS in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Categories	On-campus			Off-campus		
	SOS	LOS	SOE	SOS	LOS	SOE
LS	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant
ME	Significant	Significant	Significant	Significant	Not significant	Significant
OIS	Not significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

Legend: SOS - status of study; LOS- length of stay; SOE- standard of English

Q.4: *Who usually initiates the face-to-face interactions between you and local students?*

Based on the information in Table 41, the majority of IME students (52.6%) reported that they initiated the interactions with local students while only 9.2% have reported that the interactions were initiated by local students. However, 38.2% have reported that both local and IME students initiated interactions.

Table 41: The frequency of interactions initiated by IME students, LS or both

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Me	80	52.6	52.6	52.6
	Local Students	14	9.2	9.2	61.8
	Both	58	38.2	38.2	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

In order to determine whether or not the frequencies of initiation of contact reported by IME students are associated with the variables SOS, LOS and SOE, cross-tabulations were performed. A summary of results from the cross-tabulations as well as the results from the Chi square tests are shown in Table 42.

According to Table 42, IME students enrolled in English/foundation courses reported that the face-to-face contact with local students was initiated by both, while IME students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses reported that the contact with LS is primarily initiated by them. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the SOS and the initiators of face-to-face contact with the LS.

Moreover, cross tabulations between the LOS and the initiators of contact, shown in Table 42, identified that IME students with a length of stay (LOS) up to three years reported that they primarily initiated the contact with LS. However, those with LOS over three years reported that both they and local students initiated the contact. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the LOS and the initiators of face-to-face contact with LS.

However, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between the SOE and the initiators of face-to-face contact with LS.

Table 42: Influence of the Status of Study (SOS) and Length of Stay (LOS) on the initiation of contact

	Overall results	Chi square tests
Status of study:		Significant p. value=.003
English/foundation	'Both' more often reported	
Undergraduate	'Me' more often reported	
Postgraduate	'Me' more often reported	Significant p. value=.040
Length of stay:		
One year or less	'Me' more often reported	
Two – three years	'Me' more often reported	
Three years and over	'Both' more often reported	

Legend: SOS - status of study; LOS - length of stay

Q.5: Number of friends from the categories LS, ME and OIS

Based on the information in Table 43, 42.1% of IME students reported having 1-5 friends from the category 'Local students' while 36.8% reported having 6-10 friends from the category 'Other international students' and the same percentage reported having 11-20 friends from the category 'Middle Eastern students'. In regards to the value '21+ friends' only 5.9 % of IME students reported having 21 or more local friends while 26.3% and 10.5% respectively reported having such number of friends among the category of ME and OIS. From Table 43 it could be concluded that the larger the number of friends, the frequencies in the category LS decrease, in contrast to the frequencies in the category ME which increase.

Table 43: Cross-tabulation of IME students' number of friends from the categories LS, ME and OIS

Number of friends			Responses by Category			Total
			LS	ME	OIS	
1-5 friends	Count		64	20	34	118
	% of Total		42.1%	13.2%	22.4%	25.9%
6-10 friends	Count		49	36	55	140
	% of Total		32.2%	23.7%	36.2%	30.7%
11-20 friends	Count		30	56	47	133
	% of Total		19.7%	36.8%	30.9%	29.2%
21+ friends	Count		9	40	16	65
	% of Total		5.9%	26.3%	10.5%	14.2%
Total		Count	152	152	152	456
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

To establish whether the frequencies reported by IME students regarding their number of friends are associated with their status of study (SOS), length of stay (LOS) and their standard of English (SOE), cross-tabulations and Chi square tests are conducted. The overall results are presented in Tables 44, 45 and 46.

Influence of status of study (SOS)

As shown in Table 44, IME students enrolled in English/foundation studies and postgraduate courses reported having 1-5 friends from the category LS while those enrolled in undergraduate courses have reported having 6-10 friends from the same category. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the IME students' SOS and students' number of friends from the category LS.

In regards to the number of friends from the category ME students, as shown in Table 44, IME students enrolled in English/foundation studies and undergraduate courses have reported having 11-20 friends from this category, while those enrolled in postgraduate courses have reported having 6-10 ME friends. A Chi square test for

independence indicated a significant association between the SOS and IME students' number of friends from the category ME.

Concerning the number of friends from the category OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between the SOS and IME students' number of friends from the category OIS.

Table 44: Influence of the status of study on IME students' number of friends from the categories LS, ME

Categories	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	English/foundation	1-5 most often reported	Significant p. value=.005
	Undergraduate	6-10 most often reported	
	Postgraduate	1-5 most often reported	
ME	English/foundation	11-20 most often reported	Significant p. value=.006
	Undergraduate	11-20 most often reported	
	Postgraduate	6-10 most often reported	

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of the length of stay (LOS)

According to Table 45, IME students with LOS in Australia up to three years have reported primarily having 1-5 friends from the category LS, while those who have been in Australia for three years and over reported having 6-10 friends from this category. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the LOS and IME students' number of friends from the category LS.

In regards to IME students' number of friends from the categories other ME students and OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between the LOS and IME students' number of friends from the category other ME and OIS.

Table 45: Influence of Length of Stay (LOS) on IME students' number of friends from the category LS

Category	Length of stay	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less	1-5 friends most often	Significant p. value=.008
	Two –three years	1-5 friends most often	
	Three years and over	6-10 friends most often	

Legend: LS-Local students

Influence of standard of English (SOS)

According to Table 46, IME students with poor and average SOE reported primarily having 1-5 friends from the category LS, while those with a good or better SOE reported primarily having 6-10 friends from the category LS. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the SOE and IME students' number of friends from the category LS.

In regards to the number of friends from the category ME students, a Chi square test for independence indicated no significant association between the SOE and IME students' number of friends from the category ME.

As shown in Table 46 IME students, regardless of the SOE, reported primarily having 11-20 friends from this category. However, Table 46 shows that IME students with a good or better SOE have reported primarily having 11-20 friends from the category OIS, while those with poor and average SOE have reported having 6-10 friends from this category. A Chi square test for independence indicated a weak significance between the SOE and IME students' number of friends from the category OIS.

Table 46: Influence of Standard of English (SOE) on IME students' number of friends from the categories LS and OIS

Categories	Standard of English	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	Poor	1-5 friends most often	Significant p. value=.023
	Average	1-5 friends most	
	Good or better	6-10 friends most often	
OIS	Poor	6-10 friends most often	Weak Significance p. value=.052
	Average	6-10 friends most often	
	Good or better	11-20 friends most often	

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

Table 47 presents the Chi square tests concerning the association of IME students' numbers of friends from the three categories with SOS, LOS and SOE. According to this table, the status of study (SOS), length of stay (LOS) and standard of English are all statistically associated with IME students' number of friends from the category LS. However, the number of IME students' friends from the category ME students is statistically associated only with the status of study (SOS), while the number of their friends from the category OIS is not statistically associated with the SOE.

Table 47: Summary of the Chi Square tests relating to IME students' number of friends from the categories LS, ME and OIS, in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Categories	Chi square tests		
	SOS	LOS	SOE
LS	Significant	Significant	Significant
ME	Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
OIS	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Q.6 and Q.7: *Indicate language usually spoken at events when you meet face-to-face with LS and OIS.*

According to Table 48, the vast majority of IME students reported using English as a means of communication when meeting face-to-face with LS and OIS in various places or events. However, as shown in Table 48 a considerable percentage of IME students reported using Arabic language 'At place of residence' and 'At friend's house' when meeting with LS. The use of Arabic in these places as well as the number of events could suggest that local students were from Middle Eastern background. The use of Arabic, reported by some IME students when meeting OIS in various events, could suggest that OIS were coming from other Arabic speaking countries not included in the definition of Middle East used in this research.

Table 48: Language used by IME students when meeting LS and OIS at various events

Categories	Events	Language spoken %		Overall results
		Arabic	English	
LS	At university	2.6	97.4	An average of 85.95% of IME students are using English language as a means of communication when meeting local students at various events
	At sport events	10.5	89.5	
	At social events	19.1	80.9	
	At a club	10.5	89.5	
	At party	11.8	88.2	
	At place of residence	26.3	73.7	
	At friend's place	21.1	78.9	
	At other places	10.5	89.5	
OIS	At university	3.9	96.1	English is the language that the vast majority of IME students use as a means of communication when meeting other international students at various events
	At sport events	4.6	95.4	
	At social events	13.8	86.2	
	At a club	8.6	91.4	
	At party	7.9	92.1	
	At place of residence	17.1	82.9	
	At friend's place	13.8	86.2	
	At other places	9.2	90.8	

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

Q.8, 9 and 10: *Please indicate how often you have the following face-to-face activities with LS, ME and OIS*

As shown in Table 49, IME students reported predominantly having 'Sometimes' contact with LS for almost all social and educational activities, except for 'Going to sport game' and 'Preparing for exams'. For these activities, nearly one third of the participants reported 'Often' contact with LS.

In regards to the frequency of IME students' contact with other ME students, Table 49 shows that the values 'Sometimes' and 'Often' are interchangeably the most or second most frequently reported values in all activities except for the activity 'Visiting family'. However, IME students reported predominantly having 'Sometimes' contact with other ME students in 'Going to library' and 'Often' contact in 'Doing assignments'.

Concerning the frequency of IME students' contact with OIS, Table 49 shows that 'Sometimes' and 'Rarely' are interchangeably the most or the second most frequently reported values for almost all the activities. As IME students reported, they have 'Sometimes' contact with OIS in all educational activities and some activities with a social nature. However, IME students reported predominantly 'Never' visiting OIS family and 'Never' 'Going shopping' with OIS.

Table 49: IME students' frequency of contact with LS, ME and OIS in various activities

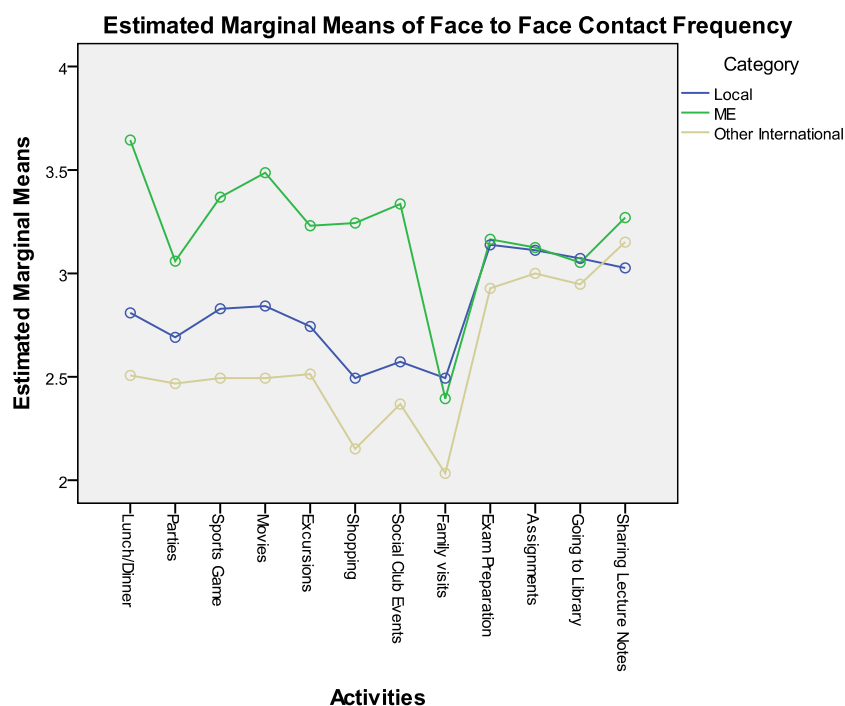
Activities			Face-to-face contact by category in %			Average Total %
			LS	ME	OIS	
Having Lunch/Dinner	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	7.9	0	9.2	5.7
		Rarely	28.9	9.9	41.4	26.7
		Sometimes	42.8	36.8	40.1	39.9
		Often	15.1	32.2	7.9	18.4
		Very often	5.3	21.1	1.3	9.25
		Total	100	100	100	100
Going to parties	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	21.7	11.2	21.7	18.2
		Rarely	19.7	19.1	25.7	21.5
		Sometimes	29.6	32.2	38.2	33.3
		Often	25.7	27.6	13.2	22.1
		Very often	3.3	9.9	1.3	4.9
		Total	100	152	100	100
Going to sports game	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	19.1	8.6	25.7	17.8
		Rarely	22.4	18.4	24.3	21.7
		Sometimes	19.7	21.1	27.0	22.6
		Often	34.2	31.6	21.1	28.9
		Very often	4.6	20.4	2.0	9.0
		Total	100	100	152	100
Going to movies	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	15.1	7.2	14.2	12.2
		Rarely	20.4	8.6	39.5	23.0
		Sometimes	37.5	32.2	28.3	32.6
		Often	19.1	32.2	17.8	23.0
		Very often	7.9	19.7	0	9.2
		Total	100	100	100	100
Going excursions	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	15.1	7.9	19.7	14.2
		Rarely	25.7	18.4	30.9	25.0
		Sometimes	35.5	31.6	32.2	33.0
		Often	17.1	27.0	12.5	19.0
		Very often	6.6	15.1	4.6	8.8
		Total	100	100	100	100
Going shopping	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	27.0	5.3	34.2	22.2
		Rarely	26.3	18.4	32.2	25.6
		Sometimes	25.0	33.6	19.1	25.9
		Often	13.8	32.2	13.2	19.7
		Very often	7.9	10.5	1.3	6.6
		Total	100	100	100	100
Social club events	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	28.3	3.3	27.6	19.7
		Rarely	20.4	15.1	28.9	21.5
		Sometimes	26.3	38.8	24.3	29.8
		Often	15.8	30.3	17.1	21.0
		Very often	9.2	12.5	2.0	7.9
		Total	100	100	100	100
Visiting family	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	28.3	27.0	43.4	32.9
		Rarely	23.0	30.3	21.7	25.0
		Sometimes	28.9	25.0	23.7	25.9
		Often	10.5	11.6	10.5	10.9
		Very often	9.2	5.9	.7	5.3
		Total	100	100	100	100
Preparing for exams	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	10.5	12.5	8.6	10.5
		Rarely	21.7	19.7	27.6	22.7
		Sometimes	21.7	23.0	35.5	26.7
		Often	35.5	28.3	19.1	27.6
		Very often	10.5	16.4	9.2	12.0
		Total	100	100	100	100
Doing assignments	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	7.2	11.2	7.2	8.5
		Rarely	23.7	15.1	21.7	20.2
		Sometimes	34.9	35.5	41.4	37.2
		Often	19.1	26.3	23.0	22.8
		Very often	15.1	11.8	6.6	11.2
		Total	100	100	100	100
Going to library	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	9.9	9.9	6.6	8.8
		Rarely	19.1	15.1	21.1	18.4
		Sometimes	34.9	44.7	48.0	42.5
		Often	26.3	20.4	19.7	22.2
		Very often	9.9	9.9	4.6	8.1
		Total	100	100	100	100
Sharing lecture Notes	Face-to-face Contact Frequency	Never	11.8	11.8	4.6	9.4
		Rarely	19.7	9.9	19.7	16.4
		Sometimes	31.6	36.8	43.4	37.2
		Often	27.6	22.4	20.4	23.4
		Very often	9.2	19.9	11.8	13.6
		Total	100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish with which group IME students' prefer primarily face-to-face contact in various activities, the means of each activity was calculated. As shown in Figure 8, the means of all the activities with other ME students are higher in comparison to the means of the activities with LS and OIS, except for the mean of the activity 'Visiting family'. Moreover, the means of all the activities with LS are higher in comparison to the means of all the activities with OIS except for the activity 'Sharing lecture notes'.

The results suggest that IME students prefer face-to-face activities with other ME students, followed by preferences for LS and OIS.

Figure 8: The mean plot of IME students' face-to-face activities with LS, ME and OIS



In order to establish whether IME students' face-to-face contact in various activities with the three groups (LS, ME and OIS) differs in relation to Status of study (SOS), Length of stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE), Chi square tests for independence were performed. The results of these tests, shown in Table 50, indicated:

- a significant association between SOS and IME students' face-to-face contact with local students in all activities, except in 'Doing assignments'
- a significant association between SOS and IME students' face-to-face contact with other ME students in all activities except in 'Going shopping', 'Doing assignments', 'Going to library' and 'Sharing lecture notes'
- a significant association between SOS and IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS in all activities except in 'Going shopping' and 'Having lunch'.

In regards to the Length of stay (LOS), Table 50 shows:

- a significant association between LOS and IME students' face-to-face contact with local students in all activities
- a significant association between LOS and IME students' face-to-face contact with ME students in all activities except 'Going to sports game', 'Going on excursions', 'Visiting family', 'Going to library' and 'Sharing lecture notes'.
- a significant association between LOS and IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS in all activities except 'Going to movies', 'Going on excursion' and 'Going to library'.

Concerning the Standard of English (SOE), Table 50 shows that there is:

- a significant association between SOE and IME students' face-to-face contact with local students in all activities except in 'Going to sports games', 'Going to movies' and 'Social club events'
- a significant association between SOE and IME students' face-to-face contact with other ME students only in the activities 'Having lunch', 'Going on excursions' and 'Social club events'.

- a significant association between SOE and IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS in all activities except 'Going to sports games', 'Going on excursions' and 'Social club events'.

Table 50: Chi square tests of IME students' face-to-face contact in various activities with LS, ME and OIS in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Activities	Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Having lunch	.000	.001	NS	.000	.000	.000	.007	.000	.000
Going parties	.001	.044	.007	.000	.026	.000	.008	NS	.014
Going to sports game	.000	.000	.001	.043	NS	.000	NS	NS	NS
Going to movies	.000	.000	.047	.007	.024	NS	NS	NS	.012
Going excursions	.001	.000	.000	.011	NS	.013	.001	.003	NS
Going shopping	.002	NS	NS	.000	.020	.049	.028	NS	.001
Social club events	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	NS	.037	NS
Visiting family	.000	.000	.036	.014	NS	.001	.001	.000	NS
Preparing for exams	.018	.000	.000	.000	.019	.000	.022	NS	.000
Doing assignments	NS	NS	.007	.023	.016	.001	.009	NS	.000
Going to library	.002	NS	.000	.004	NS	NS	.009	NS	.000
Sharing lecture notes	.002	NS	.000	.000	NS	.004	.001	NS	.000

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Q.11, 12 and 13: *Indicate how often do you ask LS, ME and OIS for help/advice for the following activities*

According to Table 51, IME students reported predominantly 'Sometimes' asking help/advice from LS for all the activities, except for 'Using library'. Among all the activities, 40.1% of IME students reported asking 'Sometimes' help/advice from LS for 'Shopping', while 37.5% and 35.5% for 'Explaining assignment work' and 'Studying for exams' respectively.

Concerning the frequency of IME students asking other ME students' help/advice in various activities, Table 51 shows that 'Sometimes' is the most frequently reported value in most of the activities except in 'Studying for exams' and 'Study groups'.

For these two activities 34.9% and 33.6% respectively reported predominantly 'Often' asking LS for help/advice. Besides this, 45.4% and 44.7% of IME students reported asking 'Sometimes' other ME students' help/advice for 'Shopping' and 'Explaining class material', while 42.8% to 'Find a place'.

Concerning the frequency of IME students seeking help/advice from OIS, Table 51 shows that 44.7% of IME students reported asking 'Sometimes' help from OIS for 'Shopping', while 44.1% and 33.6% respectively, to 'Find a place' and for 'Study Group'. In addition, about one third of the participants reported asking 'Sometimes' help/advice from OIS in 'Studying for exams' (31.6%), 'Explaining assignment work' (31.6%) and 'Explaining class material' (29.6%).

Table 51: Cross-tabulation of IME students' frequency of asking help/advice from LS, ME and OIS in various activities

How often IME students ask LS,ME and OIS help/advice in the followings:			Frequency by category in %			Average Total in %
			LS	ME	OIS	
Shopping	Frequency	Never	11.8	5.9	17.8	11.8
		Rarely	31.6	11.8	30.3	24.5
		Sometimes	40.1	45.4	44.7	43.4
		Often	10.5	30.3	5.9	15.5
		Very often	5.9	6.6	1.3	4.6
	Total		100	100	100	100
Find a Place	Frequency	Never	5.9	2.6	10.5	6.3
		Rarely	22.4	8.6	27.0	19.3
		Sometimes	32.2	42.8	44.1	39.7
		Often	29.6	33.6	15.1	26.1
		Very often	9.9	12.5	3.3	8.5
	Total		100	100	100	100
Studying for Exams	Frequency	Never	7.2	8.6	7.9	7.9
		Rarely	20.4	12.5	27.0	19.9
		Sometimes	35.5	26.3	31.6	31.1
		Often	27.0	34.9	24.3	28.7
		Very often	9.9	17.8	9.2	12.3
	Total		152	100	100	100
Study Group	Frequency	Never	7.2	9.9	9.9	9.0
		Rarely	27.0	15.1	22.4	21.5
		Sometimes	28.9	30.9	33.6	31.1
		Often	28.9	33.6	24.3	28.9
		Very often	7.9	10.5	9.9	9.4
	Total		100	100	100	100
Assignment Proof Reading	Frequency	Never	17.1	22.4	27.0	22.1
		Rarely	23.7	27.0	30.9	27.2
		Sometimes	32.9	27.0	19.7	26.5
		Often	18.4	15.1	15.1	16.2
		Very often	7.9	8.6	7.2	7.9
	Total		100	100	100	100
Explaining Class Material	Frequency	Never	11.2	9.9	16.4	12.5
		Rarely	23.0	12.5	26.3	20.6
		Sometimes	28.9	44.7	29.6	34.4
		Often	27.6	19.7	18.4	21.9
		Very often	9.2	13.2	9.2	10.5
	Total		100	100	100	100
Explaining assignment Work	Frequency	Never	13.2	11.2	13.2	12.5
		Rarely	19.1	11.8	24.3	18.4
		Sometimes	37.5	37.5	31.6	35.5
		Often	23.0	25.7	17.8	22.1
		Very often	7.2	13.8	13.2	11.4
	Total		100	100	100	100
Using Library	Frequency	Never	11.8	11.8	22.4	15.3
		Rarely	33.6	25.0	28.3	28.9
		Sometimes	25.7	31.6	22.4	26.5
		Often	23.0	19.1	28.4	23.5
		Very often	5.9	12.5	8.6	9.0
	Total		100	100	100	456

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether the frequency of IME students asking for help/advice from the three groups (LS, ME and OIS) differs in relation to Status of study (SOS), Length of stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE), Chi square tests for independence were performed. The results of these tests, as shown in Table 52, indicate that in regards to Status of study (SOS) there is:

- a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from local students in all activities except in 'Shopping' and 'Using the library'

- a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from ME students in all activities
- a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from OIS in all activities except in 'Assignments', 'proof reading' and 'Using the library'.

Table 52: Chi square tests of the frequency of IME students asking for help/ advice from LS, ME and OIS in various activities in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Activities	Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Shopping	NS	.006	.000	.000	.001	NS	NS	.000	.000
Find a place	.000	.032	.000	.004	.000	.002	NS	.026	.001
Studying for exams	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.014	.002	NS	.021
Participating in a study group	.000	.009	.000	.000	NS	.045	.003	.007	.001
Assignments' proof reading	.000	.004	NS	.005	.049	.031	.005	NS	NS
Explaining class material	.048	.003	.023	.031	NS	.005	.047	.004	.021
Explaining assignment work	.002	.002	.002	.005	.044	.001	.000	.038	.000
Using the library	NS	.006	NS	.002	NS	.036	.002	NS	.001

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In regards to the Length of stay (LOS), Table 52 indicates:

- a significant association between the LOS and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from LS in all activities
- a significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students' ask help advice from ME students in all activities except in 'Participating in a study group', 'Explaining class material' and 'Using the library'
- a significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from OIS in all activities except for the activity 'Shopping'.

Furthermore, Table 52 indicates:

- a significant association between the Standard of English and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from LS in all activities except in 'Shopping' and 'Find a place'
- a significant association between the Standard of English and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from ME in all activities except 'Studying for exams', 'Assignments proof reading' and 'Using the library'
- a significant association between the Standard of English and the frequency IME students' ask help/advice from OIS in all activities except 'Assignments proof reading'.

Q.14, 15 and 16: *Please indicate how often you interact face-to-face with LS, ME and OIS in various places*

As shown in Table 53, IME students reported predominantly 'Sometimes' having face-to-face contact with LS in various places. Specifically, 42.6% of IME students reported interacting 'Sometimes' with LS in 'Lecture venues' while 36.8% and 36.2% in 'Tutorial sessions' and 'University's food court' respectively.

Concerning the frequency of IME students' interactions with other ME students, Table 53 shows that 'Sometimes' and 'Often' are interchangeably reported. In this respect, IME students reported predominately 'Often' interactions with other ME students in 'Place of residence' (42.8%), 'University's food court' (38.8%) and 'Tutorial sessions' (34.9%). Similarly, IME students reported predominantly 'Sometimes' interactions with other ME students in 'Lecture venues' (44.7%), 'Parks' (42.8%), 'Shopping mall' (40.1%) and 'Library' (36.2%).

Concerning the frequency of IME students' interactions with OIS in various places, Table 53 shows that 'Sometimes' is the most frequently reported value in almost all places. Explicitly, IME students reported predominantly interacting 'sometimes' in

‘Lecture venues’ (53.9%), ‘Tutorial sessions’ (43.4%), ‘Library’ (45.4%) and ‘Place of residence’ (40.8%).

Table 53: IME students’ frequency of face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS in various places

How often IME students interact face-to-face with LS, ME and OIS in various places			Frequency by category in %			
			LS	ME	OIS	Average Total in %
Lecture venues	Frequency	Never	6.6	11.2	0	17.8
		Rarely	19.7	8.6	13.8	14.0
		Sometimes	42.1	44.7	53.9	46.9
		Often	21.7	19.7	23.7	21.7
		Very often	9.9	15.8	8.6	11.4
	Total		100	100	100	100
Tutorial sessions	Frequency	Never	5.9	9.9	0	5.26
		Rarely	14.5	6.6	15.5	12.2
		Sometimes	36.8	34.2	43.4	37.4
		Often	27.6	34.9	26.3	35.0
		Very often	15.1	15.9	15.8	15.6
	Total		100	100	100	100
Library	Frequency	Never	5.9	11.2	3.3	6.8
		Rarely	24.3	11.8	18.4	18.2
		Sometimes	32.9	36.2	45.4	38.1
		Often	27.0	31.6	28.3	28.9
		Very often	9.9	9.2	4.6	7.9
	Total		100	100	100	100
Place of residence	Frequency	Never	15.1	4.6	14.4	11.3
		Rarely	15.8	7.9	18.4	14
		Sometimes	28.3	22.4	40.8	30.5
		Often	25.0	42.8	21.7	29.8
		Very often	15.8	22.4	4.6	14.2
	Total		100	100	100	100
University's food court	Frequency	Never	19.1	9.2	8.6	12.3
		Rarely	10.5	15.1	23.7	16.4
		Sometimes	36.2	19.1	36.8	30.7
		Often	24.3	38.8	25.7	29.6
		Very often	9.9	17.8	5.3	11.0
	Total		100	100	100	100
Student union	Frequency	Never	24.3	31.6	23.7	26.5
		Rarely	22.4	9.9	26.3	19.5
		Sometimes	25.7	23.0	26.3	25.0
		Often	20.4	27.6	19.7	22.5
		Very often	7.2	7.9	3.9	6.3
	Total		100	100	100	100
Sport venues	Frequency	Never	19.1	16.4	12.5	16.0
		Rarely	13.2	10.5	21.1	14.9
		Sometimes	27.0	30.9	28.3	28.7
		Often	21.7	27.0	30.3	26.2
		Very often	19.1	15.1	7.9	14.0
	Total		100	100	100	100
Social club	Frequency	Never	15.1	14.5	16.4	15.3
		Rarely	21.1	14.5	22.4	19.4
		Sometimes	32.2	25.0	34.9	30.7
		Often	23.7	30.9	20.4	25.0
		Very often	7.9	15.1	5.9	9.6
	Total		100	100	100	100
Shopping mall	Frequency	Never	16.4	8.6	19.1	14.7
		Rarely	23.7	17.1	24.3	21.7
		Sometimes	33.6	40.1	31.6	35.1
		Often	18.4	28.3	22.4	23.0
		Very often	7.9	5.9	2.6	5.4
	Total		100	100	100	100
Parks	Frequency	Never	23.0	11.2	19.1	17.8
		Rarely	22.4	15.8	28.3	22.1
		Sometimes	26.3	42.8	31.6	33.5
		Often	17.8	25.7	19.7	21.0
		Very often	10.5	4.6	1.3	5.4
	Total		100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether there is a statistically significant association between the frequency of IME students' interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS in the foregoing places, and their Status of study (SOS), Length of stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE), Chi square tests were conducted. The results of these tests are presented in Table 54. According to Table 6.33 there is:

- a significant association between SOS and the frequency of IME students' interactions with LS in all places except in 'University's food court', 'Sport games', 'Social club', 'Shopping mall' and 'Parks'
- a significant association between SOS and the frequency of IME students' interactions with ME students in all places
- a significant association between SOS and the frequency of IME students' interactions with OIS in all places, except in 'University's food court' and 'Sport games'.

Table 54: Chi square tests of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS in various places in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Places	Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Lecture venues	.001	.000	.027	.000	NS	NS	.000	.000	.008
Tutorial sessions	.000	.001	.001	.000	NS	.020	.002	NS	.000
Library	.026	.028	.000	.000	NS	NS	.000	NS	.000
Place of residence	.026	.000	.001	.003	.001	.020	.000	.001	.043
University's food court	NS	.000	NS	.001	.002	NS	.001	.000	NS
Student union	.004	.000	.005	.006	.001	NS	.101	.000	NS
Sport games	NS	.000	NS	.000	.018	NS	.018	.016	.002
Social club	NS	.000	.020	.000	.000	.029	.026	.000	NS
Shopping mall	NS	.030	.000	.004	NS	.000	NS	.001	.047
Parks	NS	.000	.000	.013	NS	NS	NS	.001	.001

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Moreover, Table 54 indicates that there is:

- a significant association between LOS and the frequency of IME students' interactions with LS in all places
- a significant association between LOS and the frequency of IME students' interactions with ME students in all places except in 'Lecture venues', 'Tutorial sessions', 'Library', 'Shopping mall' and 'Parks'
- a significant association between LOS and the frequency of IME students' interactions with OIS only in 'Tutorial sessions', 'Place of residence', 'Social club', and 'Shopping mall'.

In regards to the association between Standard of English and IME students' face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS in various places, Table 54 indicates that there is:

- a significant association between SOE and the frequency of IME students' interactions with LS in all places except in 'Student union', 'Shopping mall' and 'Parks'
- a significant association between SOE and the frequency of IME students' interactions with other ME students in all places except in 'Tutorial sessions' and 'Library'
- a significant association between the Standard of English and the frequency of IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS in all places except in 'University's food court', 'Student union' and 'Social club'.

Q.17, 18 and 19: *Please indicate the importance of having face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS in various purposes.*

According to Table 55, 41.4% and 28.3% of IME students reported predominately that face-to-face contact with LS is respectively 'Very important' and 'Important' for the purpose 'To use English language'. Furthermore, IME students reported predominantly that interactions with LS are 'Important' for the purpose 'To do

hobbies' (33.6%) and 'To develop new interests' (30.9%). However, 30.3% of IME students reported predominately that interactions with LS for the purpose of 'Friendships' are 'Moderately important'. Nevertheless, 29.6% and 20.4% of IME students reported that interactions for the purpose of 'Friendships' were respectively 'Important' and 'Very important'. Similarly, 38.8% and 31.6% of IME students' reported also that for the items 'To have fun' and 'To do sports', respectively, interactions with LS are also 'Moderately important'.

Table 55 also shows that about one third of IME students reported predominantly that face-to-face contact with other ME students was 'Moderately important' in almost all items except for 'To study' and 'Have fun' items. For these two items 28.9 % and 31.6% respectively, considered face-to-face contact with other ME students as 'Important'.

According to the results presented in Table 55, IME students reported predominantly that their face-to-face contact with OIS is 'Moderately important' for the items 'To use English language'(30.3%), 'To have fun'(38.2%) and 'Develop new interests'(28.3%). However, for the items 'To study' and 'For friendships', respectively 28.9% and 31.6% of IME students consider face-to-face contact with OIS predominantly as 'Important'.

Table 55: The importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS in various items

The importance of having face-to-face contact		Frequency by category in %			Average Total in %
		LS	ME	OIS	
To use English language	Not important at all	3.9	24.3	7.9	12.0
	Of little importance	2.0	15.1	17.8	11.6
	Moderately important	24.3	35.5	30.3	30.0
	Important	28.3	14.5	23.0	22.0
	Very important	41.4	10.5	21.1	24.3
Total		100	100	100	100
To study	Not important at all	3.3	6.6	5.3	5.0
	Of little importance	17.8	26.3	19.1	21.0
	Moderately important	23.0	21.7	27.0	23.9
	Important	28.9	28.9	35.5	31.1
	Very important	27.0	16.4	13.2	18.9
Total		100	100	100	100
For friendships	Not important at all	2.6	5.3	2.6	3.5
	Of little importance	17.1	11.8	27.0	18.6
	Moderately important	30.3	30.9	27.6	29.6
	Important	29.6	22.4	30.3	27.4
	Very important	20.4	29.6	12.5	20.8
Total		100	100	100	100
To have fun	Not important at all	6.6	3.9	3.3	4.6
	Of little importance	24.4	15.8	30.9	23.7
	Moderately important	38.2	25.7	38.2	34.0
	Important	25.7	31.6	24.4	27.2
stemological assumptions of positivist and interpretivist y important		7.2	23.0	5.3	11.8
Total		100	100	100	100
To develop new interests	Not important at all	5.9	5.9	5.3	5.7
	Of little importance	17.1	17.8	27.6	20.8
	Moderately important	25.0	35.5	28.3	29.6
	Important	30.9	28.3	25.0	28.0
	Very important	21.1	12.5	13.8	15.8
Total		100	100	100	100
To do hobbies	Not important at all	5.9	5.3	3.9	5.0
	Of little importance	16.4	18.4	30.3	21.7
	Moderately important	28.3	31.6	29.6	29.8
	Important	33.6	29.6	21.7	28.3
	Very important	15.8	15.1	14.5	15.1
Total		100	100	100	100
To do sports	Not important at all	8.6	8.6	6.6	7.9
	Of little importance	19.1	15.1	32.9	22.3
	Moderately important	31.6	30.9	13.8	25.4
	Important	24.4	25.0	25.0	24.8
	Very important	28.4	20.4	21.7	23.5
Total		100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether there is an association between the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact in the items presented in Table 55 and the Status of study (SOS), Length of Stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE), Chi square tests for independence were conducted. The results of the tests, presented in Table 56, show:

- a significant association between SOS and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS only for the items 'To have fun' and 'To do hobbies'
- a significant association between SOS and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with ME students for all the items, except for the item 'To study'
- a significant association between SOS and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS for all the items.

Table 56: Chi square tests for the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS in various items in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Purpose of face-to-face contact	Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
To use English language	NS	.000	.001	NS	NS	.000	.087	.012	.001
To study	NS	NS	.004	.002	.002	.002	NS	NS	NS
For friendships	NS	.017	.005	.000	NS	NS	NS	.004	NS
To have fun	.000	.027	.000	.000	NS	.017	.050	.005	NS
To develop new interests	NS	.013	.002	.001	.004	.001	NS	.012	.000
To do hobbies	.000	.010	.016	.001	NS	NS	.043	.011	.005
To do sports	NS	.003	.018	.001	.006	NS	.003	.000	.003

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In addition, Table 56 shows that there is:

- a significant association between LOS and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS for all the items, except for the item 'To use English'
- a significant association between LOS and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with ME students for the items 'To study', 'To develop new interests' and 'To do sports'

- a significant association between LOS and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS for almost all items, except 'For friendship', 'To do hobbies' and 'To do sports' items.

In regards to the association of SOE and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS, other ME and OIS, Table 56 indicates that there is:

- a significant association between SOE and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with LS only for the items 'To have fun', 'To do hobbies' and 'To do sports'
- a significant association between SOE and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with ME students for all items except for the 'To study' item
- a significant association between SOE and the importance of IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS for all items except 'To study', 'For friendship' and 'To have fun'.

Q.20: *Issues affecting IME students' face-to-face contact with LS*

The vast majority of IME students predominately indicated that all items included in Table 57, except 'Religion', 'Slightly' affect their face-to-face contact with LS. To this end, 'Religion' is the only item which scored higher in "Not at all" than in 'Slightly' value. However, approximately two-thirds or more of IME students reported that 'Different interest' (70.4%), 'Language difficulties' (67.8%), 'Age' (65.8%) and 'Stereotyping' (60.5%) 'Slightly' affect their interactions with LS. Meanwhile, approximately more than half of IME students also reported that their interactions with LS are affected by 'Cultural differences' (52.2%) and 'Time availability' (58.6%).

Table 57: The degree that various items affect IME students' face-to-face contact with LS

Issues effecting face-to-face contact	Responses in %		
	Not at all	Slightly	Very much
Cultural differences	31.6	52.6	15.8
Stereotyping	30.3	60.5	9.2
Racial differences	44.7	44.8	12.5
Language difficulties	13.8	67.8	18.4
Religion	42.1	33.6	24.3
Age	21.7	65.8	12.5
Different interests	10.5	70.4	19.1
Time availability	10.5	58.6	30.9

Legend: LS-Local students

However, in order to establish whether the items affecting IME students' face-to-face contact with LS are associated with the Status of study (SOS), Length of stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE), Chi square tests for independence were considered. The results of these tests, shown in Table 58, indicate that:

- the SOS is significantly associated with 'Stereotyping', 'Age', 'Different interests' and 'Time availability'
- the LOS is significantly associated with all issues affecting IME students' face-to-face contact with the LS
- the SOE is significantly associated with all the issues affecting IME students' face-to-face contact with local students except for the issues 'Racial differences' and 'Language difficulties'.

Table 58: Chi square tests of the issues affecting IME students' face-to-face contact with LS in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE

Issues effecting face-to-face contact	Chi square tests (p- values)		
	Status of study	Length of stay	Standard of English
Cultural differences	NS	.024	.016
Stereotyping	.031	.016	.035
Racial differences	NS	.019	NS
Language difficulties	NS	.025	NS
Religion	NS	.017	.008
Age	.000	.002	.042
Different interests	.041	.000	.012
Time availability	.000	.000	.001

Q.21: *Indicate the level of difficulty of face-to-face contact of IME students with LS, ME and OIS.*

According to Table 59, 26.7% of IME students' indicated predominantly that face-to-face contact with LS is 'Difficult' while only 5.3% and 4.6% respectively reported that face-to-face contact with ME and OIS is 'Difficult'. Moreover, 46.1% of IME students reported that contact with other ME students is 'Very easy' while a further 23.7% have reported that face-to-face contact with this group is 'Easy'. However, 17.8% and a further 23.8% reported that face-to-face contact with LS is respectively 'Very easy' or 'Easy', while 19.7% and 32.2% of IME students reported that face to face contact with OIS is respectively 'Very easy and' 'Easy'.

Table 59: IME students' level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS

Level of difficulty in face-to-face contact			Responses by category			Total
			LS	ME	OIS	
Very difficult	Count		13	3	1	17
	% of Total		8.6%	2.0%	.7%	3.7%
Difficult	Count		39	8	7	54
	% of Total		26.7%	5.3%	4.6%	11.08%
Neither difficult or easy	Count		52	36	65	153
	% of Total		34.2%	23%	42.8%	33.6%
Easy	Count		21	36	49	106
	% of Total		13.8%	23.7%	32.2%	23.2%
Very easy	Count		27	70	30	127
	% of Total		17.8%	46.1%	19.7%	27.8%
Total	Count		152	152	152	456
	% of Total		33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether or not IME students' level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with the three groups of students differ in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE, cross-tabulations were performed. Furthermore, Chi square tests were conducted in order to indicate the statistical significance between the level of difficulty and SOS,

LOS and SOE. The overall results of the cross-tabulations are presented in Tables 60, 61 and 62.

Influence of status of study (SOS)

A Chi square test for independence indicated not significant association between IME students' status of study and their level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with LS.

In regards to the level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with ME students, Table 60 shows that IME students in English/foundation and undergraduate levels of study reported primarily that face-to-face contact with ME students is 'Very easy'. Moreover, IME students undertaking postgraduate level of study reported primarily that face-to-face contact with ME students is 'Easy'. A Chi square test for independence indicated a weak significant association between IME students' status of study and level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with ME students.

Concerning IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS, a Chi square test for independence indicated not significant association between IME students' status of study and level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with OIS.

Table 60: Influence of the status of study (SOS) on IME students' level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with ME

Category	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
ME	English/foundation	Very easy contact more often	Weak Significance p. value=.052
	Undergraduate	Very easy contact more often	
	Postgraduate	Easy contact more often	

Legend: ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of length of stay (LOS)

Table 61 shows that IME students who have been in Australia for 'One year or less' reported predominantly that their face-to-face contact with LS is 'Difficult'.

However, IME students who have been in Australia for 'Two-three years' reported that their face-to-face contact with LS is 'Neither difficult nor easy' while those who have been in Australia for 'Three years or more' reported predominantly that their face-to-face contact with LS is 'Very easy'. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' LOS and level of difficulty in their face-to-face contact with LS.

A Chi square test for independence however, indicated no significant association between LOS and IME students' level of difficulty in their face-to-face contact with other ME students.

Concerning IME students' level of difficulty in their face-to-face contact with OIS, Table 61 shows that IME students who have been in Australia for up to 3 years reported primarily that the contact with OIS is 'Neither difficult nor easy'. However, those who have been in Australia for 'Three years or more' reported primarily that their contact with OIS is 'Very easy'. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between LOS and IME students' level of difficulty in their face-to-face contact with OIS students.

Table 61: Influence of length of stay (LOS) on IME students' level of difficulty in face contact with LS, ME and OIS

Categories	Length of stay	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less	Difficult contact more often	Significant p. value=.003
	Two –three years	Neither difficult nor easy contact more often	
	Three years and over	Very easy contact more often	
OIS	One year or less	Neither difficult nor easy contact more often	Significant p. value=.003
	Two –three years	Neither difficult nor easy contact more often	
	Three years and over	Very easy contact more often	

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

Influence of standard of English (SOE)

According to Table 62, IME students with a poor standard of English language command reported predominately that their contact with LS is 'Easy' while those with average as well as with good or better English language skills reported predominantly that their contact with LS is 'Neither difficult nor easy'. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between IME students' standard of English and level of difficulty in their face-to-face contact with LS.

Concerning IME students' face-to-face contact with other ME students, Table 62 shows that IME students regardless of their SOE reported predominantly that contact with other ME students was 'Very easy'. A Chi square test for independence indicated a significant association between the standard of English and the level of difficulty in IME students' face-to-face contact with other ME students.

In regards to IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS, Table 62 shows that IME students with poor SOE reported predominantly that their contact with OIS is 'Difficult'. However, students with good or better language skills reported that their face-to-face contact with OIS is 'Neither difficult nor easy'. A Chi square test for

independence indicated a significant association between SOE and the level of difficulty in IME students' face-to-face contact with OIS.

Table 62: Influence of standard of English (SOE) on IME students' level of difficulty in face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS

Categories	Standard of English	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	Poor Average Good or better	Easy contact more often Neither difficult nor easy contact more often Neither difficult nor easy contact more often	Significant p. value=.011
ME	Poor Average Good or better	Very easy contact more often Very easy contact more often Very easy contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
OIS	Poor Average Good or better	Difficult contact more often Neither difficult nor easy contact more often Neither difficult nor easy contact more often	Significant p. value=.000

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

6.5 Face-to-face networks

6.5.1 Introduction

This section presents the results of questions 22-45 of Section B of the online survey instrument. It examines IME students' social networks with local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS). Specifically, it is concerned with the consistency of their networks, the level of difficulty in establishing networks with others, the purpose and importance of their networks and the factors influencing their interactions.

6.5.2 Description of IME students' networks

Q.22: *In your first year in Australia indicate what best describes your networks of contacts*

According to Table 63, 37.5% of IME students' reported that during their first year in Australia their networks of contact consisted only of other IME students, while 21.7% reported having LS networks only. However, a small percentage of students

reported having networks consisting of a mix of other IME students and OIS (9.9%), mix of LS (7.9%), mix of LS who were from ME origin, IME students and OIS (7.2%). In addition, during their first year in Australia an even smaller percentage of IME students reported having networks of contacts consisted of LS and OIS or LS and IME students, while 3.9% of IME students reported having networks of contacts consisting solely of OIS.

Table 63: IME students' networks of contacts in their first year in Australia

Networks of contacts during first year in Australia		Frequency	%
Valid	LS only	33	21.7
	IME students only	57	37.5
	OIS only	6	3.9
	Mix of LS and OIS	9	5.9
	Mix of LS and IME students	9	5.9
	Mix of IME students and OIS	15	9.9
	Mix of LS, IME students and OIS	12	7.9
	Mix of LS, who are from ME origin, IME students and OIS	11	7.2
	Total	152	100.0

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Q.23: *What best describes the current composition of your network of contacts?*

As Table 64 indicates, 21.7% of IME students reported that the current composition of their network of contacts consists of LS only, while 18.4% reported that their current networks consist of IME students only. Moreover, 14.5% of IME students reported that their current network of contacts consists of IME students and OIS, and 13.8% reported that their current network of contacts consisted of a mix of LS from ME origin, IME students and OIS.

Table 64: Current composition of IME students' network of contacts

Current composition of networks of contacts		Frequency	%
Valid	LS only	33	21.7
	IME students only	28	18.4
	OIS only	4	2.6
	Mix of LS and OIS	15	9.9
	Mix of LS and IME students	16	10.5
	Mix of IME students and OIS	22	14.5
	Mix of LS, IME students and OIS	13	8.6
	Mix of LS, who are from ME origin, IME students and OIS	21	13.8
	Total	152	100.0

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Comparison of the results item by item, as shown in Table 65, indicates that the percentage of IME students who reported having networks of contacts consisting of 'LS only' remained the same in the first and current year. However, the percentage of IME students who reported in their first year of having networks of contacts consisting of 'IME students only', 'OIS only' and 'Mix of IME students and OIS' has decreased in the current year. This decrease, which is greater for the item 'IME students only', resulted in the increase of the percentage in the remaining items.

Table 65: The difference between IME students' networks of contacts in their first year in Australia and during the current year

Networks of contacts	First year		Currently		Difference in contact between first and current year	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
LS only	33	21.7	33	21.7	0	0
IME students only	57	37.5	28	18.4	29 less	-19.1
OIS only	6	3.9	4	2.6	2 less	- 1.3
Mix of LS and OIS	9	5.9	15	9.9	6 more	+4
Mix of LS and IME students	9	5.9	16	10.5	7 more	+4.6
Mix IME students and OIS	15	9.9	22	14.5	7 more	- 4.6
Mix of LS, IME students and OIS	12	7.9	13	8.6	1 more	+.7
Mix of LS who are from ME origin, IME students and OIS	11	7.2	21	13.8	10 more	+6.6
Total	152	100.0	152	100.0		

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether IME students' networks of contacts in their first year and current year are associated with their SOE, cross tabulations were performed and Chi square tests for independence were conducted. The overall results of the cross tabulation, presented in Table 66, indicates that IME students with good or better as well as with average SOE, during their first year in Australia reported predominantly that their network of contacts consisted of 'IME students only'. However, IME students with a poor SOE, for the same timeline, reported a variety of networks of contacts. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between the SOE and the consistency of IME students' networks during their first year in Australia.

Similarly, the results of the cross tabulations, as shown in Table 66, indicate that IME students with a good or better SOE predominately reported that their current network of contacts consisted of 'LS only' while those with an average SOE predominately reported that their current network of contacts consisted of 'IME students only'. In addition, IME students with a poor SOE, for the same timeline reported a variety of networks of contact. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between SOE and the consistency of IME students' networks during the current year (current year is considered the year 2009, when the survey was administered).

Table 66: Influence of Standard of English (SOE) in IME students' network of contacts in their first and current year

Networks of contacts	Standard of English	Overall results	Chi square tests
First year	Good or better Average Poor	IME students only, predominately IME students only, predominately IME students only; mix of LS and OIS students; mix of LS and IME; mix of LS, IME and OIS; mix of LS from ME origin, IME and OIS (in equal number)	Significant p. value=.000
Current year	Good or better Average Poor	LS only, predominately IME students only, predominately Mix of LS and IME students; LS, IME and OIS; LS from ME origin IME and OIS (in equal number)	Significant p. value=.001

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Q.24: *What is the origin of LS who are not of Middle Eastern origin.*

According to Table 67, 60.5% of IME students reported that LS who are included in their networks of contacts are predominately from Asian origin while equally 59.2 % of IME students reported that LS in their networks predominately originate from Europe or Australia.

Table 67: The origin of IME students' networks of contacts from the LS category

Origin of IME students' networks of contact from the category LS	Frequency of responses in count and %	
	Count	%
Asia	92	60.5
Europe	90	59.2
Indian sub-continent	43	28.3
Africa	34	22.4
Australia	90	59.2

Legend: LS-Local students

To identify whether IME student's networks of contacts with LS differ in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE, cross tabulations and Chi square tests were performed. The overall results of the cross tabulations are presented in Tables 68, 69 and 70.

Influence of Status of study (SOS)

According to Table 68 14.5% of IME students' enrolled in English/foundation courses reported predominantly networks of contacts with LS from European origins. However, 38.8% of IME students enrolled in undergraduate courses reported that their networks of contacts with LS predominantly consist of LS from Australian origin, while 9.2% of those enrolled in postgraduate courses reported predominantly that their networks of contacts with LS consist primarily of students from Asian origins. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association only between SOS and IME students' networks of contact with LS from European and Australian origin.

Table 68: Influence of Status of Study (SOS) on IME students' networks of contacts with LS

Origin of LS	Status of study			Overall results	Chi square tests
	English/Foundation	U/grad	P/grad		
Asia	12.5%	38.8 %	9.2%	English/Foundation: predominantly networks of contact with LS from European origin.	Not significant p- value=.441
Europe	14.5%	37.5%	7.2%		Significant p- value=.031
India sub-continent	2.6%	20.3%	5.2%	Undergraduate: predominantly networks of contact with LS from Australian origin	Not significant p- value=.193
Africa	3%	15.8%	2.6%		Not significant p- value=.872
Australia	11.1%	43.5%	4.6%	Postgraduate: most often networks of contact with LS from Asian origin	Significant p- value=.018

Legend: LS-Local students

Influence of Length of stay (LOS)

As shown in Table 69, 23.7% of IME students' who have been in Australia for one year or less, predominantly reported that LS in their network of contacts are from Asian origin. However, 32.2% of those who have been in Australia for two to three years reported that LS in their networks of contacts are predominantly from Australian origin. Nevertheless, 9.9% of IME students who have been in Australia for over three years, reported that LS in their networks of contacts are predominantly from Asian origin. Chi square tests indicated a significant association between LOS and IME students' networks of contacts with LS from Asian, European and Australian origins.

Table 69: Influence of LOS on IME students' networks of contacts with LS

Origin of LS	Length of stay			Overall results	Chi square tests
	One year or less	2-3 years	Over 3 years		
Asia	23.7%	27.0%	9.9%	LOS: One year or less predominantly networks with LS from Asian origin	Significant p = .001
Europe	21.7%	28.3%	9.2%		Significant p=.010
Indian sub-continent	8.5%	17.8%	2.0%	LOS: 2-3 years predominantly networks of contact with LS from Australian origin	Not significant p=.424
Africa	9.9%	9.2%	3.2%	LOS: 3 and over predominantly networks of contact with LS from Asian origin	Not significant p=.183
Australia	17.8%	32.2%	9.2%		Significant p=.010

Legend: LS-Local students

Influence of Standard of English (SOE)

Table 70 shows that 5.2% and 40.8% of IME students with poor and good or better English language skills respectively, reported that LS in their networks of contacts are primarily from Asian origin, while 22.3% of IME students with average English language skills reported that LS in their networks of contacts are primarily from European origin. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between SOE and IME students' networks of contacts with LS from Asian, European, Indian and African origins.

Table 70: Influence of Standard of English (SOE) on IME students' networks of contacts with LS

Origin of LS	Standard of English			Overall results	Chi square tests
	Poor	Average	Good or better		
Asia	5.2%	14.5%	40.8%	SOE Poor: Primarily networks of contact with LS from Asian origin	Significant p= .033
Europe	2.6%	22.3%	34.2%		Significant p=.007
Indian sub-continent	0%	3.9%	24.3%	SOE Average: Primarily networks of contact with LS from European origin	Significant p=.004
Africa	1.3%	11.8%	9.2%	SOE Good or better : Primarily networks of contact with LS from Asian origin	Significant p=.001
Australia	2.6%	20.4%	36.1%		Not Significant p=.124

Legend: LS-Local students

Q.25: *The extent IME students agree/disagree with various statements*

As shown in Table 71, IME students' reported predominantly that they 'Neither agree nor disagree' with the statement 'The number of Local Students in my face-to-face networks is about right (Statement 1). However, 31.6% 'Agree' and 18.4% 'Strongly agree' that their face-to-face contact with LS is limited although they wish more contact (Statement 2). Nevertheless 29.6% 'Agree' and 13.8% 'Strongly agree' that the limited number of LS in their networks is due to limited opportunities of contact with LS (Statement 4). While statement 1, which was more vague and general, IME students' approach was predominantly neutral, for statements 2 and 4 which were more specific, IME students predominantly took a stand.

Moreover, although IME students predominantly 'Agree' that the number of LS in their face-to-face networks is limited, 32.2% of IME students 'Disagree' and a further 28.3% 'Strongly disagree' that this is due to their preferences towards face-to-face networks with students of their own countries. Similarly, 30.3% of IME students 'Strongly disagree' and an additional 24.3% 'Disagree' that the number of LS in their face-to-face networks is limited because they had already established networks with international students while attending ELICOS classes. However, in regards to statement 5 which attributes the limited number of LS in IME students networks with LS to disinterest towards international students, IME students predominantly responded 'Neither agree nor disagree' (37.5%). The neutral response in statement 5 as well as in statement 1 is possibly 'culture dependent'. Namely, IME students avoid taking a strong stand when it comes to issues concerning third party (as in statement 5) as well as in areas which they are not sure which response would be most appropriate.

Table 71: IME students' frequency of agreement/disagreement in various statements

Statements	Frequency of agreement /disagreement									
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%	count	%
1. The number of Local students in my face-to-face networks is about right	12	7.9	33	21.7	51	33.6	31	20.4	25	16.4
2. The number of Local Students in my face-to-face networks is limited although I wish to have more contact	11	7.2	29	19.1	36	23.7	48	31.6	28	18.4
3. The number of Local Students in my face-to-face networks is limited because I prefer face-to-face networks with students from my own country	43	28.3	49	32.2	40	26.3	20	13.2	0	0
4. The number of Local Students in my face-to-face networks is limited because I have limited opportunities for contact with Local Students	20	13.2	33	21.7	33	21.7	45	29.6	21	13.8
5. The number of Local Students in my face-to-face networks is limited because local students are not interested in establishing contact with International Students	32	21.1	25	16.4	57	37.5	23	15.1	15	9.9
6. Local Students are not included in my face-to-face networks because I have established networks with international students while attending ELICOS classes	46	30.3	37	24.3	35	23.0	21	13.8	13	8.6

Q.26: *Where did you first make your face-to-face networks with LS, other ME students and OIS.*

This question provided six places and asked respondents to indicate in which place they did make their first face-to-face network with LS, other ME students and OIS. It required one place for each group. However, the responses were ambiguous, since IME students responded for each single place. Thus, the results of this question were not analysed.

Q.27: Level of difficulty in establishing networks of contacts with LS, ME and OIS

According to Table 72, 30.3% of IME students reported finding it difficult to establish networks with LS, while 32.9% reported that establishing networks with LS is 'Neither difficult nor easy'. However, 44.6% and 19.7% of IME students reported respectively that it is 'Very easy' and 'Easy' to establish networks with other ME students. In regards to networks with OIS, 39.5% of IME students reported that establishing networks with these students is 'Easy', while 34.4% of IME students reported that establishing networks with OIS is 'Neither difficult nor easy'.

Table 72: IME students' level of difficulty in establishing networks of contact with LS, ME and OIS

Level of difficulty establishing networks			Responses by Category			Total
			LS	ME	OIS	
Very easy	Count		24	68	27	119
	% of Total		15.8%	44.7%	17.8%	26.1%
Easy	Count		26	30	60	116
	% of Total		17.1%	19.7%	39.5%	25.5%
Neither difficult or easy	Count		50	52	57	159
	% of Total		32.9%	34.2%	37.5%	34.9%
Difficult	Count		46	2	8	56
	% of Total		30.3%	1.3%	5.3%	12.3%
Very difficult	Count		6	0	0	6
	% of Total		3.9%	0%	0%	1.3%
Total	Count		152	152	152	456
	% of Total		33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether or not IME students' level of difficulty in establishing networks of contacts with the three groups of students differ in relation to SOS, LOS and SOE, cross-tabulations were performed. Furthermore, Chi square tests were conducted in order to indicate the statistical significance between the level of difficulty and SOS, LOS and SOE. A summary of the cross-tabulations' findings is presented in Tables 72, 73 and 74.

Influence of Status of study (SOS)

Chi square tests for independence indicated not significant association between the SOS and level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with LS and OIS.

In regards to their networks with other ME students, Table 73 shows that IME students enrolled in English/foundation and undergraduate courses reported primarily that it is 'Easy' to establish networks with this group of students. However, IME students in postgraduate courses find it 'Easy' and 'Neither difficult nor easy' establishing networks with other ME students. Chi square tests for independence indicated a weak significant association between the SOS and level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with other ME students.

Table 73: Influence of Status of Study (SOS) in IME students' level of difficulty in establishing networks with LS, ME and OIS

Category	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
ME	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Very easy establishing networks more often Very easy establishing networks more often Easy and Neither difficult nor easy Establishing networks more often	Weak significance p. value=.052

Legend: ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of Length of stay (LOS)

As shown in Table 74, IME students with LOS in Australia up to three years reported primarily that it is 'Neither difficult nor easy' to establish networks with LS. In addition, IME students who have been in Australia for over three years find it 'Very easy' to establish networks with LS. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between LOS and level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with LS.

Concerning the establishment of networks with other ME students, Table 74 shows that IME students who have been in Australia for a year or less and those with LOS three years and over reported primarily that it is 'Very easy' to establish networks with other ME students. Moreover, IME students with LOS of two to three years reported that establishing networks with other ME students is 'Neither difficult nor easy'. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between LOS and level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with other ME students.

In regards to the establishment of networks with OIS, IME students who have been in Australia for one year or less reported primarily that establishing networks with OIS is 'Neither difficult nor easy'. Meanwhile, those who have been in Australia for two to three years reported predominantly, in equal numbers, that establishing networks with OIS is 'Neither difficult nor easy' or 'Easy'. In a contrary, IME students with LOS three years and over reported predominantly that it is 'Very easy' to establish networks with OIS. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between LOS and level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with OIS.

Table 74: Influence of Length of Stay (LOS) in IME students' level of difficulty in establishing networks with LS, ME and OIS

Categories	Length of stay	Summary of the results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Neither difficult nor easy to establish networks more often Neither difficult nor easy to establish networks Very easy to establish networks more often	Significant p. value=.000
ME	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Very easy to establish networks more often Neither difficult nor easy to establish networks more often Very easy to establish networks more often	Significant p. value=.026
OIS	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Neither difficult nor easy to establish networks more often Neither difficult nor easy and difficult equally Very easy to establish networks more often	Significant p. value=.003

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Influence of Standard of English (SOE)

According to Table 75 IME students with good or better language skills reported primarily that establishing networks of contacts with LS is 'Neither difficult nor easy', while those with average language skills reported equally that establishing networks of contacts with LS is 'Neither difficult nor easy' and 'Difficult'. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between the SOE and level of difficulty in establishing networks of contact with LS.

Concerning the establishment of networks of contacts with other ME students, Chi square tests of independence indicated no significant association between the SOE and level of difficulty in establishing networks of contact with other ME students. In regards to networks with OIS, IME students with good or better and average SOE reported primarily that they find it 'Neither difficult nor easy' establishing networks with OIS, while those with poor language skills reported establishing networks with OIS as 'Easy'. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between the SOE and level of difficulty in establishing networks of contact with OIS.

Table 75: Influence of Standard of English (SOE) in IME students' level of difficulty in establishing networks with LS and OIS

Categories	Standard of English	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	Good or better Average Poor	Neither difficult nor easy to establish contact more often Difficult and Neither difficult nor easy and difficult All values, except 'Difficult,' are reported equally often	Significant p. value=.025
OIS	Good or better Average Poor	Neither difficult nor easy to establish networks more often Neither difficult nor easy to establish networks more often Easy to establish contact more often	Significant p. value=.024

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether there is an inter-relationship between the level of difficulty IME experience in their face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS, and the level of difficulty they are facing in establishing networks of contact with the

foregoing groups of students, correlation analysis was conducted. Specifically, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated. The value of the correlation ranges from -1.00 to 1.00. According to Pallant (2007):

- the negative sign in front of the coefficient value indicates a negative correlation between two variables i.e. the high scores on one variable is associated with low scores on the other
- a correlation value of -1.00 indicates a perfect negative correlation between two variables while a correlation value of 1.00 indicates a perfect positive correlation between two variables
- a correlation of zero indicates no relationship between the variables
- the negative sign in front of the coefficient value refers to the direction of the relationship, not the strength.

As shown in Table 76 the values of all correlation coefficients are positive. This is an indication of a positive correlation between the two variables. Moreover, the strength of the relationship between the two variables varies from .063 to .675. To establish whether the relationship between two variables is small, medium or large, Cohen (1988) suggests the following:

$r = -.10$ to $-.29$ and $.10$ to $.29$: small correlation

$r = -.30$ to $-.49$ and $.30$ to $.49$: medium correlation

$r = -.50$ to -1.0 and $.50$ to 1.0 : large correlation

In accordance with Cohen's guidelines, the results of the correlation between levels of difficulty IME are experiencing in their face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS and the level of difficulty they are facing in establishing networks of contact with the foregoing groups of students, as shown in Table 76, indicate a strong positive correlation between the following variables:

- Level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with LS and the level of difficulty they experience in face-to-face contact with LS ($r=.670$, $n=152$, $p<.0005$). At $r=.670$, the calculation of the co-efficient of determination indicates that the first variable explains nearly 45% of the variance in respondents scores on the second variable.
- Level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with other ME students and the level of difficulty they experience in face-to-face contact with other ME students ($r=.675$, $n=152$, $p<.0005$). At $r=.675$, the calculation of the co-efficient of determination indicates that the first variable explains nearly 46% of the variance in respondents scores on the second variable.
- Level of difficulty IME students are facing in establishing networks with OIS and the level of difficulty they experience in face-to-face contact with OIS ($r=.512$, $n=152$, $p<.0005$). At $r=.512$, the calculation of the co-efficient of determination indicates that the first variable explains nearly 26% of the variance in respondents scores on the second variable.
- Level of difficulty IME students are experiencing in their face-to-face contact with other ME students and level of difficulty in establishing networks with OIS ($r=.508$, $n=152$, $p<.0005$). At $r=.508$, the first variable explains nearly 26% of the variance in respondents scores on the second variable.

Table 76: Correlation analysis between the level of difficulty IME students are facing in their face-to-face contact with LS, ME and OIS and level of difficulty in establishing networks with the foregoing groups

Correlations

		Level of difficulty in establishing networks with the LS	Level of difficulty in establishing networks with the other ME students	Level of difficulty in establishing networks with the OIS	The level of difficulty you find in face-to-face contact with the LS	The level of difficulty you find in face-to-face contact with other ME students	The level of difficulty you find in face-to-face contact with the OIS
Level of difficulty in establishing networks with LS	Pearson Correlation	1	.063	.257**	.670**	.000	.227**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.443	.001	.000	.997	.005
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152
Level of difficulty in establishing networks with the other ME students	Pearson Correlation	.063	1	.339**	.217**	.675**	.366**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.443		.000	.007	.000	.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152
Level of difficulty in establishing networks with the OIS	Pearson Correlation	.257**	.339**	1	.314**	.287**	.512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152
The level of difficulty you find in face-to-face contact with LS	Pearson Correlation	.670**	.217**	.314**	1	.213**	.439**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.007	.000		.008	.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152
The level of difficulty you find in face-to-face contact with other ME students	Pearson Correlation	.000	.675**	.287**	.213**	1	.508**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.997	.000	.000	.008		.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152
The level of difficulty you find in face-to-face contact with OIS	Pearson Correlation	.227**	.366**	.512**	.439**	.508**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	152	152	152	152	152	152

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Q.28: *How often IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS, ME and OIS*

As shown in Table 77, in regards to the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS, 30.9% of IME students' reported the value 'Weekly' while a further 28.3% reported the value 'Several times per week'. However, 13.3% reported that 'Rarely' or 'Daily' they depend on their face-to-face networks with LS. In regards to the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with other ME students, 36.2% of them reported "Daily" while a further 24.3% reported equally the values 'Several times per week' and 'Weekly'.

Finally, 34.9% and 36.6% of IME students reported that they depend on their face-to-face networks consisting of OIS on a 'Several times per week' and 'Weekly' basis respectively.

Table 77: Frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS, ME and OIS

How often IME students depend on their face-to-face networks			Responses by Category			Total
			LS	ME	OIS	
Rarely	Count		20	8	4	32
	% of Total		13.2%	9.3%	2.6%	7.0%
Monthly	Count		22	15	26	63
	% of Total		14.5%	9.9%	17.1%	13.8%
Weekly	Count		47	37	51	135
	% of Total		30.9%	24.3%	33.6%	29.6%
Several times per week	Count		43	37	53	133
	% of Total		28.3%	24.3%	34.9%	29.2%
Daily	Count		20	55	18	93
	% of Total		13.2%	36.2%	11.8%	20.3%
Total		Count	152	152	152	456
		% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether the frequency of IME students depending on their face-to-face networks with LS, ME and OIS is associated with their SOS, LOS and SOE, cross-tabulations were performed. The overall results of the cross-tabulations are presented in Tables 78, 79 and 80.

Influence of Status of study (SOS)

According to Table 78, IME students enrolled in English/foundation courses primarily reported that they depend 'Several times per week' on their face-to-face networks with LS. However, those enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate courses reported respectively that they depend on their networks with LS 'Weekly' and 'Rarely'. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS.

Table 78 also shows that IME students enrolled in English/foundation and undergraduate courses reported primarily that they depend on their face-to-face networks with other ME students 'Daily', while those in postgraduate courses reported primarily that they depend 'Monthly' on their face-to-face networks with other ME students. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with other ME students.

In regards to how often IME students depend on their face-to-face contact with OIS, Chi square tests of independence indicated no significant association between SOS and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with OIS.

Table 78: Influence of Status of Stay (SOS) on the frequency IME students

Categories	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Several times per week contact most often Weekly contact more often Rare contact more often	Significant p. value=.004
ME	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Daily contact more often Daily contact more often Monthly contact more often	Significant p. value=.000

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of Length of stay (LOS)

Table 79 shows that IME students who have been in Australia for one year or less and for two to three years primarily reported that they depend 'Weekly' on their face-to-face networks with LS. However, those who have been in Australia for over three years primarily reported that they depend 'Daily' on their networks with LS. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS.

Table 79 also shows that IME students who have been in Australia for one year or less reported primarily that 'Daily' they depend on their face-to-face networks with

other ME students, while those with LOS of two to three years reported primarily ‘Several times per week’. However, IME students with LOS over three years reported primarily that they depend ‘Weekly’ on their face-to-face networks with other ME students. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with other ME students.

In regards to how often IME students depend on their face-to-face networks of contact with OIS, Chi square tests of independence indicated no significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with OIS.

Table 79: Influence of Length of Stay (LOS) on the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS, ME

Categories	Length of stay	Summary of the results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Weekly contact more often Weekly contact more often Daily contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
ME	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Daily contact more often Several times per week contact more often Weekly contact more often	Significant p. value=.000

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students

Influence of Standard of English (SOE)

Table 80 shows that IME students with good or better SOE reported that they depend ‘Weekly’ on their face-to-face networks with LS, while those with average language skills reported that they depend ‘Daily’ on their face-to-face networks with LS. However, IME students with poor language skills reported that they depend ‘Several times per week’ on their face-to-face networks with LS. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between SOE and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS.

In regards to how often IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with other ME students, Table 80 shows that IME students with a good or better SOE reported primarily that they depend 'Weekly' on their face-to-face networks with other ME students. However, those with average and poor English language skills reported primarily the 'Daily' value. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between SOE and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with other ME students.

Concerning how often IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with OIS, as shown in Table 80, IME students with a good or better SOE reported primarily that they depend on their face-to-face networks with OIS on a 'Weekly' basis. In addition, those with average SOE reported primarily 'Several times per week' while those with poor SOE reported equally the values 'Daily' and 'Several times per week'. Chi square tests of independence indicated a significant association between SOE and the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with OIS.

Table 80: Influence of SOE on the frequency IME students depend on their face-to-face networks with LS, ME and OIS

Categories	Standard of English	Summary of the results	Chi square tests
LS	Good or better Average Poor	Weekly contact more often Daily contact more often Several times per week contact more often	Significant p. value=.046
ME	Good or better Average Poor	Weekly contact more often Daily contact more often Daily contact more often	Significant p. value=.000
OIS	Good or better Average Poor	Weekly contact more often Several times per week contact more often Daily and Several times per week contact more often (equal %)	Significant p. value=.000

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Q.29, 30 and 31: *The purpose of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS*

As shown in Table 81, 74.4% of IME students reported primarily that the purpose of their networks with LS is to 'Improve my language skills' (74.3%). However, in regards to the purpose of their networks with other ME students, as shown in Table 81, 77.6% of IME students reported that the purpose of their networks with other ME students is 'To go out' (77.6%) while 70.4% reported that the purpose of their networks with other ME students is 'Supporting me when I feel homesick'. Nevertheless, 68.4% of IME students reported primarily that the purpose of their networks with OIS is 'Learning about new cultures' (68.4%).

Table 81: The purpose of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS

Purpose of networks	Frequency of responses for each category					
	LS		ME		OIS	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
To go out	78	51.3	118	77.6	66	43.4
Learning new ways of doing things	91	59.9	57	37.5	77	50.7
Supporting me when I feel home sick	37	24.3	107	70.4	31	20.4
Learning about other cultures	90	59.2	57	37.5	104	68.4
Improve my language skills	113	74.3	64	42.1	78	51.3
To get or seek help with assignments and exams	64	42.1	63	41.4	73	48.0

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Furthermore, Chi square tests for independence were used to explore the relationship between SOS, LOS and SOE and IME students' various purposes for networks with LS, ME and OIS. These results, shown in Table 82, are indicating in regards to SOS:

- a significant association between SOS and IME students' networks with LS for all purposes, except for the purpose 'Learning other cultures'
- a significant association between SOS and IME students' networks with other ME students for all purposes, except for the purposes 'To go out' and 'To get or seek help with assignments and exams'

- a significant association between SOS and IME students' networks with OIS for the purposes 'To go out', 'Improve my language skills' and 'To get or seek help with assignments and exams' and, not significant association for the remaining purposes.

In regards to LOS, Table 82 indicates:

- a significant association between LOS and IME students' networks with LS for the purposes 'To go out', 'To improve my language skills' and 'To get or seek help with assignments and exams'.
- a significant association between LOS and IME students' networks with other ME students only for the purpose 'Learning new ways of doing things'
- a significant association between LOS and IME students' networks with OIS only for the purpose 'To go out'.

Table 82: The results of Chi square tests regarding the impact of SOS, LOS and SOE on purposes of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS

Purpose of IME students' networks	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
To go out	.000	NS	.038	.007	NS	.001	NS	NS	NS
Learning new ways of doing things	.000	.000	NS	NS	.048	NS	NS	NS	.016
Supporting me when I feel home sick	.039	.044	NS	NS	NS	NS	.010	NS	.020
Learning about other cultures	NS	.000	NS	NS	NS	NS	.024	.046	NS
Improve my language skills	.023	.000	.003	.012	NS	NS	.004	.000	NS
To get or seek help with assignments and exams	.006	NS	.012	.028	NS	NS	NS	.027	NS

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Finally, in regards to the SOE, Table 82 indicates:

- a significant association between SOE and IME students' networks with LS for the purposes 'Supporting me when I feel home sick', 'Learning about other cultures' and 'Improve my language skills'
- a significant association between SOE and IME students' networks with other ME students for the purposes 'Learning about other cultures', 'Improve my language skills' and 'To get or seek help with assignments and exams'
- a significant association between SOE and IME students' networks with OIS for the purposes 'Learning new ways of doing things' and 'Supporting me when I feel home sick'.

Q 32, 33, 34: *The importance of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS in various purposes.*

According to Table 83, 40.8% of IME students consider networks of contacts with LS predominantly as 'Moderately important' for the purpose 'To go out' and 40.1% predominantly as 'Very important' for the purpose 'To improve my language skills'. In addition IME students consider networks with LS predominantly as 'Important' for the purposes 'Learning about other cultures' (34.2%), 'To get or seek help with assignments and exams' (32.2%) and for 'Learning new ways of doing things' (29.6%).

Table 83 also shows that IME students reported that their networks of contacts with other ME students are predominantly 'Important' for the purposes to 'To go out' (37.5%) and to 'To get or seek help with assignments/exams' (36.2%). Nevertheless, they consider networks with other ME students predominantly as 'Very important' for the purpose of 'Supporting me when I feel homesick' (42.8%).

Concerning the importance of IME students' networks with OIS, Table 83 shows that these are predominantly 'Important' for the purpose of 'Learning about other cultures' (40.8%) and predominantly 'Moderately important' for 'To get or seek help with assignments/exams' (33.6%), 'To go out' (35.2%) and 'Learning new ways of doing things' (33.6%).

Table 83: The importance of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS

The importance of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS for various purposes		Responses by Category in %			Average Total in %
		LS	ME	OIS	
To go out	Not important at all	7.2	2.6	9.2	6.3
	Of little importance	11.8	7.2	23.0	14.0
	Moderately important	40.8	24.3	35.2	33.4
	Important	26.3	37.5	21.7	28.5
	Very important	13.8	28.3	7.9	16.6
Total		100	100	100	100
Learning new ways of doing things	Not important at all	4.6	9.9	5.9	6.8
	Of little importance	14.5	20.4	19.7	18.2
	Moderately important	28.3	32.9	33.6	31.6
	Important	29.6	16.4	28.9	25.0
	Very important	23.0	20.4	11.8	18.4
Total		100	100	100	100
Supporting me when I feel homesick	Not important at all	30.9	7.9	35.5	24.8
	Of little importance	28.3	17.1	19.1	21.5
	Moderately important	27.6	13.2	25.7	22.1
	Important	11.2	19.1	13.8	14.7
	Very important	2.0	42.8	5.9	16.9
Total		100	100	100	100
Learning about other cultures	Not important at all	6.6	21.7	3.9	10.7
	Of little importance	11.2	20.4	5.3	12.3
	Moderately important	19.7	23.7	20.4	21.2
	Important	34.2	20.4	40.8	31.8
	Very important	28.3	13.8	29.6	23.9
Total		100	100	100	100
Improve my language skills	Not important at all	5.3	19.7	11.8	12.2
	Of little importance	7.9	18.4	14.5	13.6
	Moderately important	15.1	37.5	28.3	27.0
	Important	31.6	15.8	27.6	24.6
	Very important	40.1	8.6	17.8	22.1
Total		100	100	100	100
To get or seek help with assignments /exams	Not important at all	5.3	12.5	3.9	7.2
	Of little importance	19.1	15.8	14.5	16.4
	Moderately important	28.3	24.3	33.6	28.7
	Important	32.2	36.2	28.3	32.2
	Very important	15.1	11.2	19.7	15.3
Total		100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Chi square tests for independence were used to explore the relationship between SOS, LOS and SOE and, the importance of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS for various purposes. In regards to SOS, the results of the tests shown in Table 84 indicated:

- a significant association between SOS and the importance of IME students' networks with LS in all purposes
- a significant association between SOS and the importance of IME students' networks with other ME students in all purposes
- a significant association between SOS and the importance of IME students' networks with OIS in all purposes except for the purpose 'To get or seek help with assignments and exams'.

Table 84: Results of Chi square tests regarding the impact of SOS, LOS and SOE in the importance of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS in various purposes

Importance of IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS for various purposes	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
To go out	.001	.000	.007	NS	NS	NS	.008	.000	.002
Learning new ways of doing things	.000	.000	.003	NS	.004	NS	NS	.000	NS
Supporting me when I feel home sick	.005	.024	.001	.012	.013	.000	.000	.000	.000
Learning about other cultures	.016	.002	.007	.044	.000	NS	.012	.000	.037
Improve my language skills	.007	.043	.001	NS	NS	.002	.000	.000	NS
To get or seek help with assignments and exams	.003	.000	NS	.012	.048	.015	.000	.010	.003

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In regards to LOS, Table 84 shows that there is:

- a significant association between LOS and the importance of IME students' networks with LS for the purposes ' Supporting me when I feel homesick',

‘Learning about other cultures’ and ‘To get or seek help with assignments and exams’

- a significant association between LOS and the importance of IME students’ networks with other ME students in all purposes except for the purpose ‘To go out’, and ‘Improve my language skills’
- a significant association between LOS and the importance of IME students’ networks with OIS for the purposes ‘Supporting me when I feel homesick’, ‘Improve my language skills’ and ‘To get or seek help with assignments and exams’.

In regards to the SOE Table 84 shows that there is:

- a significant association between SOE and the importance of IME students’ networks with LS in all purposes except for the purpose ‘Learning new ways of doing things’
- a significant association between SOE and the importance of IME students’ networks with other ME students in all purposes
- a significant association between SOE and the importance of IME students’ networks with OIS in all purposes except for the purposes ‘Learning new ways of doing things’ and ‘Improve my language skills’.

Q. 35: *The degree cultural differences influence their face-to-face networks with LS and OIS*

According to Table 85, 40.8% of IME students reported predominantly that cultural differences ‘Slightly’ influence their networks with LS while only 8.6% and 3.3% reported that their networks with LS are influenced respectively ‘A lot’ and ‘A great deal’ by cultural differences. Moreover, 42.8% of IME students reported predominantly that cultural differences ‘Moderately’ influence their networks with OIS, while 25.7% reported ‘Slightly’.

Table 85: The degree cultural differences influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS

Influence of cultural differences in IME students' networks with LS and OIS			Responses by Category		
			LS	OIS	Total
Not at all	Count		26	26	52
	% of Total		17.1%	17.1%	17.1%
Slightly	Count		62	39	101
	% of Total		40.8%	25.7%	33.3%
Moderately	Count		46	65	111
	% of Total		30.3%	42.8%	36.6%
A lot	Count		13	19	32
	% of Total		8.6%	12.5%	10.6%
A great deal	Count		5	3	8
	% of Total		3.3%	2.0%	2.6%
Total		Count	152	152	304
		% of Total	50%	50%	100%

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether the degree of cultural differences influencing IME students' networks with LS and OIS is associated with their SOS, LOS and SOE, cross tabulations were performed and Chi square tests for independence were calculated. The overall results are shown in Tables 86, 87 and 88.

Influence of Status of study (SOS)

As shown in Table 86, IME students enrolled in English/foundation courses reported primarily that cultural differences 'Moderately' influence their networks with LS. Moreover, those in undergraduate and postgraduate courses reported that cultural differences 'Slightly' influence their networks with LS. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between SOS and the degree IME students' networks with LS are influenced by cultural differences.

Concerning the impact of cultural differences on IME students' networks with OIS, Chi square tests for independence indicated no significant association between SOS and the degree cultural differences influence IME students' networks with OIS.

Table 86: The association between Status of Study (SOS) and the degree cultural differences influence IME students' networks with LS

Category	Status of study	Overall results	Chi square tests
LS	English/foundation Undergraduate Postgraduate	Moderate influence more often reported Slight influence more often reported Slight influence more often reported	Significant p. value=.035

Legend: LS-Local students

Influence of Length of stay (LOS)

Based on the information presented in Table 87, IME students with LOS in Australia up to 3 years reported primarily that their networks with LS were 'Slightly' influenced by cultural differences. Meanwhile, those with LOS over three years reported predominantly that cultural differences 'Not at all' influence their networks with LS. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between LOS and the degree IME students' networks with LS are influenced by cultural differences.

Concerning the impact of the cultural differences on IME students networks with OIS, as Table 87 shows, IME students with LOS in Australia of up to three years reported primarily that their networks with LS were 'Moderately' influenced by cultural differences. Meanwhile, IME students with LOS of more than three years reported that cultural differences 'Not at all' influence their networks with OIS. Chi square tests for independence indicated no significant association between LOS and the degree IME students' networks with OIS are influenced by cultural differences.

Table 87: The association between LOS and the degree cultural differences influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS

Categories	Length of stay	Summary of the results	Chi square tests
LS	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Slight influence more often reported Slight influence more often reported Not at all influence more often reported	Significant p. value=.011
OIS	One year or less Two –three years Three years and over	Moderate influence more often reported Moderate influence more often reported Not at all influence more often reported	Significant p. value=.011

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

Influence of Standard of English (SOE)

Table 88 shows that IME students with good or better SOE reported that cultural differences with OIS are 'Moderately' influencing their networks with this group of students. However, those with average SOE reported primarily that their networks with OIS are 'Slightly' influenced by cultural differences, while IME students with poor SOE reported primarily that their networks with OIS are 'Moderately' or 'Slightly' influenced by cultural differences. Chi square tests for independence indicated a significant association between SOE and the degree IME students' networks with OIS are influenced by cultural differences.

Concerning the impact of cultural differences on IME students' networks with LS, Chi square tests for independence indicated no significant association between SOE and the degree cultural differences influence IME students' networks with LS.

Table 88: The association between Standard of English (SOE) and the degree cultural differences influence IME students' networks with OIS

Category	Standard of English	Summary of the results	Chi square tests
OIS	Good or better Average Poor	Moderate influence more often Slight influence more often Moderate and Slight influence more often	Significant p. value=.032

Legend: OIS-Other international students

Q.36, 37 and 38: *Aspects influencing IME students' use of face-to-face networks with LS, ME and OIS*

According to Table 89, 80.3% of IME students reported predominantly that 'Language' influences the use of networks with LS, while in this regard 56.6% and 51.3% respectively reported the 'Culture' and 'Interests/hobbies' aspects. Concerning the use of their networks with other ME students, 55.9% of IME students predominantly reported that 'Language' influences the use of these networks, while 52.6% and 52.0% respectively indicated the aspects 'Time availability' and 'Interests/hobbies'. Finally, concerning the aspects which influence the use of networks with OIS, as shown in Table 6.68, 67.1% of IME students reported 'Language' and 55.9% 'Culture'.

Table 89: The frequency various aspects are influencing IME students' use of networks with LS, ME and OIS

Aspects influencing IME students using their networks with LS, ME and OIS	Frequency of responses for each category					
	LS		ME		OIS	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Culture	86	56.6	72	47.4	85	55.9
Religion	50	32.9	67	41.4	62	40.8
Language	122	80.3	85	55.9	102	67.1
Interests/hobbies	78	51.3	79	52.0	69	45.4
Access to students	55	36.2	46	30.3	44	28.9
Time availability	62	40.8	80	52.6	69	45.4
Age	51	33.0	48	31.6	57	37.5

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether there is an association between SOS, LOS and SOE and the various aspects which influence IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS, chi square tests were conducted. The results presented in Table 90 indicate:

- a significant association between SOS and the aspects of 'Culture' and 'Religion' in regards to IME students networks with LS

- a significant association between SOS and the aspect 'Access to students' in regards to IME students networks with other ME students
- a significant association between SOS and the aspects 'Culture' and 'Access to students' in regards to IME students networks with OIS.

Table 90: The association between Status of Study (SOS), Length of stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE) and the aspects which influence IME students'

Aspects influencing IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Culture	.044	NS	.008	.018	NS	.002	NS	.042	NS
Religion	.002	NS	NS	.029	.001	NS	.048	NS	.002
Language	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	.036
Interests/hobbies	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Access to students	NS	.003	.005	.042	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Time availability	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Age	NS	NS	NS	NS	.043	NS	NS	NS	.042

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In regards to the LOS, Table 90 shows that there is:

- a significant association between LOS and the aspects 'Culture', 'Religion' and 'Access to students' in regards to IME students networks with LS students
- a significant association between LOS and the aspects 'Religion' and 'Age' in regards to IME students networks with other ME students
- a significant association between LOS and the aspect 'Culture' in regards to IME students networks with OIS.

Finally, in regards to SOE Table 90 shows that there is:

- a significant association between SOE and the aspect 'Religion' in regards to IME students networks with LS

- a significant association between SOE and the aspect 'Culture' in regards to IME students networks with other ME students
- a significant association between SOE and the aspects 'Religion', 'Language' and 'Age' in regards to IME students networks with OIS.

Q. 39, 40 and 41: *How much various aspects influence the use of face-to-face networks with LS, ME and OIS.*

Based on the information provided in Table 91, 42.8% of IME students reported that 'Language' influences 'Very much' the use of networks with LS, while 40.8% and 38.2% reported respectively that 'Time availability' and 'Access to students' also influence the use of their local networks. However, 32% reported predominantly that 'Religion' influences 'Very little' the use of their networks with LS.

Concerning IME students networks with other ME students, Table 91 shows that 34.9% and 33.6% of IME students reported respectively that 'Time availability' and 'Access to students' predominantly 'Very much' influence the use of their networks with other ME students. Nevertheless, 32.2% reported that 'Hobbies and interest' also influence 'Very much' the use of their networks with other ME students.

In regards to the aspects which influence the use of IME students' networks with OIS, Table 91 shows that 'Culture', 'Access to students', 'Time availability' and 'Language' were respectively reported by 46.1%, 38.8%, 38.2 and 37.5% of IME students as aspects which influence 'Very much' their networks with OIS. However, 'Age' and 'Interests/hobbies' were reported by 34.9% and 33.6% of respondents as aspects which predominately 'Moderately' influence IME students' networks with OIS.

Table 91: The degree various aspects influence IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS

Degree various aspects influence IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS			Responses by category in %			Average Total in %
			LS	ME	OIS	
Culture	Frequency	Very little	27.6	40.8	21.1	29.8
		Moderately	19.7	19.7	22.4	20.6
		Very much	27.6	23.7	46.1	34.4
		Extremely	22.4	5.9	7.9	12.0
		Very extremely	2.6	9.9	2.6	5.0
		Total	100	100	100	100
Religion	Frequency	Very little	32.6	41.4	42.1	38.7
		Moderately	22.4	16.4	19.7	19.5
		Very much	23.0	29.6	29.6	27.4
		Extremely	15.1	5.3	5.3	8.5
		Very extremely	3.3	7.2	3.3	4.6
		Total	100	100	100	100
Language	Frequency	Very little	7.2	36.2	13.2	18.9
		Moderately	20.4	26.3	32.2	26.3
		Very much	42.8	23.0	37.5	34.4
		Extremely	23.0	5.9	10.5	13.1
		Very extremely	6.0	8.6	6.6	7.0
		Total	100	100	100	100
Interests/hobbies	Frequency	Very little	6.6	19.7	13.2	13.1
		Moderately	28.3	30.9	38.2	32.4
		Very much	34.9	32.2	32.2	33.1
		Extremely	25.7	9.9	13.2	16.2
		Very extremely	4.6	7.2	3.3	5.0
		Total	100	100	100	100
Access to students	Frequency	Very little	14.5	26.3	17.8	19.5
		Moderately	15.1	26.3	32.9	24.7
		Very much	38.2	33.6	38.8	36.8
		Extremely	24.3	5.9	7.9	12.7
		Very extremely	7.9	7.9	2.6	6.1
		Total	100	100	100	100
Time availability	Frequency	Very little	11.8	23.0	14.5	16.4
		Moderately	19.7	23.7	32.2	25.2
		Very much	40.8	34.9	38.2	37.9
		Extremely	24.3	11.2	11.8	15.7
		Very extremely	3.3	7.2	3.3	4.6
		Total	100	100	100	100
Age	Frequency	Very little	21.7	27.0	23.0	23.9
		Moderately	25.7	32.9	34.9	31.1
		Very much	30.9	25.7	28.9	28.5
		Extremely	19.1	8.6	9.9	12.5
		Very extremely	2.6	5.9	3.3	3.9
		Total	100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether the degree various aspects influence IME students use of face networks with LS, ME and OIS is associated with the Status of Study (SOS), Length of Stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE), Chi square tests for independence were performed. The results of these tests, presented in Table 92, indicate the following in regards to SOS:

- a significant association between SOS and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with LS, except for the aspects 'Interests/hobbies' and 'Access to students'

- a significant association between SOS and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with other ME students, except for the aspects 'Culture', 'Religion' and 'Age'
- a significant association between SOS and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with OIS, except for the aspect 'Language'.

Table 92: The association between Status of Study (SOS), Length of Stay (LOS) and Standard of English (SOE) and the degree various aspects influence IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS

The degree various aspects influencing IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Culture	.001	NS	.001	.000	NS	.040	.000	.000	.005
Religion	.013	NS	.026	NS	.005	NS	.000	.014	NS
Language	.000	.000	NS	.003	.003	.000	.006	.001	NS
Interests/hobbies	NS	.000	.049	NS	.001	.004	.007	.034	NS
Access to students	NS	.014	.003	.000	.001	.000	.001	.011	NS
Time availability	.008	.000	.000	.001	.001	.001	.001	.000	.000
Age	.004	NS	.021	NS	.000	.000	.011	.011	NS

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In regards to the LOS, Table 92 indicates:

- a significant association between LOS and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with LS in 'Culture', 'Language', 'Access to students' and 'Time availability'
- a significant association between LOS and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with other ME students in all aspects, except in 'Culture'
- a significant association between LOS and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with OIS in all aspects, except in 'Religion'.

Concerning SOE, Table 92 indicates that there is:

- a significant association between SOE and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with LS in all aspects
- a significant association between SOE and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with other ME students in all aspects
- a significant association between SOE and the degree various aspects influence the use of IME students' networks with OIS only in the aspects 'Culture' and 'Time availability'.

Q. 42 and 43: *What customs influence IME students' face-to-face networks with LS and OIS?*

As shown in Table 93, 'Type of entertainment' was reported by 73.7% of IME students' as the custom which predominantly influences their face-to-face networks with LS. 'Food' and Social relationships' also have been respectively reported by 48.7% and 48.0% of respondents as customs which influence IME students networks with LS.

Moreover, Table 93 shows that 'Type of entertainment' was also reported by 57.2% of IME students as the custom which predominantly influences their face-to-face networks with OIS. Nevertheless 'Food' was reported by 53.3% of respondents as the second in order custom which influences IME students networks with OIS.

Table 93: The frequency various customs influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS

Customs influencing IME students' networks with LS and OIS	Frequency of responses for each category			
	LS		OIS	
	Count	%	Count	%
Dress code	66	43.4	54	35.5
Type of entertainment	112	73.7	87	57.2
Male-female relationship	64	42.1	70	46.1
Food	74	48.7	84	53.3
Family values	51	33.6	45	29.6
Religion	58	38.2	66	43.4
Social relationships	73	48.0	65	42.8

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether or not there is an association between SOS, LOS and SOE, and the customs which influence IME student's networks with LS and OIS, Chi square tests were performed. The results of the tests, as presented in Table 94, indicate that:

- SOS, among all customs which influence IME students' face-to-face networks with LS, is significantly associated only with 'Dress code', 'Food' and 'Family values'
- SOS, among all customs which influence IME students' face-to-face networks with OIS, is significantly associated with 'Dress code' only.

Table 94: The association between SOS, LOS and SOE and, the various customs which influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS

Various customs influencing IME students' networks with LS and OIS	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)					
	Status of study		Length of stay		Standard of English	
	LS	OIS	LS	OIS	LS	OIS
Dress code	.009	.007	NS	NS	NS	.048
Type of entertainment	NS	NS	NS	.025	NS	NS
Male-female relationship	NS	NS	NS	NS	.046	NS
Food	.021	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS
Family values	.000	NS	.015	NS	NS	NS
Religion	NS	NS	.008	NS	.002	.017
Social relationships	NS	NS	.001	NS	NS	NS

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

In addition, Table 94 shows that:

- LOS, among all customs which influence IME students' face-to-face networks with LS, is significantly associated with 'Family values', 'Religion' and 'Social relationships'
- LOS, among all customs which influence IME students' face-to-face networks with OIS, is significantly associated with the 'Type of entertainment'.

Concerning SOE, Table 94 shows that:

- SOE, among all customs which influence IME students face-to-face networks with LS, is significantly associated with 'Male-female relationship' and 'Religion'
- SOE, among all customs which influence IME students' face-to-face networks with OIS, is significantly associated with 'Dress code' and 'Religion'.

Q. 44 and 45: *How have various customs influenced IME students' networks with LS and OIS?*

Based on the information provided in Table 95, 'Type of entertainment', 'Male-female relationships', 'Food' and 'Social relationships' are the customs which are reported by 66.7%, 34.9%, 41.4% and 36.2% of IME students respectively as customs that predominantly influence 'Very much' their networks with LS. However, 'Dress code' and 'Religion' are the customs which are primarily reported by 32.9% and 34.2% of IME students' as the ones which 'Very little' influence their networks with LS.

Concerning networks with OIS, as shown in Table 95, 39.5% and 33.6% of IME students reported respectively that 'Dress code' and 'Religion' influence 'Very little' their networks with OIS. Meanwhile, 'Type of entertainment', 'Male-female

relationships', 'Food' and 'Social relationships' respectively were reported by 38.8%, 37.5%, 42.8% and 46.1% of IME students' as customs which predominantly influence 'Very much' their networks with OIS.

Table 95: The degree various aspects influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS

The degree various aspects influence IME students' networks with LS, ME and OIS			Responses by category in %		
			LS	OIS	Average Total in %
Dress code	Frequency	Very little	32.9	39.5	36.2
		Moderately	25.7	21.1	23.4
		Very much	23.7	25.0	24.3
		Extremely	17.1	11.2	14.1
		Very extremely	.7	3.3	2.0
	Total		100	100	100
Type of entertainment	Frequency	Very little	3.9	8.6	6.2
		Moderately	19.1	23.7	21.4
		Very much	66.7	38.8	52.8
		Extremely	22.4	22.4	22.4
		Very extremely	7.9	6.6	7.2
	Total		100	100	100
Male-female relationship	Frequency	Very little	19.1	21.1	20.1
		Moderately	25.7	23.0	24.3
		Very much	34.9	37.5	36.2
		Extremely	13.8	11.8	25.6
		Very extremely	6.6	6.6	6.6
	Total		100	100	100
Food	Frequency	Very little	14.5	17.8	16.1
		Moderately	25.0	21.7	23.3
		Very much	41.4	42.8	42.1
		Extremely	13.8	9.2	11.5
		Very extremely	5.3	8.6	6.9
	Total		100	100	100
Family values	Frequency	Very little	19.7	23.0	21.4
		Moderately	31.6	34.9	33.2
		Very much	30.9	28.9	29.9
		Extremely	14.5	8.6	12.0
		Very extremely	3.3	4.6	3.9
	Total		100	100	100
Religion	Frequency	Very little	34.2	33.6	33.9
		Moderately	27.0	26.3	26.6
		Very much	22.4	27.6	25.0
		Extremely	8.6	5.3	6.9
		Very extremely	7.9	7.2	7.5
	Total		100	100	100
Social relationships	Frequency	Very little	20.4	19.7	20.0
		Moderately	24.3	17.8	21.0
		Very much	36.2	46.1	41.1
		Extremely	15.1	13.2	14.1
		Very extremely	3.9	3.3	3.6
	Total		100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

In order to establish whether there is an association between SOS, LOS and SOE, and the degree which various customs influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS, Chi square tests were performed. The results of the tests as presented in Table 96 indicate:

- a significant association between SOS and the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with LS, for 'Food', 'Religion' and 'Social relationships'
- a significant association between SOS and the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with OIS, for 'Food', 'Religion' and 'Social relationships'
- a significant association between LOS and the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with LS, for all customs except for 'Dress code' and 'Male-female relationships'
- a significant association between LOS and the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with OIS, for all customs except 'Religion'
- a significant association between SOE and the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with LS, for 'Male-female relationships', 'Religion' and 'Social relationships'
- a significant association between SOE and the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with OIS, for 'Type of entertainment', 'Male-female relationships', 'Religion' and 'Social relationships'.

Table 96: The association between SOS, LOS and SOE and, the degree various customs influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS

The degree various customs influence IME students' networks with LS and OIS	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)					
	Status of study		Length of stay		Standard of English	
	LS	OIS	LS	OIS	LS	OIS
Dress code	NS	NS	NS	.021	NS	NS
Type of entertainment	NS	NS	.000	.000	NS	.004
Male-female relationship	NS	NS	NS	.019	.034	.014
Food	.009	.014	.003	.000	NS	NS
Family values	NS	NS	.007	.000	NS	NS
Religion	.021	.001	.001	NS	.031	.000
Social relationships	.048	.003	.002	.018	.006	.003

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS-Other international students

6.6 Way of life

6.6.1 Introduction

This section is concerned with the analysis of results concerning questions about the IME students' living situation and the frequency they participate in various activities at their place of living with LS, other ME students and OIS.

6.6.2 Living situation

Q.46: *IME students' living situation*

In regards to IME students situation, Table 97 shows that 28.3% of IME students reported predominantly living in a 'Home stay accommodation with local family' while 25.7 % lived in 'Private accommodation with other ME students'. The remaining items were reported by far less percentage of IME students.

Table 97: IME students' living situation

Living situation	Frequency	%
Home stay accommodation with a local family	43	28.3
Student shared accommodation with co-nationals	27	17.8
Student shared accommodation with other International ME students	14	9.2
Student shared accommodation with other International students	11	7.2
Student shared accommodation with mix of students	18	11.8
Private accommodation with other ME students	39	25.7
Total	152	100.0

Q.47, 48 and 49: *Activities at place of living with LS, other ME students and OIS*

As shown in Table 98, IME students reported predominantly 'Having lunch/dinner' (37.5%), 'Study' (37.5%) and 'Watching movies' (30.3%) with LS 'Several times per week'. Nevertheless, 41.4% of IME students reported 'Watching movies' with other ME students predominantly 'Several times per week' at their place of living, while 38.2% and 36.8% reported respectively 'Having lunch/dinner' and 'Study' with other ME students at their place of living. However, IME students reported 'Having lunch/dinner' (26.3%), 'Watching movies' (30.3%) and 'Going out' (30.9%) with OIS predominantly on 'Monthly' basis, while on a 'Weekly' basis they reported 'Play sports/games' (28.3%) and 'Study' (27.6%) with OIS.

Table 98: The frequency of IME students having various activities with LS, ME and OIS at their place of living

Activities			Responses by category in %			Average Total in %
			LS	ME	OIS	
Having Lunch/Dinner	Frequency	Rarely	28.3	.7	25.0	18.0
		Monthly	9.9	11.8	26.3	16.0
		Weekly	16.4	21.1	21.7	19.7
		Several times per week	37.5	38.2	23.0	32.9
		Daily	7.9	28.3	3.9	13.3
	Total		100	100	100	100
Watching movies	Frequency	Rarely	23.7	6.6	24.3	18.2
		Monthly	20.4	9.2	30.3	19.9
		Weekly	24.3	38.2	25.7	29.4
		Several times per week	30.3	41.4	18.4	30.0
		Daily	1.3	4.6	1.3	2.4
	Total		100	100	100	100
Going out	Frequency	Rarely	17.1	2.0	26.3	15.1
		Monthly	21.1	9.2	30.9	20.4
		Weekly	34.9	34.2	18.4	29.1
		Several times per week	17.8	33.6	20.4	23.9
		Daily	9.2	21.1	3.9	11.4
	Total		100	100	100	100
Play sports/games	Frequency	Rarely	24.3	18.4	34.2	25.6
		Monthly	8.6	11.2	17.1	12.3
		Weekly	41.4	37.5	28.3	35.7
		Several times per week	24.3	28.9	17.1	23.4
		Daily	1.3	3.9	3.3	2.8
	Total		100	100	100	100
Study	Frequency	Rarely	11.5	9.2	21.7	14.1
		Monthly	11.8	17.8	22.4	17.3
		Weekly	31.6	20.4	27.6	26.5
		Several times per week	37.5	36.8	25.7	33.3
		Daily	3.9	15.8	2.6	7.4
	Total		100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

Descriptive statistics, presented in Table 99, show that the mean scores in all activities with other ME students is higher in comparison to the mean scores for the same activities with LS and OIS. This indicates that in their place of living, IME students have the foregoing activities more often with other ME students than with LS and OIS.

Table 99: Descriptive statistics for IME students' activities with LS, ME and OIS in their place of living

Activities	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Having lunch/dinner with LS	152	2.87	1.384
Watching movies with LS	152	2.65	1.181
Going out with LS	152	2.81	1.189
Play sport/with LS	152	2.70	1.128
Study with LS	152	3.03	1.124
Having lunch/ dinner with other ME students	152	3.82	.999
Watching movies with other ME students	152	3.28	.938
Going out with other ME	152	3.62	.982
Play sport / games with other ME students	152	2.89	1.137
Study with other ME students	152	3.32	1.205
Having lunch/ with OIS	152	2.55	1.206
Watching movies with OIS	152	2.42	1.089
Going out with OIS	152	2.45	1.195
Play sport / with OIS	152	2.38	1.212
Study with OIS	152	2.65	1.158
Valid N (listwise)	152		

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

To establish however, whether the frequency of IME students' activities with LS, ME and OIS at place of living is associated with their SOS, LOS and SOE, Chi square tests were performed. The results of the tests are presented in Table 100.

According to Table 100, SOS is statistically associated with the frequency IME students have all the mentioned activities with LS, ME and OIS at their place of living.

Table 100: The association between SOS, LOS and SOE and the frequency IME students' have various activities at their place of living with LS, ME and OIS

Activities in IME students' place of living	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Having lunch/dinner	.006	.000	.050	.000	NS	.015	.000	.002	.013
Watching movies	.000	.000	.001	.000	NS	.014	NS	.000	NS
Going out	.002	.000	.040	.001	.002	NS	.001	.000	.048
Playing sports/games	.004	.000	.000	.000	.007	NS	.024	.015	NS
Study	.014	.004	.001	.000	.002	.048	.018	.000	.000

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

In regards to LOS, Table 100 shows that it is statistically associated with:

- the frequency IME students have all the mentioned activities with LS at their place of living
- the frequency IME students 'Go out', 'Play sports/games' and 'Study' with other ME students at their place of living
- the frequency of IME students 'Having lunch/dinner', 'Watching movies' and 'Studying' with OIS at their place of living.

Table 100 also shows that SOE is statistically associated with:

- the frequency IME students have all the activities at their place of living with LS, except for the activity 'Watching movies'
- the frequency IME students have all the activities at their place of living with other ME students
- the frequency IME students have all the activities at their place of living with OIS, except for the activities 'Play sports/games' and 'Watching movies'.

6.7 Study habits

6.7.1 Introduction

This section presents the analysis of the results regarding the frequency IME students are studying with LS, other ME students and OIS in various places. Furthermore, it presents the analysis of the results of nine statements which refer to reasons IME students prefer to interact with LS, other ME students and OIS.

6.7.2 Study with others

Q.50, 51 and 52: *The frequency IME students study with LS, ME and OIS in various places*

According to Table 101, 40.1% of IME students reported predominantly that they 'Rarely' study with LS at 'My place of residence' and 38.2% reported predominantly that they 'Rarely' study 'At friend's place' with LS. On the contrary, 'At University', 31.6% of IME students reported predominantly studying 'Several times per week' with LS.

Table 101 also shows that 35.5% and 29.6% of IME students predominately reported that they study 'Several times per week' with other ME students 'At University' and 'At my residence', respectively.

Finally, in regards to the frequency IME students study with OIS, as Table 101 shows, 42.1% of IME students reported studying with OIS 'At university', predominantly 'Several times per week'. However, 'At my residence' and 'At friend's place' IME students reported predominantly that they 'Rarely' study with OIS.

Table 101: The frequency IME students study in various places with LS, ME and OIS

Places for studying			Responses by category in %			Average Total in %
			LS	ME	OIS	
At university	Frequency	Rarely	16.4	11.2	9.9	12.5
		Monthly	14.5	10.5	17.8	14.2
		Weekly	28.9	27.6	26.3	27.6
		Several times per week	31.6	35.5	42.1	36.4
		Daily	8.6	15.1	3.9	9.2
	Total		100	100	100	100
At my residence	Frequency	Rarely	40.1	23.0	36.2	33.1
		Monthly	5.3	7.2	14.5	9.0
		Weekly	22.4	25.0	29.6	25.6
		Several times per week	27.0	29.6	18.4	25.0
		Daily	5.3	15.1	1.3	7.2
	Total		100	100	100	100
At friend's place	Frequency	Rarely	38.2	29.6	40.1	35.9
		Monthly	15.1	8.6	17.1	40.8
		Weekly	23.7	29.6	21.1	24.8
		Several times per week	23.0	27.6	19.7	23.4
		Daily	0	4.6	2.0	2.2
	Total		100	100	100	100

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

To establish whether there is an association between SOS, LOS and SOE, and frequency IME students study with LS, other ME and OIS at various places, Chi square tests for independence were conducted. The results of the tests, presented in Table 102, indicate:

- a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME study with LS 'At university' and 'At friend's house'
- a significant association between SOS and the frequency IME study with other ME and OIS in all places
- a significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students study with LS 'At university' and 'At place of residence'
- a significant association between LOS and the frequency IME students study with other ME and OIS 'At place of residence' and 'at friend's house'
- a significant association between SOE and the frequency IME students study with LS and OIS in all places
- a significant association between SOE and the frequency IME students study with other ME students 'At university'.

**Table 102: The association between SOS, LOS and SOE, and frequency
IME students study with LS, ME and OIS at various places**

Places	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)								
	Status of study			Length of stay			Standard of English		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
At university	.000	.000	.000	.000	NS	NS	.000	.005	.000
At place of residence	NS	.000	.001	.000	.002	.000	.002	NS	.005
At friend's house	.001	.001	.000	.NS	.001	.000	.001	NS	.003

Legend: LS-Local students; ME-Middle Eastern students; OIS-Other international students

6.7.3 Views about interaction for study purposes

Q.53: *The extent IME students agree/disagree with various statements*

The responses to nine questions concerning IME students' interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS are presented in Table 103. It can be seen that a very high percentage of IME students reported 'Neither agree nor disagree' with almost all the questions. However, approximately 45% reported that they 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' with the statement 'I feel LS are avoiding me'. To this end, IME students reported a relatively high preference for interacting with LS to learn about Australian culture and to improve their English language skills, as in both these questions around 70% of respondents reported that they 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree'.

Table 103: The frequency IME students agree/disagree with various statements regarding interactions with LS for study purposes

Statements	Responses %				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I prefer to interact with LS because I am interested to know more about Australian culture	1.3	.7	28.3	38.6	30.9
2. I prefer to interact with LS because they show interest to learn about my culture.	2.0	15.1	31.6	36.8	14.5
3. I prefer to interact with LS because they better know how to do assignments and other uni work.	3.3	17.8	44.1	33.6	1.3
4. I prefer to interact with LS in order to improve my English language skills.	0	7.2	17.8	34.9	40.1
5. I prefer to interact with LS because they are fun to work with.	.7	15.8	38.2	38.2	7.2
6. I prefer to interact with other ME Students and OIS because I have difficulties in understanding LS's English.	13.8	36.2	28.3	19.1	2.6
7. I prefer to interact with other ME and OIS because I feel more comfortable to do uni work with students whose level of English is similar to mine.	9.2	21.1	43.4	25.0	1.3
8. I feel LS are avoiding me.	25.0	20.4	35.5	15.8	3.3
9. I interact with any group of students who share similar interests with me.	9.2	17.1	33.6	31.6	8.6

To further explore the relationship between the items, a correlation matrix was generated, as shown in Table 104, and the values of Barlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy were calculated, as shown in Table 6.84. The purpose of the correlation matrix is to confirm the appropriateness of data for factor analysis, while the purpose of Barlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy is to establish whether the sample size is adequate for such analysis.

The correlation matrix, shown in Table 104, suggests that there are a considerable number of correlation coefficients with value greater than .3. This suggests the suitability of the data for factor analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Explicitly, Table 104 shows that there is a strong correlation between some sets of variables, as

well as medium and small correlation between other sets of variables. In regards to strong correlations the output in Table 104 shows:

- IME students' interest to know more about Australian culture is positively strongly related to their preference to interact with LS in order to improve their English language skills, as shown in the correlation matrix
- IME students' interest to know more about Australian culture is positively strongly related to the interest of LS to learn more about IME students' culture, as shown in the correlation matrix
- LS' interest to learn more about IME students' culture is positively strongly related to IME students' perception of LS as 'fun to work with', as shown in the correlation matrix.

The output in Table 104 also shows a medium correlation:

- between LS' interest to learn about IME students' culture and IME students' preference to interact with LS in order to improve their English language skills
- between IME students' preferences to interact with other ME students and OIS due to difficulties understanding LS' English and their preferences to do uni work with students with similar English/language skills
- between IME students' perception that LS are avoiding them and their preferences to interact with other ME students and OIS due to difficulties understanding LS' English
- between IME students' preferences to interact with LS because they know better how to do assignments and other uni work and IME students' perceptions that LS 'are fun to work with'
- between IME students' interest to know more about Australian culture and their perceptions that LS 'are fun to work with'.

- between IME students' preferences to interact with LS because they know better how to do assignments and other uni work and IME students' interest to know about Australian culture
- between IME students' preferences to interact with LS because they know better how to do assignments and other uni work and IME students' preference to interact with LS in order to improve their English language skills
- between IME students' perceptions that LS 'are fun to work with' and their preference to interact with LS in order to improve their English language skills

Table 104 also shows medium negative correlations between some sets of variables. Negative correlations imply that as the value of one variable increases the value of the other decreases. In this context, as the more IME students feel that LS are avoiding them, the less they prefer to interact in order to improve their language skills; they are less interested to interact with LS for the purpose to learn more about Australian culture; and less they believe that LS are interested to learn about their culture.

Table 104: Correlation matrix of the sets of variables included in Q.53

	1. I prefer to interact with LS because I am interested to know more about Australian culture.	2. I prefer to interact with LS because they show interest to learn about my culture.	3. I prefer to interact with LS because they better know how to do assignments and other uni work.	4. I prefer to interact with LS in order to improve my English language skills.	5. I prefer to interact with LS because they are fun to work with.	6. I prefer to interact with other ME students and OIS because I have difficulties understanding LS' English.	7. I prefer to interact with other ME students and OIS because I feel more comfortable to do uni work with students whose level of English is similar to mine.	8. I feel that LS are avoiding me.	9. I interact with any group of students who share similar interests with mine.
1. I prefer to interact with LS because I am interested to know more about Australian culture.	1.000	.594	.375	.614	.408	.003	.087	-.334	.166
2. I prefer to interact with LS because they show interest to learn about my culture.	.594	1.000	.257	.480	.510	-.072	.032	-.316	.060
3. I prefer to interact with LS because they better know how to do assignments and other uni work.	.375	.257	1.000	.365	.416	.264	.104	-.031	.202
4. I prefer to interact with LS in order to improve my English language skills.	.614	.480	.365	1.000	.346	-.057	.011	-.373	.153
5. I prefer to interact with LS because they are fun to work with.	.408	.510	.416	.346	1.000	.317	.136	-.096	.304
6. I prefer to interact with other ME students and OIS because I have difficulties in understanding local students' English.	.003	-.072	.264	-.057	.317	1.000	.446	.440	.247
7. I prefer to interact with other ME students and OIS because I feel more comfortable to do uni work with students whose level of English is similar to mine.	.087	.032	.104	.011	.136	.446	1.000	.159	.139
8. I feel LS are avoiding me.	-.334	-.316	-.031	-.373	-.096	.440	.159	1.000	.165
9. I interact with any group of students who share similar interests with me.	.166	.060	.202	.153	.304	.247	.139	.165	1.000

In regards to Barlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin's Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO), the output Table 105 suggests that the sample size is also adequate for factor analysis as p-value(.000) is <.05 and KMO value (.725) is > .6.

Table 105: KMO and Bartlett's Test

The KMO and Bartlett Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.725
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	391.036
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Thus, factor analysis was undertaken to explore a possible relationship or association between the items. Factor analysis "encompasses a variety of different, although related techniques" through which a large number of variables can be reduced to a smaller set of variables (factors)" (Pallant, 2004, p.156). The reduction of the variables enables the identification of the factors "that represent the underlying relationships among a group of related variables" (Pallant, 2004, p.156). In other words, factor analysis identifies common attributes that can comprise a factor.

Factor analysis was performed using SPSS software factor analysis tool and more specifically the principal component method (PCM). This method helps to determine the number of factors that best describe the underline relationships between the variables. In this context, PCM balances two conflicting needs: "the need to find a simple solution with as few factors as possible; and the need to explain as much of the variance in the original data as possible" (Pallant, 2007, p.182). The first principal component extracted accounts for the largest amount of variance with the successive components accounting for smaller amounts of variance.

In deciding upon the number of factors which should be retained, this researcher was assisted by the Kaiser's criterion method or otherwise called eigenvalue as well as by Catell's scree test. The eigenvalue of a factor represents the amount of the total variance explained by that factor. However, for a factor to be retained for a further investigation its eigenvalue must be 1.0 or more. Table 106, which presents the eigenvalues of all the factors, identifies only two factors with an eigenvalue of 1.0 and more. These two components (factors) explain a total of 55.72% of the variance with Component 1 contributing 33.24% of the variance and Component 2 contributing 22.47% of the variance.

Table 106: The eigenvalues of all factors included in Q.53

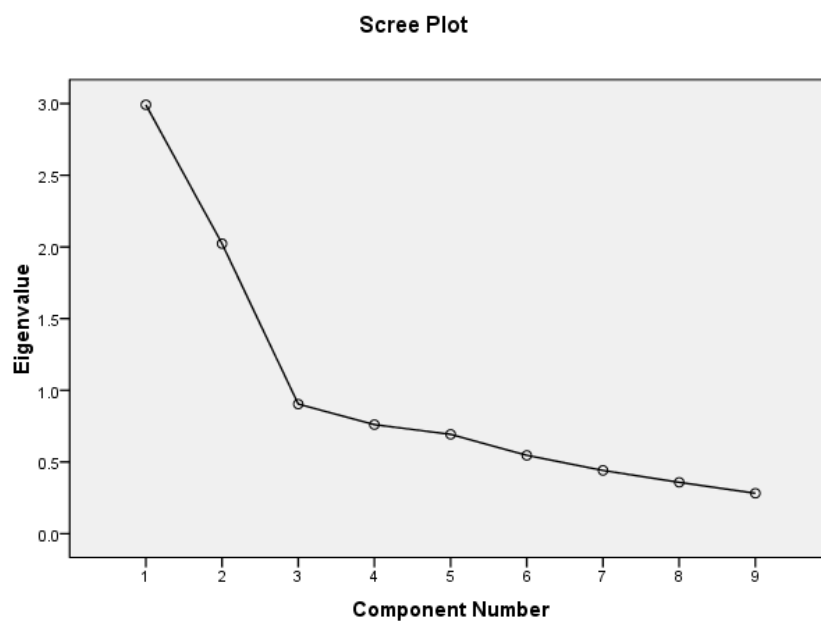
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.992	33.244	33.244	2.992	33.244	33.244
2	2.023	22.479	55.723	2.023	22.479	55.723
3	.904	10.045	65.768			
4	.761	8.451	74.219			
5	.693	7.698	81.917			
6	.546	6.071	87.987			
7	.441	4.902	92.889			
8	.358	3.981	96.870			
9	.282	3.130	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

In addition to Kaiser's criterion method, the Catell's scree test was used to graphically illustrate the variance underlying each of the factors. Figure 9 presents the scree plot of the Q.53 data with each factor represented on the x-axis as a component and its associated eigenvalue on the y-axis. The factors are arranged in the scree plot in descending order of eigenvalues. Typically, the first factors account for the majority of the variance. The selection of the number of factors is usually made where the scree graph changes direction. Only the components above the point where the scree plot changes direction are retained.

However, despite the fact that only two components score eigenvalue above the Kaiser's criterion of 1, the scree plot in Figure 9 indicates that there is a clear break between the second and third components, and another one after the fourth component.

Figure 9: Scree plot



Thus, the interpretation of four factor solutions was considered. The un-rotated loadings of each of the items on the four components, shown in Table 107, indicate that most of the items load quite strongly on Component 1 and 2 while few in Components 3 and 4.

Table 107: The Component Matrix

Component Matrix ^a				
Items	Component			
	1	2	3	4
1. I prefer to interact with LS because I am interested to know more about Australian culture.	.818			
4. I prefer to interact with LS in order to improve my English language skills.	.762			
2. I prefer to interact with LS because they show interest to learn about my culture.	.756			
5. I prefer to interact with LS because they are fun to work with.	.719			
3. I prefer to interact with LS because they better know how to do assignments and other uni work.	.606			-.534
6. I prefer to interact with other ME Students and OIS because I have difficulties in understanding local students' English.		.848		
8. I feel that LS are avoiding me.	-.375	.694		
7. I prefer to interact with other ME students and OIS because I feel more comfortable to do uni work with students whose level of English is similar to mine.		.583	-.660	.327
9. I interact with any group of students who share similar interests with mine.	.318	.461	.594	.546

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 4 components extracted.

To refine the factor solution and reduce the number of variables that have relatively high loadings on other factors, the Varimax rotation method was used. This method maximises the variance of the square loadings on the factor in all of the variables and presents a pattern of loadings in a manner that makes it much clearer which variables related to which factors.

In Table 108 are presented the eigenvalues values of all variables before factor extraction, after factor extraction and after factor rotation. As shown in Table 108, the values of the factors in the columns *Extraction sums of Squared Loadings* are the same before the extraction, except that the values for the discarded factors are not shown. However, in the columns *Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings* the values of the

factors have changed because rotation optimises the factor structure and consequently equalises the relative importance of the four factors. Thus, Component 1, which before the extraction accounted for 33.24% of variance after rotation, accounts for 29.18%. Similarly, Components 2, 3, 4 which before rotation accounted for 22.47%, 10.04% and 8.45% of variance, after rotation account respectively for 17.02%, 15.49% and 12.51% of variance.

Table 108: The loadings of the factors before and after rotation

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.992	33.244	33.244	2.992	33.244	33.244	2.626	29.183	29.183
2	2.023	22.479	55.723	2.023	22.479	55.723	1.532	17.028	46.211
3	.904	10.045	65.768	.904	10.045	65.768	1.395	15.496	61.707
4	.761	8.451	74.219	.761	8.451	74.219	1.126	12.512	74.219
5	.693	7.698	81.917						
6	.546	6.071	87.987						
7	.441	4.902	92.889						
8	.358	3.981	96.870						
9	.282	3.130	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

The loadings of the factors after rotation, presented in Table 109, indicate that there are five items which load above .3 on Component 1; three items on Component 2; two items on Component 3 and one item on Component 4. Ideally, there should be three or more items loading on each Component. However, since this is not the case a decision was taken to retain only two factors.

Table 109: Rotated component matrix

Items	Component loadings			
	1	2	3	4
1. I prefer to interact with Local Students because I am interested to know more about Australian culture.	.800			
2. I prefer to interact with Local Students because they show interest to learn about my culture.	.771			
3. I prefer to interact with Local Students in order to improve my English language skills.	.762			
4. I feel that Local Students are avoiding me.	-.687			
5. I prefer to interact with Local Students because they better know how to do assignments and other uni work.		.828		
6. I prefer to interact with Local Students because they are fun to work with.	.446	.570		
7. I prefer to interact with International ME Students and other international students because I feel more comfortable to do uni work with students whose level of English is similar to mine.			.948	
8. I prefer to interact with International ME Students and other international students because I have difficulties in understanding local students' English.		.544	.626	
9. I interact with any group of students who share similar interests with mine.				.971

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

These factors are:

- IME students' preference for interactions
- IME student perceptions

6.8 IME students' perceptions

6.8.1 Introduction

This section analyses the results of the questions which refer to IME students' perceptions about LS and OIS. In addition, it analyses the extent these perceptions are influenced by cultural norms.

6.8.2 Perceptions of other students

Q.54 and 55: *The extent IME students agree/disagree with some statements regarding the perceptions of LS and OIS about them.*

According to Table 110, a very high percentage of IME students reported 'Neither agree nor disagree' with the seven statements which refer to the perceptions of LS and OIS. However, despite the predominantly neutral response to statements 1, 2, 4 and 5, in regards to perceptions of LS, nearly 45% of IME students altogether 'Agree' and 'Strongly agree' with statement 1 - 'LS like me for what I am',- and statement 5- 'LS are open minded and interested to learn about my culture'. Similarly, nearly 45% of IME students altogether 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' with statement 2- 'LS avoid contact with me' and statement 4- 'LS consider me different because of my culture'.

In regards to statements 6 and 7, 50% of IME students reported predominantly that they 'Agree' with the statement 'LS help me with my work when I ask' while more than 40% predominantly 'Agree' with the statements 'LS are understanding of my beliefs'.

Concerning the perceptions of OIS, a very high percentage of the respondents also reported that they 'Neither agree nor disagree' with the seven statements. However, despite that 42.8% and 36.8% of IME students reported predominantly that 'Neither

agree nor disagree' with statement 2- 'OIS avoid contact with me' and statement 4- 'OIS consider me different because of my culture'- more than 40% altogether 'Disagree' and 'Strongly disagree' with both statements. For the remaining statements, IME students reported predominantly their agreement.

Table 110: The extent IME students agree/disagree with various statements regarding the perception of LS and OIS

Categories	Statements	Responses in %				
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
LS	1. LS like me for what I am	0	2.0	41.4	25.0	31.6
	2. LS avoid contact with me	16.4	29.6	41.4	9.9	2.6
	3. LS help me with my work when I ask	.7	10.5	32.2	50.0	6.6
	4. LS consider me different because of my culture	17.1	28.9	34.2	19.7	0
	5. LS are open minded and interested to learn about my culture	1.3	5.9	43.4	32.9	16.4
	6. LS are understanding of my beliefs	0	8.6	31.6	41.4	18.4
	7. LS are understanding of my customs	0	7.9	31.6	45.4	15.1
OIS	1. OIS like me for what I am	0	1.3	38.2	49.3	11.2
	2. OIS avoid contact with me	14.5	34.9	42.8	7.9	0
	3. OIS help me with my work when I ask	0	13.8	36.8	45.4	3.9
	4. OIS consider me different because of my culture	15.1	27.6	36.8	20.4	0
	5. OIS are open minded and interested to learn about my culture	.7	13.8	34.9	34.9	15.8
	6. OIS are understanding of my beliefs	0	8.6	36.2	39.5	15.8
	7. OIS are understanding of my customs	0	7.9	34.9	42.8	14.5

Legend: LS-Local students; ME: other Middle East; OIS: other international students

In this context, the descriptive statistics in Table 111 and 112 indicate that there is a very little difference in responses of IME students in relation to the perceptions of LS and OIS.

Table 111: The mean and standard deviation of IME students' responses regarding their perception of LS

IME students' perceptions of LS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
LS: Like me for what I am	152	3.86	.892
LS: Avoid contact with me	152	2.53	.969
LS: Help me with my work when I ask	152	3.51	.797
LS: Do consider me different because of my culture	152	2.57	.994
LS: Are open- minded and interested to learn about my culture	152	3.57	.881
LS: Are understanding of my beliefs	152	3.70	.869
LS: Are understanding of my customs	152	3.68	.827
Valid N (listwise)	152		

Table 112: The mean and standard deviation of IME students' responses regarding their perception of OIS

IME students' perceptions of OIS	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
OIS: Like me for what I am	152	3.70	.679
OIS: Avoid contact with me	152	2.44	.836
OIS: Help me with my work when I ask	152	3.39	.773
OIS: Do consider me different because of my culture	152	2.62	.975
OIS: Are open-minded and interested to learn about my culture	152	3.51	.942
OIS: Are understanding of my beliefs	152	3.62	.852
OIS: Are understanding of my customs	152	3.64	.826
Valid N (listwise)	152		

In addition, paired-samples T tests were performed in order to establish whether or not there is a significant difference between the mean scores for LS and OIS. The results of these tests, as shown in Table 113, indicate that there is not statistically significant difference in the means scores in almost all the statements for LS and OIS, as the probability value is substantially greater than the specified alpha value of .05. However, there is a weak significance in the statements:

- 'LS: Like me for what I am' (M=3.86, SD=.892) and 'OIS: Like me for what I am' (MD=3.70, SD= .679), $t(151) = 2.519$, $p < .05$

- 'LS: Help me with my work when I ask' (M=3.51, SD=.797) and 'OIS: Help me with my work when I ask' (M=3.39, SD=.773), $t(151) = 2.033$, $p < .05$

Table 113: The results of paired sample tests

Statements	Paired differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
LS: Like me for what I am OIS: Like me for what I am	.158	.773	.063	.034	.282	2.519	151	.013
LS: Avoid contact with me OIS: Avoid contact with me	.086	1.035	.084	-.080	.251	1.018	151	.310
LS: Help me with my work when I ask OIS: Help me with my work when I ask	.118	.718	.058	.003	.234	2.033	151	.044
LS: Do consider me different because of my culture. OIS: Do consider me different because of my culture	-.059	.978	.079	-.216	.098	-.746	151	.457
LS: Are open- minded and interested learn about my culture. OIS: Are open- minded and interested learn about my culture	.059	.922	.075	-.089	.207	.791	151	.430
LS: Are understanding of my beliefs OIS: Are understanding of my beliefs	.072	.831	.067	-.061	.205	1.074	151	.285
LS: Are understanding of my customs OIS: Are understanding of my customs	.039	.629	.051	-.061	.140	.774	151	.440

Legend: LS-Local students; ME: other Middle East; OIS: other international students

6.8.3 Views about western customs

Q. 56: *The extent IME students like/dislike various western customs*

According to Table 114, a very high percentage of IME students reported 'Neither agree nor disagree' with the 11 items composing Q.56. Specifically, a very high percentage of IME students reported that they predominantly 'Neither agree nor

disagree' with the items 'Western religions' (74.3%), 'Western food' (59.9%), 'Dress code' (48.0%) and 'Lifestyle' (46.1%). These items are the ones which are very different in Middle Eastern culture. In this respect IME students, in order to avoid expressing their disagreement, have chosen to be 'politically correct'. This can explain their neutral response. Despite the neutral response in the foregoing items, 42.1% of IME students reported predominantly to 'Dislike very much' the 'Use alcohol' while 40.8% predominantly 'Like very much' the 'Informality between teacher and students' in educational settings. In addition, respondents reported predominantly that they 'Like' the 'Role of women' (51.3%), 'The employment opportunities for women' (43.3%) and the 'Equal gender status' in western societies.

Table 114: The extent IME students like/dislike various items related to western culture

Western customs	Responses				
	Dislike very much	Dislike	Neither like nor dislike	Like	Like very much
Equal gender status	0	5.9	36.8	39.5	17.8
The role of women	0	7.2	28.3	51.3	13.8
The employment opportunities for women	1.3	8.6	31.6	43.4	15.1
Freedom in choice of partner	1.3	9.9	40.1	31.6	17.1
The informality between teacher and students	1.3	9.9	15.8	32.2	40.8
Dress code	2.0	10.5	48.0	32.2	7.2
Lifestyle	2.0	11.2	46.1	35.5	5.3
Use of alcohol	42.1	23.0	33.6	1.3	0
Western food	9.2	15.1	59.9	11.8	3.9
Western entertainment	3.3	24.3	39.5	27.0	5.9
Western religions	4.6	13.8	74.3	7.2	0

To establish whether or not IME students' responses vary in relation to their SOS, LOS and SOE cross Chi square tests were performed. The results of the tests, presented in Table 115 indicate:

- a significant association between SOS and the aspects of 'The employment opportunities for women', 'Freedom in choice of partner', 'The informality between teacher and students', 'Use of alcohol', 'Western food' and 'Western entertainment'
- a significant association between LOS and the aspects of 'Freedom in choice of partner', 'Use of alcohol', 'Western food' and 'Western religions'
- a significant association between SOE and the aspects of 'The role of women', 'The employment opportunities for women', 'The informality between teacher and students', 'Lifestyle', 'Use of alcohol', 'Western entertainment' and 'Western religions'.

Table 115: The results of Chi square regarding the association between SOS, LOS and SOE and various aspects of western culture

Western customs	Chi square tests		
	SOS	LOS	SOE
Equal gender status	NS	NS	NS
The role of women	NS	NS	.025
The employment opportunities for women	.050	NS	.000
Freedom in choice of partner	.014	.005	NS
The informality between teacher and students	.000	NS	.000
Dress code	NS	NS	.022
Lifestyle	NS	NS	.022
Use of alcohol	.000	.000	.031
Western food	.012	.002	NS
Western entertainment	.005	NS	.023
Western religions	NS	.031	.009

Q.57: *The extent of IME students' perceptions towards LS influenced by some aspects of their culture*

In regards to the extent IME students' perceptions towards the LS are influenced by the cultural aspects presented in Table 116, they reported predominantly that their perceptions are 'Moderately' influenced by all these aspects except for the 'Religious practices'. Religious practices', as reported, do 'Not at all' influence their perception towards LS.

Table 116: The extent IME students' perceptions towards LS are influenced by aspects of their culture

Cultural aspects	Responses in %				
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	A lot	A great deal
Gender relationships	18.4	13.2	39.5	16.4	12.5
Gender status	17.8	18.4	37.5	19.1	7.2
Dress code	21.1	15.1	43.4	20.4	0
Religious practices	45.5	13.2	27.6	10.5	3.3
Lifestyle	15.1	21.7	34.9	17.8	10.5

To establish whether or not the frequency of their responses differ in relation to IME students' SOS, LOS and SOE, Chi square tests were performed. The results of these tests, presented in Table 117, indicate that the:

- SOS is significantly associated with the extent various aspects of the culture influence IME students perceptions towards LS, except for the 'Gender status' and 'Dress code'
- LOS is significantly associated with the extent various aspects of the culture influence IME students perceptions towards LS, except for 'Religious practices'
- SOE is significantly associated with the extent various aspects of the culture influence IME students perceptions towards LS.

Table 117: The association between SOS, LOS and SOE and, the extent various aspects of IME students culture influence their perceptions about LS

Cultural aspects	Results of Chi square tests (p- values)		
	SOS	LOS	SOE
Gender relationships	.021	.000	.005
Gender status	NS	.002	.000
Dress code	NS	.000	.002
Religious practices	.004	.015	.005
Lifestyle	.003	.000	.000

6.9 Summary of the results

This section provides a summary of the results using the main sub-sections of CCIS. Table 118 presents the results from the examination of six variables on IME students' level of interaction on-campus and off-campus with LS, other ME students and OIS. The results in this table indicate the following:

- The interactions between LS and IME students tended to be greater for on-campus than off-campus
- Interactions between IME students and other ME students decreases for some variables from daily to weekly whilst for other variables weekly and daily interactions were equally reported.

Table 118: The influence of various variables on IME students' level of interaction, on-campus and off-campus, with LS, other ME students and OIS

Variables	Level of Interactions on-campus			Level of interactions off-campus		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Age	Stw	Weekly	Daily	Weekly	Weekly/Daily	Weekly
Gender	Stw	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Weekly/Daily	Weekly
Marital status	Stw	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Status of study	Stw	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly
Length of stay	Stw	Daily	Daily	Weekly	Weekly/Daily	Weekly
Standard of English	Stw	Daily	Daily	Weekly/Rarely	Weekly/Daily	Weekly

Legend: Stw-Several times per week; LS-Local students; ME: other Middle East; OIS: other international students

Table 119 presents the results from the examination of six variables on IME students' level of difficulty in interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS. In this table when neither difficult nor easy was the most frequently reported value, the researcher presents the next more frequently reported value. This table shows that in regards to six variables, IME students found it was:

- neither difficult nor easy to interact and develop networks with LS
- very easy to interact and establish networks with other ME students
- neither difficult nor easy to interact and easy to establish networks with OIS.

Table 119: The influence of various variables on IME students' level of difficulty in interactions and establishment of networks with LS, other ME students and OIS

Variables	Level of difficulty in interactions			Level difficulty in establishing networks		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Age	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Nd nor e/ Easy	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Easy
Gender	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Nd nor e/ Easy	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Easy
Marital status	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Nd nor e/ Easy	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Easy
Status of study	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Nd nor e/ Easy	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Easy
Length of stay	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Nd nor e/ Easy	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Easy
Standard of English	Ndnor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Nd nor e/ Easy	Nd nor e/ Difficult	Very easy	Easy

Legend: Nd nor e: Neither difficult nor easy; LS-Local students; ME: other Middle East;

OIS: other international students

Table 120 presents the results of the examination of six variables on IME students' number of friends and on the dependency of networks with LS, other ME students and OIS. According to this table the number of IME students' friends as a follows:

- 1-5 friends from LS
- 6-10 friends from OIS
- 11-20 friends from other ME students

In addition, Table 120 shows that IME students depend:

- Weekly on their networks with LS
- Daily on their networks with other ME students
- Several times per week on their networks with OIS

Table 120: The influence of various variables on IME students' number of friends and on the dependency of the networks with LS, other ME students and OIS

Variables	Number of friends			Dependency of networks		
	LS	ME	OIS	LS	ME	OIS
Age	1-5	11-20	6-10	Weekly	Daily	STW
Gender	1-5	11-20	6-10	Weekly	Daily	STW
Marital status	1-5	11-20	6-10	Weekly	Daily	STW
Status of study	1-5	11-20	6-10	Weekly	Daily	STW
Length of stay	1-5	11-20	6-10	Weekly	Daily	STW
Standard of English	1-5	11-20	6-10	Weekly	Daily	STW

Legend: LS-Local students; ME: other Middle East; OIS: other international students

Table 121 presents the results of the examination of the influence of culture, religion and language on the establishment of networks with LS, other ME students and OIS.

This table shows the following:

- Culture influences on IME students networks is similar with both LS and OIS.
- Religion influences very little IME students' networks with all the group of students.
- Language influences very much IME students' networks with LS, OIS and very little their networks with other ME students as could be expected.

Table 121: The extent culture, religion and language influence the establishment of IME students' networks with LS, other ME students and OIS

Aspects	The extent culture, religion and language influence the establishment of IME students' networks		
	LS	ME	OIS
Culture	Very much/very little	Very little	Very much
Religion	Very little	Very little	Very little
Language	Very much	Very little	Very much

Legend: LS-Local students; ME: other Middle East; OIS: other international students

Table 122 presents the results of the examination of the influence of various aspects on the establishment of IME students' networks with LS, other ME students and OIS. This table shows that all the aspects influence similarly the establishment of IME students' networks with LS and OIS.

Table 122: The degree various aspects influence the establishment of IME students' networks with LS, and OIS

Aspects	The degree various aspects influence the establishment of IME students' networks	
	LS	OIS
Type of entertainment	Very much	Very much
Male-female relationships	Very much	Very much
Food	Very much	Very much
Family values	Moderately	Moderately
Religion	Very little	Very little
Social relationships	Very much	Very much

Legend: LS-Local students; OIS: other international students

Table 123 presents the results of the examination of some cultural aspects on the extent these influence their perceptions about LS. As this table shows, all these aspects moderately influence their perception of LS.

Table 123: The extent to which perceptions of IME about LS is influenced by aspects of their culture

Cultural aspects	The extent perceptions of IME about LS is influenced by aspects of their culture
Gender relationships	Moderately
Gender status	Moderately
Dress code	Moderately
Religious practices	Not at all
Lifestyle	Moderately

Legend: LS-Local students

Chapter 7 considers the results of this chapter together with the results from the focus group and interview data.

Chapter 7: Discussion of the results

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the results presented in Chapter 6 in terms of the research questions. Namely:

RQ.1 - What is the level and the nature of International Middle Eastern students' interactions with local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS)?

RQ.2 - What are the social networks of IME students?

The first part of this Chapter addresses Research Question 1 by drawing on the results of Sections A, C and D of the online survey along with the focus group sessions and individual in-depth interviews. The second part addresses, Research Question 2 by drawing on the results of Sections B and E of the online survey along with the results of the focus groups and interviews.

7.2 Research question 1

7.2.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, the literature referring to international university students' interactions with other students is concentrated predominantly on international students from Asian origin. However, there is only a limited research investigating the interactions of international students from ME origin. The discussion that follows concerns IME students' interactions in Australia with Local

Student (LS), other Middle Eastern students (ME) and Other International Students (OIS).

The discussion about the level and nature of IME students' interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS draws upon the results regarding:

- the frequency of IME students interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS
- the importance of interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS
- the frequency of activities used by IME students to interact with LS, other ME students and OIS
- the frequency various places are used by IME students ' for interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS.

These aspects are considered in the following sections:

7.2.2 The frequency of IME students' interactions on-campus and off-campus with LS, Other ME students and OIS.

The frequency of IME students' interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS was measured by the number of times they interact on-campus and off-campus with members of each group. The results of Q.2 of the CCIS, presented in Chapter 6, indicates that on-campus, IME students on a daily basis predominantly interact with other ME students and secondary with OIS, while daily interactions with LS are by far less frequent. However, it is important to note that the average number of times IME students interact on-campus with OIS ($\bar{X}=3.81$) is higher than the average number of times they interact with other ME students ($\bar{X}=3.69$) and LS ($\bar{X}=3.27$). This finding is supported by the results of some items in Q. 14, Q. 15 and Q. 16, which respectively refer to the frequency of IME students interactions with LS, other ME and OIS in on-campus context. As shown in Table 124, at 'University's food court' the average number of times IME students interact with other ME students is

higher than the average number they interact with OIS and LS. However, in ‘Lecture venues’ and ‘Tutorial sessions’ the average number of times IME students interact with OIS is higher than the average number of times they interact with other ME students and LS.

Table 124: Interactions of IME students’ on-campus with LS, other ME students and OIS

Interactions at on-campus context	Mean values		
	LS	Other ME	OIS
Lecture venues	3.09	3.20	3.27
Tutorial sessions	3.32	3.38	3.43
University’s food court	2.95	3.41	2.95

Limited interactions of IME students’ on-campus continue also outside the university. As the results of Q.3, presented in Chapter 6 indicate, off-campus on a daily basis they predominantly interact with other ME students while the interactions with OIS and LS are far less frequent. Furthermore, these results show that the average number of times IME students interact off-campus with other ME students is higher than the average number of times they interact with LS and OIS.

In the focus group session, it was evident that the lack of interactions with LS and the more frequent interactions with OIS, in some on-campus places, can be attributed to a number of factors including the limited number of LS and the abundance of international students in some courses, the limited number of IME students in some courses, the limited attendance of LS in lectures and the self-separation of the students in tutorials in local and international.

Clarification and explanation of the survey data was provided by the focus group and interview data. This is highlighted by student T, an Emirati student enrolled in a Bachelor of Engineering, who remarked:

We do not have many local students in my course. Around 70% of the students in tutorials and lectures are international students. Most of them are from India and Asian countries, like China, Korea...But there are students from Pakistan and Latin America. There are just 3 or 4 international students in the whole course from Arabic speaking countries.

Another student from the UAE, enrolled in a Bachelor of Accounting, provided the following comment on the lack of interactions with LS on-campus:

In my course there are many Australian students. But they mainly join each other and the international students join each other too. When an Australian student tries to approach a group of international students, in this case we know that the Australian has no Australian friends. In this case he just forced himself to be with us.

Commenting on the lack of interactions with LS and the predominant interactions with OIS over interactions with other ME students, A, an Emirati student enrolled in an engineering degree, pointed out:

I agree with T. In my course there are not many local students; mainly Asian international students. In some labs there are few students from ME, but when I have project I like to join Asians. They are very smart in maths and physics. Some have trouble with English, so we help each other.

As student S, an Emirati student enrolled in Business degree, noted:

In the beginning of the semester there were many LS in tutorials but not in lectures. As lectures are available on the web it is easy for LS to study. But in tutorial you do not see many LS. For them attendance is not important as it is for us. If we do not attend we have problem with our visas and sponsors. Often tutorials run with international students. Many of LS are working and attend the tutorials when we have assignment.

In regards to the interactions with OIS student F from the Emirates in the face-to-face interview noted:

In the subjects I am doing now there are no other international students from Middle East. I am the only one. So, in classes I interact mainly with OIS. Sometimes I interact with some Aussies.

In regards to IME students' interactions on-campus, student M from Bahrain enrolled in a Business degree, in the face-to-face interview pointed out his preference to interact with other ME students. As he explained:

From my country there are not many students in Melbourne. In university however, there are some students from Emirates. Even when I do not have classes I go to university to meet with them and have lunch or kick a ball in the park. I feel happy because I speak my language and I can tell them my problems. We have similar culture. Sometimes I have lunch with OIS but with them it is different. We talk about assignments and exams or about soccer.

However, when it comes to interactions in tutorials in the interviews, student M noted:

Sometimes in tutorials there are only few LS but other times plenty. There are many when we have group assignment and have to choose the group to work with. Some local students we do see them often and when come to classes they sit with other LS and after the class finishes they are in a hurry to go. In the classroom it seems we are two different groups; it does not bother me because there are three or four students from Emirates and plenty of Indians and Asians so I mix with them. LS, group with other LS and international students we stick together. With some of international students we were together since diploma. So I know them well.

In regards to lack of interactions between LS and international students in tutorials, student M also pointed out that the educational system somehow promotes the segregation of the two groups. As he pointed out:

When we have group assignments, tutors ask us to choose the members of our groups. So what we do is: we choose international students because we know them better and LS choose LS. I know that for Australians it is easier to work with other Australians because we have difficulties with English. But this way we have not opportunity to improve our English language, to learn how Australian students think and let them know how we deal with the same problem in different way. But, if tutors were selecting the member of the groups and mix Australian students with international students it might be a better way. We could not reject others and in this way we could exchange ideas from different perspective.

No doubt, lectures and tutorial sessions constitute an environment where interactions with others could be initiated and could lead to friendships. However, this is not the case with IME students. As the results of Q.4 indicate, the vast majority of IME students initially attempted a contact with LS; nevertheless, as they report only a small percentage of LS attempted contact with them. As a result, 42.1% of IME students reported having 1-5 friends from the category LS while 36.2% reported having 6-10 friends from the category OIS. However, 36.8% reported having 11-20 friends from the category OIS. The lesser number of friends from the category LS indicates that the attempts for contact with LS was not successful. As student S commented in the focus group session:

In my first day of university I introduced myself to some students in the tutorial. I was thinking that if I interact with LS I could improve my English. However, I believe that most of the LS did not even remember my name. Instead of 'hi T..' they say 'Hi mate'. There is a kind of racism with international students. And it is obvious that they try to avoid contact with international students.

Similar comments were made also by student A, in the focus groups:

Interactions with most of LS do not move beyond 'hi mate' and 'Bye mate'. At the start, this made me feel awkward but now does not bother me. You know, there are lots of

international students in the tutorials... However, there are three Australian students, two of them from Italian background and one from French background. I am happy to work with them. Anyway, outside university I spend my free time with my own people, students from Emirates and Middle East. I do this mainly because we have our habits of spending our time. If I go out with Australian students they may be will ask me to go clubbing or drinking. These are outside my culture. I cannot enjoy even if it's enjoyable for others.

A student from UAE, who has been in Australia for five years, noted also:

Australian students are not racists with international students. The fact that we not mix is not because they are racists. They have their own group of friends as we do. In my tutorials I have students whose parents migrated to Australia from Asia, Europe and Middle East. They are nice to us. But they are working and try to complete their own assignments. Also LS have their family here. They have to spend time with their family. Scholarship students from my country are not working and we are alone. We have plenty of time to do our assignments and to do whatever we want.

The bi-cultural background of LS, however, seems to assist IME students' interactions. A few other students in the interview mentioned spending time on campus with LS from European, Asian or Middle Eastern backgrounds.

In a face-to-face interview, a Qatari student Z revealed that:

The names of couple students sounded Arabic. So I approached them and when we had the same classes often we used to sit together in lectures and tutorials. This was very good for me because I had someone to help if I did not understand the lecturers or tutors.

Also student A, in the interview, noted:

I mix with few LS from my course. One I think is either German or Dutch. I am not sure. I mix also with some LS from Middle East. We are not friends. I see them every

day at university during classes, but only during classes. Sometimes we go for lunch or go to the library to study. Outside uni I do not usually talk much with local students. I find it hard to talk to them; some, if I can say that, are racists. They are kind of lazy. Leave everything to last minute.

In the focus group discussions a few students pointed out that at uni they mix few times with LS from bi-cultural background. In this respect student T pointed out:

I mix a lot with students from my country or other Arab countries. But also mix with other international students and LS from European background or Middle East background. They approached me and introduced themselves and tried to be friends with me... We were like happy to work together and we scored a good mark; 18 out of 20 and we were very happy... I used to spend two to three hours a week with them. We had discussions about the news and how the world is going; like what is happening in Iraq and the global warming, general issues. But now we are in different subjects so I do not see them much.

He was even attending parties in LS family home. As he commented:

Couple of times, I have been invited in their houses. Birthday parties for their parents. I did go. There are some similarities between my culture and their culture. But there are some differences too, which make it obvious they come from Europe. The difference is the way of celebrating with drinking. But the way they welcoming people to their houses, introduce people inside their houses, attitude with the visitor is something that is similar with my country.

Thus, it becomes evident that IME students try to establish some contact with local students especially with students from bi-cultural background. The data suggests that it would seem that sometimes, few students try to even be open-minded and try to go out of their way to experience other things not familiar to them. However, data indicates that IME students predominantly interact with other Middle Eastern students.

7.2.3 The importance of interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS

The data from chapter 6 indicates that IME students' predominantly interact with students from their own countries or international students from other Middle Eastern countries. However, for some purposes they consider it important to interact with LS. As the results of Q.17, 18 and 19 shows, nearly three quarters of IME students give high importance to the interactions with LS for the purpose of using English language while more than half for studying.

However, for the activities with a social nature their responses are divided. As the data in Chapter 6 reveals, some students predominantly consider interactions for such activities to be important while others moderately important. Nevertheless, more than 50% of IME students reported that interactions with LS for friendship, study purposes and for playing sports as either important or very important. Furthermore, the results of these questions show that IME students predominantly consider their interactions with other ME students as important or very important for friendships and the purpose of having fun. Meanwhile, interactions with OIS are considered important for studying purposes and for using English language. Clarification, explanation and further insight of the survey data was provided by focus group and by interview data.

The focus group discussions with students revealed that all IME students considered that interactions with LS would help them to improve their English.

As student M commented:

I am sure if we mix with LS we could improve our English. But because we do not mix much we have problems when we do assignments. I mix with a lot of international students and they also have problems with English so I cannot improve my English. I do not mean that I have difficulties to communicate when I go out but I really have problem with my assignments.

Furthermore, student T supported this comment noting:

If I was interacting more with Australian students I could improve my English. But it is ok for me. I study engineering and everything is maths and physics. Science is the same for all. But if I was doing something like business management it was important to mix with Australians to improve my English. For something related to how things work in Australia, interacting with local students is something that benefits us. For my studies, I think there is no need to interact with Australian students...When, I talk in the class my English is not good. But I have my own rule. If I got grammar mistake or spelling mistake in some words, I am not an English native speaker; students know that; so I keep going, just keep going. They do not pay attention to my language.

In the interview, student A explained that:

I have improved my English because I mix at uni with LS and with couple of Aussie friends outside uni. I believe that I have improved a lot my English. In the tutorials because we interact mainly with other international students we cannot learn proper English. Before, I had difficulties understanding Australian accent. Now I do not have problem. I speak like Aussies.

The importance of interactions with LS for the purpose of improving English language skills was also demonstrated in the interviews with Libyan students. As student M noted:

I finished my Master in Australia and recently my PhD. But still my level of English is not as good as it should be. Interactions with Australians help us to improve our English. It is very important to interact with LS because if you mix with people from your country you talk your language and if you mix with people from other countries their English accent is different. If you do not mix with locals sometimes in the discussion you cannot understand their accent. But there are advantages and disadvantages when interact with LS. But the advantages are more than the

disadvantages. But in my life the first thing is my religion. If by not mixing with locals, I cannot improve my language, it is not a problem.

Another interviewee further explained:

When I was doing my masters I preferred to mix in the class with LS. I was thinking since I could not go out with them to clubs I could interact with them in the class to improve my language and learn something about the culture here. But I end up mixing with international students like me. However, when I was doing my PhD my colleagues were not keeping distance from me... Australians are very helpful. In the beginning when I started Labs they felt that I needed help and without asking they came to me and asked me what you want. They are very helpful.

A Jordanian student pursuing a PhD in hospitality, noted also:

It is very important to interact with Australian to learn the language. But unfortunately this is not possible all the times for me. I interact more with them in my professional place because we have some Australians study with us. So when we have time we chat about many things. This helps me to improve my language. But I do not go out with them.

The importance of interactions with LS for the purpose of improving English language skills was also demonstrated in the interview with a Libyan student. As student H noted:

When I was doing my Master I did not mix at all with Australians. I see them in the labs but everyone was working alone. Not interaction at all. I said hi and they said hi too. That's all. In some way it is because of me. I did not want to interact with them. My English is not in a good level. If I was mixing with Australians I could improve it. For me the difference in culture was a problem to mix with Australians. I used to mix with some international students who were Muslims...Now I mix with my supervisor in the university but I never go out with him.

In regards to interactions with LS, other ME students and OIS for the purpose of studying, as the results of the Q.17, 18, and 19 indicate IME students predominantly consider it important and very important to study with LS (59.9%) and OIS (48.7%) over other Middle East students (45.3%). However, despite this, the results of Q.50, 51 and 52 show that in the university the majority of the students are studying with OIS. This is evident also in the results of Q.14, 15 and 16 where 43.4% of IME students reported going sometimes to the library with OIS in comparison to 36.8% and 34.9% who respectively reported going sometimes to the library with LS and other ME students.

In the focus group session, student S, noted:

I prefer to study with my own people, like Arab people from Middle East. But because there are not many in my class I go to library to study with OIS Pakistan, India or Latin countries like Mexico and Brazil. The chance is Asian students.

Also student T, in the focus group discussions pointed out that:

Me too, I like to study with people from my country. But as I said Asian are very good in maths and physics while, I face some difficulties in these areas. So, I study with them in the university. We go to the library with few international students. Local students study separate but last semester when I was mixing with three LS students' from Italian and French background sometimes we study together in the library and sometimes they use to come to my place.

However, IME students' low level of interaction with LS and their tendency to interact with other ME students or other international students is not an Australian phenomenon. Mostafa's (2006), study of Arab students' experiences in a Canadian university and Alreshoud and Koeske's (1997) study of Saudi-Arabian students' experiences in the US, both reveal that interactions between IME students and LS are limited. Mostafa claims that Middle Eastern students prefer to interact with students from their own origin or from countries "having similar cultural and habitual

principles" (p. 47). Alreshoud and Koeske also found that Saudi-Arabian students 'seldom' or 'sometimes' spend their free time with American students and show a 'little' or 'somewhat little' desire of contact with them. They rather prefer to have contact with other ME students with whom they create a type of sub-cultural group. However, the low level of interactions between IME students and LS does not take place in western countries. As Pandian's (2008) study of IME student's experiences in a Malaysian university reveals IME students' level of interactions with Malaysian students is also low despite they demonstrated the desire for a greater contact.

7.2. 4. The frequency of activities used by IME students' to interact with LS, other ME students and OIS

In the current study, the results of Q.4 indicate that IME students initially demonstrated a desire for contact with LS. Explicitly, more than half of respondents reported initiating contact with LS. Despite their desire for contact with LS on-campus, IME students reported that off-campus they do not socialise much outside their culture.

The results of Q.8, 9 and 10 suggest that for most of the activities with social nature IME students predominantly report often and very often interactions with other ME students. However, for these types of activities they predominantly report that they sometimes interact with LS and OIS. However, nearly an equal percentage of IME students reported study for exams with LS or other ME students. But, for doing assignments, going to library and sharing lecture notes, 41.4% of IME students reported predominantly interacting sometimes with OIS.

Insights into the survey data are provided from the focus group and interviews data. For instance, student M in the focus group session pointed out the preference of IME students to do assignments with OIS. As he explained:

In my last semester, I had problem to finish one assignment. I was in a group project with two Australian students. But when the project finished the lecturer told us that we have to write the assignment individually, not as group. I tried to do it by myself, like to complete it, but at the last stage I couldn't finish it because I was not sure whether it was done correctly. I asked one of the local students in my group, if he could help me with it. I knew he already handed his assignment in; but he told me he cannot help me finish it. In a way, he ignored me.

He further noted:

Some of my friends told me to "not rely on Australian students. They will not help you at last stage". After this happened to me I believe it. I was upset but then I ignored him. So when I need help I ask other international students. We have similarities in the way we studying and the way of thinking.

However, student S added:

Australian girls are more helpful than Australian guys. It is easier for me to be friends with local girls in all my classes. I find Australian girls more, more welcoming than the Australian guys.

However, student A, a student from the Emirates reflected:

At university I have only one local friend but I have friends who are international students. My local friend is Asian. He comes to my place or we go for lunch or dinner. He is helping me when I have problems with assignments. To be honest he is the only one I ask for help when I need. Other LS do not offer help. Even if you ask them for help never help. They do not even help each other... Outside university I have other group of friends. I spend time with two Aussie friends. But they are not students from university...But, I have also Emirati friends.

In the focus group session student S, noted that:

I study with international students from India and Pakistan. If I need help I ask first students from my country. If they cannot help me I ask other international students. If they cannot help me I have two options; one option is to ask them if they know someone who can help me; second option is to look for a private tutor. But if my friends from India and Pakistan can help me they do it.

An Emirati student in the focus group had a negative attitude regarding the way LS approach their uni work:

Australian students leave everything last minute. I was with Australian students for one group assignment. I did not know the students from before. I had miserable time because they relied on me. I was doing my part and they keep asking me 'can you do this', 'can you do that because we are busy with other assignments'. At the end I have done all the assignment on my own. If I have not done it at the end all group would receive zero. For me is easier to work with other international students.

Another student also commented that Australian students are reliable with the time of meetings but not reliable with their work:

The good thing with them is that they respect the time. Yes, they respect the time of the meeting. If we have a meeting they are there on time; but the problem is they respect the time but they come up to us sometimes with nothing. We divide the work but when we ask a local student what you did so far, he telling us 'I have been busy; I went to a party last week; I been clubbing and I had no time to do my part of the work; I could not do it but maybe this week I will be finishing it'. So, he always put us in pressure.

In regards to the social activities, IME students' preferences to spend their free time with other ME students is attributed to differences in what constitutes having a good time. As the Bahraini student pointed out:

I spend my free time with my own people, students from Emirates and Middle East. I do this because we have our habits of spending our time. If I go out with Australian students they may ask me to go clubbing or drinking. These are outside my culture. I cannot enjoy even if it's enjoyable for others. I have some friends who are not Australians; they are from Middle East. I go shopping with them, I go fishing for fun. We do like manage some trips. We go to rugby games... we played soccer a couple of times...

Another student from UAE commented:

During my regular lectures and tutorials I met with couple LS. I study with them for the exams in the library and sometimes I take their notes from the lectures. Sometimes, I go to movies, or play sports. When I am free I go out with my friends from Emirates or I go to their places. Local students go to bars or discos and they drink. Sometimes they invite me to join them. They are not familiar with my culture.

Another student in the focus group discussions pointed out:

I do not mix with Australian students on-campus because of different way of thinking and how to solve the problems in our projects. But outside university there are differences in culture and customs. Emirati students and Middle East students have other ways of having good times; not drinking or clubbing.

In regards to the interactions with other students, a Qatari student explained:

In the university I have a couple of LS friends; they are from Middle East. When we had the same subjects I used to see them often in the university. We use to go to library to study or go to movies if we had break in the middle. But now I do not see them much. Our subjects are different. But still are my friends. ...But I have a lot of friends from Middle East. We do other activities. We gather together and cook, we play games and we go trips when we have holidays.

The above discussions indicate that cultural differences are limiting the social interactions of IME students. This is translated into different interests. In Middle

Eastern culture the way of life is based on the doctrines of Islam. Islam is a way of life in the Middle East. However, the results of Q.20, which refers to the issues which affect their interactions with LS, different interests were reported by the vast majority of IME students as an issue that slightly affects their interactions with LS. Similarly cultural differences were reported by 52.6% of IME students as an issue which slightly influences their interactions with LS. Moreover, religion which often was mentioned in the focus group discussions and interview as an issue affecting their interactions with LS, the results of the survey shown that only one quarter of international students reported religion to be an issue in their interactions with LS.

7.3 Research Question 2

7.3.1 Introduction

The discussion that follows concerns IME students' networks with LS, other ME students and OIS. It draws upon the results of the online survey (CCIS), presented in Chapter 6, as well as the results of the focus group sessions and in-depth interviews data. Specifically, in addressing RQ.2 the following aspects are addressed:

- the composition of IME students' networks
- the purpose of IME students' networks
- the aspects which influence the development of IME students networks

7.3.2 The composition of IME students' networks

The survey data explored the composition of IME students' networks in terms of the friends from each category. As shown in Chapter 6 in (Q.5) over one-third of the IME students reported having 11-20 friends who are from the category other ME students, 6-10 friends from the category OIS while 42.1% reported having only 1- 5 friends from the category LS. Similarly, in the focus groups discussion and

interviews with Emirati students all the participants claimed having lots of co-national friends or friends from other Middle East countries, few OIS friends and very limited number LS friends.

In the previous section, it was noted by the participants in focus group discussion and interviews that IME students interact in activities with a social nature more frequently with other ME students; however, for activities with educational nature they interact more frequently with OIS. In addition, only a few students reported having Australian students' friends, some of whom were from Middle Eastern background.

The results of survey Q.23 shows that nearly one-fifth of IME students reported that their networks consist of LS only or ME students only while the vast majority reported networks consisting from a mix of LS, other ME students and OIS. However, the survey results indicated that while establishing networks with other ME students and OIS is respectively very easy and easy, establishing networks with LS is neither difficult nor easy.

Insights into these results are provided from the focus group and interviews data. A student from United Arab Emirates in the face-to-face interview stated:

It is easier for many of us to establish friendships with students from our culture. We are familiar how to behave. But with LS we do not know how to behave; what is acceptable and what is not. Probably, LS have the same questions about us. I believe that if we are more open there will be opportunities for contact. Myself for example, when they invite me to go parties I accept the invitation. I do not drink. Not all Australian students drink. I like to know more about their culture. In my first couple of years in Australia I was avoiding going out with LS. But now I am OK. I have friends who are really Aussies; other local friends who are originally from Germany. This does not mean that I don't spend time with students from my culture. I have a lot of friends from my culture. But with them I do different stuff.

Another student indicated that:

Often Aussies invite me in their houses and often I invite them in my house. The fact that they drink, it does not bother me. I respect their choice. It is their house; they can do whatever they want. They respect my choices and never offer me alcohol. When I go to their houses I know that they do not smoke so I do not smoke too. They know that I do not drink and when they come to my place they respect my choice and they do not bring alcohol.

A student from Oman provided another perspective:

I have few local friends. But you can count them by the fingers of one hand. Some are European and some from Asia. I met them during my regular lectures and tutorials. I study with them for the exams and sometimes I take their notes from the lectures. But I do not go out. Sometimes, we study in the Library like studying for exams, doing assignment. He is helping me when I ask.

In regards to LS friends an Emirati disclosed in the interview that:

I do not really have local student friend. I mean close friend as I have from my country. But I know some better than others. I know one Australian student who is from Middle East; he is not in the same course with me, but when we see each other in university we go for coffee and talk about cars. Something happened to my car and offered to help me. You can say he is an occasional friend.

However, the results of Q.26 show that more than one-third of IME students agree and strongly agree that the number of LS in their networks is about right.

Nevertheless, nearly 50% of the participants wish to have more contact with LS and nearly two-third report that the limited interactions with LS is not attributed to their preferences to interact with students from their own countries. They report

predominantly that the limited number of LS in their networks is a result of limited opportunities to interact with the LS.

7.3.3 The purpose of IME students' networks

The results of Q.29, 30 and 31, show that the purpose of IME students' networks differs among the three categories of students. Thus, while the purpose of their networks with LS is to improve their language skills, their networks with other ME students act as social net for support when they feel homesick. Meanwhile, the purpose of their networks with OIS is to learn about other cultures and improve their language skills.

The importance of contact with LS for the purpose of improving their English language was demonstrated by IME students in the focus group discussions and interviews with IME students in the Section 7.2.2.

The purpose of their networks with other ME students was also demonstrated in the focus groups discussions with IME students. As an Emirati student explained:

I have a lot of friends from Emirates. Some of them I know them from back home. I do not have my family here so when I have problems all of them come to support me. When they have problem I supported them as well. If did not have friends here probably I could go back home. Some students arrived here, stay for few days and then went back home.

All of the students agree that friends from their country play an important role in the case of support. As student M explained:

When we are sick and we do not have our family here we are scared. Our friends from Emirates take care of us... I have few international students' friends at uni. But I do not see them after uni. But after uni I go to the houses of my friends for Emirates and we cook together, play PlayStation, watching movies. When I have problems I can talk with my friends from my country and I feel that I have someone to rely.

7.3.4 Aspects which influence the development of IME students' networks

The results of Q.36, 37 and 38 show that language and culture predominantly reported by IME students as the aspects which influence the establishment of networks with LS and OIS. While these aspects inhibit IME students interaction with LS and OIS, the same aspects as reported by IME students in focus groups and interviews ease the establishment of networks with other ME students.

As a Libyan student in the interview noted:

Some colleagues invited me for BBQ for Christmas. They were drinking and it was ok by me. But after some friends told me that I should not be with people who drink. After that I gave up visiting Australian houses. ..The university sometimes organise BBQ but I do not go often. If I go I leave when they start drinking. I like to be friends with my Australian colleagues, but the problem is the drinking. Sometimes they say 'come with us we will not drink'. But I think I will stop them to do something they like. So I say 'Sorry I have something else to do'. But they know.

In regards to the role of the language this student explained:

If I have difficulty in an experiment or with apparatus I firstly approach students who speak Arabic. We can understand each other better than with Australian. If in the lab is not a person who speaks Arabic I go to someone who I know he will help me and has the experience to help me...I do not see much or have much of contact with other students because everyone is busy. Sometimes I meet with them on the weekend...I cannot say that I have a network with students. Students I know from my country are married and spend time with their family after their studies or work.

The limited time of meeting people even from their culture was also demonstrated in the words of a student from Libya:

I have my family here. I have to spend time with my wife and children. But I have three or four friends who are from Libya. Everyone is busy with his family. But I do not have Australian friends...My English is not good because and I do not mix with Australians. I want to mix but my culture and my religion will be barrier for me. Because they (Australians) are open and in my culture we are very strict. I eat halal food; do not sit with someone who drinks.

The 'drinking culture' in Australia was mentioned also by another PhD student from Jordan as a factor which inhibits the establishment of networks with LS:

The lifestyle in Australia is very different. Because of my culture I do not have friends from Australia. They drink alcohol. For us is not allowed to drink or sit with someone who drinks. When Australians invite me to go out I say sorry I am busy; so the communication and interaction is limited. There is a gap between the culture here and culture back home....There are many things different; the religion is different, the lifestyle... I have some relationships with Australians from Middle East outside my professional place. But still their mentality is different than back home. I do not see them often.

The results in Q.39, 40 and 41 shows also that culture and language very much influences the use of their networks with LS. This was also reported by the students during the interviews. However, in the interviews it became apparent that mature students had only few friends from their country or Middle East and had no LS or colleagues' friends. In contrast, younger students, in the interviews and focus group reported having a lot of friends from their country or Middle East and at least couple Australian friends.

Among the customs, which influence the establishment of networks with LS and OIS, shown in Q.42 and 43, the type of entertainment was predominantly reported by three quarters of IME as the customs which influence the establishment of networks with LS, and by more than 50% of IME students as the factor which

influences the establishment of networks with OIS. As the results of Q.44 and 45 indicate, the different type of entertainment influences very much the establishment of networks with LS. However, difference in the social relationship is an aspect that influences very much the establishment of IME students' networks with OIS. In the focus group and interviews, IME students reported that their preference in entertainment did not coincide with the preferences of LS.

The results of Q.53 shows that IME students predominantly prefer to interact with LS in order to improve their language skills. This result was confirmed in various instances in this study. However, nearly three quarters of IME students reported preferring to interact with LS to obtain knowledge about Australian culture and nearly fifty per cent of IME students, who reported that, prefer to interact because Australian students are interested to know about their culture.

However, in focus group discussion some students commented that LS are not interested to learn about international students' culture and some know nothing about the Middle East. As student T pointed out:

When I say I am from Dubai they (LS) ask me is Dubai a part of Brazil or a part of India? Yes, that happened to me. Some of them know nothing about the Middle East or the culture in Middle East. Some of them, I am not saying all of them know nothing about the world, the map or other cultures.

This student also noted that:

When you get to contact students, you find some Australian students to have some sort of racism with the international students. But we are alright with other international students.

Although other focus group participants share the same view that some Australian students know little about other cultures, no one else shared the view that Australian students are racists. In the focus group discussion M reflected:

I cannot say that Australian students are racists. Australia is multicultural country. The parents of many students are migrants. These students they know the culture of their parents, but others like white students, I mean the Anglo-Saxons they do not know much.

As a male student, who pursues a bachelor in IT commented:

We can talk politics, such as discussing the situation in Iraq or Afghanistan. Australian students are not involved in politics and do not know what is going on with the rest of the world. They care about what is going on inside Australia and that's all.

In addition, another student from the Emirates explains that:

Students from the Middle East like talking politics. Australian students, however, like taking about parties, girlfriends or boyfriends or saying jokes. Couple times I have joined Australian students from my tutorials for lunch. But I could not understand their jokes and the conversations about the opposite sex made me feel uncomfortable. In my country we do not openly discuss these issues. I felt as an outsider. I could not find a way to be part of the conversation. For me it is comfortable to have lunch with students from my country or other Arab students and international students from other countries.

The survey results of Q.54 and 55, presented in Chapter 6, indicated that for most of the items in both questions, a large percentage of IME students responded neutrally. In respect to perceptions of LS, over fifty per cent of IME students agreed and strongly agreed that LS like them for what they are while less than fifty per cent disagree and strongly disagree that LS avoid contact with them. However, some students in the focus groups commented that LS avoid contact with them. Similarly,

60.5% of IME students agreed and strongly agreed that LS understand their customs while 59.8% agreed and strongly agreed that LS understand their beliefs.

7.4 Summary

This chapter draws upon the results of the CCIS and the information collected through focus group and interviews sessions, in order to address the research questions. In regards to R.Q 1, the results indicate that off-campus IME students interact predominantly with other ME students. However, on-campus, the average number of times they interact with OIS is greater than the average time they interact with other ME students. This, as was explained in the focus group session, attributed to the limited number of other ME students in some courses. However, IME students consider interaction for the purpose of improving their language skills to be very important. Nevertheless, for the purpose of establishing friendships IME students indicated that they predominantly consider interactions with LS to be moderately important.

As focus group and interview sessions reveal, when IME students establish friendships with LS, these rarely move beyond the campus environment. In contrast, friendships with other ME students continue off-campus. The research reveals that their friendships with other ME students act as a support net. This is particularly the case when IME students feel homesick, and for this purpose they considered them to be very important. Interactions with OIS tend to have an academic purpose. With this group of students IME predominantly do assignments, go to the library together and share lecture notes. IME students also considered their interactions with OIS as important for friendship purposes. Finally, concerning interactions with LS, IME students predominantly reported that these can be influenced by language difficulties, different interests and age, while a large

percentage of IME students reported that religion was not at all affecting their interactions with LS. Focus group and interview sessions, however, reveal that religion affects their interactions with LS.

In regards to RQ 2, the discussion of the results indicated that predominantly IME students' found it easy to establish networks with both other ME students and OIS. However, when it comes to establishing networks with LS they found it neither difficult nor easy. In regards to the frequency, IME student depend on their networks; the results indicated daily depend on their networks with ME students, several times per week on their networks with OIS and weekly on their networks with LS. In regards to the aspects which influence IME students using their networks with LS, the results indicated that language and culture are the aspects predominantly reported by IME students. The same aspects influence the use of their networks with OIS. However, the survey results revealed that religion is the only aspect which was reported by nearly one third of the participants as an aspect which very little influences their networks with LS. Nevertheless, focus group and interviews data revealed that religion in fact influences their interactions with LS. In fact the type of entertainment many of Australian students prefer is in mismatch with IME students' religious beliefs.

The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, the aim of this research is to explore IME students' cross cultural interactions in Australia as an extensive search of literature revealed that there is a limited research concerning Middle Eastern students studying overseas. The present research specifically addressed the level and nature of IME students' interactions with local students (LS), other Middle Eastern students and other international students (OIS), as well as the networks used by IME students. In this respect the research explored the frequency of their interactions on-campus and off-campus, the activities most used by IME students to interact with LS, other ME students and OIS and the importance of these interactions for these students. As well, this research examined the composition of IME networks and the factors which inhibit/facilitate IME students cross cultural interactions.

This chapter initially considers the limitations of this research. It then provides conclusions drawn from the results presented in Chapter 6. Recommendations arising out of this research are then presented and finally areas for further research.

8.2 Consideration of the research limitations

This research has a number of limitations as evident from Chapter 4. These limitations are briefly considered as they may have impacted upon the conclusions which can be made from this research. The following limitations of this research are noted:

- The research has used a relatively small sample of IME in Australia.

Therefore, any generalisations from the findings need to be considered with

caution. A similar study using a larger cohort of IME students in Australia is warranted.

- The research has used a sample only from some Middle East Arabic speaking countries. Therefore, the findings cannot be applied to all international Middle Eastern students.
- The research was confined to Middle Eastern Arabic speaking students and the sample does not include students from other countries that can be included in the Middle East region (e.g. Turkey and Iran).
- The research has only a small sample of female IME students in Australia, and therefore could not be deemed representative of female IME students.
- The research was confined to explore the interactions of IME students with LS, other ME students and OIS. Other aspects, for example issues concerning their adjustment to living in a foreign country and problems with their studies that may affect Middle Eastern students, were not examined. These issues were not considered to be examinable within the scope of this research.
- As this research was of an exploratory nature, it was not concerned with the participants' understanding of the concept "cross cultural (intercultural) interactions". Rather this research it was concerned with the level and nature of their interactions, the factors that could enhance/ inhibit their interactions with others and the composition of their networks.

The above aspects are further addressed in section 8.5.

8.3 Conclusions from the research

The presence of international students in Higher Education institutions in Australia diversifies the student population and provides considerable opportunity for local and international students to learn from each other. However, as literature in Chapter 2 suggests international and local students learn parallel to each other and

interact mainly with members of the group with similar cultural or linguistic background. A similar conclusion can be made from this research. As Otten (2000) points out, despite that classroom comprises the major area for communication, intercultural learning does not appear to occur automatically. He argues that intercultural learning can be achieved with the “initiation of informal but facilitated group activities parallel to the formal academic settings” (p. 18). In such activities students from diverse cultural backgrounds can convey and share their personal intercultural experiences with others. This approach to learning entails the inclusion of intercultural and international dimension in the teaching learning process, the extracurricular activities, and the relationships with local cultural and ethnic community groups” (Knight, 2004, p.17).

Nevertheless, in order for this approach to have the expected outcome, it is important the intercultural learning be “an integrated dimension in to curriculum development, teaching and all other social and organisational activities of educational programmes” (Otten, 2000, p.19). Namely, it requires the internationalisation of curriculum. Nilsson (2000) defines the internationalised curriculum as the curriculum “which gives international and intercultural knowledge and abilities, aimed at preparing students for performing (professionally, socially, emotionally) in an international and multicultural context” (p. 22). As pointed out by Whalley (1997) “awareness of other cultures and perspectives and awareness of their own culture and perspectives” help students to develop intercultural competence (p.15). This has been the case in this research as elaborated upon in the previous chapter.

As observed in Chapter 2, the inclusion of intercultural learning is considered an important component towards internationalisation because the mere presence of international students does not result in intercultural learning due to the limited interactions of local and international students. A similar conclusion can be made

from this research based on the results presented in Chapter 6. As Otten (2003) observes “many international students group in their national communities ...meet other European students but rarely those of the host country. At the same time, domestic students tend to stay in their established circle of friends”... (p. 14). As indicated in Chapter 2, the foregoing has not concerned itself with Middle Eastern students.

The findings of this research, demonstrated in Chapter 7, shows that the level of interactions between international Middle Eastern students (IME) and Local Students (LS) is limited. The limited interactions between IME students and LS are also reported in Pandian's (2008) study of IME student's experiences in Malaysia. The limited interactions between LS and international students are also demonstrated by various studies which investigated the experiences of international students in various destinations (e.g. Trice, 2004; Volet and Ang, 1998; Smart et al., 2003; Bochner et al., 1985; Bochner et al., 1977). These studies all reported that international students predominantly interact with their co-nationals and then with other international students. A similar result has been obtained in this research.. However, this research has revealed that while off-campus IME students predominantly socialise with other IME students, on-campus they tend to interact predominantly with OIS. Especially in lectures and tutorials IME students predominantly had contact with OIS. In this respect, the data from this research revealed that the tendency of IME students to interact more frequently with OIS is most likely attributed to the limited number of IME students in some course and the abundance of international students from other origin.

A conclusion from this research, based on the results presented in Chapter 6, is that international Middle Eastern students found it difficult to establish contact with local students (LS). The reasons for this difficulty was not explored in this research however, cultural studies (e.g. Gudykunst and Kim 2003; Neuliep, 2003) have

shown that contact between individuals of culturally different backgrounds is more complex and uncertain. In this research, the difficulty/easiness to establish contact was considering the number and types of friends. The findings of this research revealed IME students' number of friends from the categories other Middle Eastern students (ME) and other international students (OIS) is greater than the number of friends from the category local students (LS). These findings are similar with the other studies (e.g. Bochner et al., 1977; Bochner et al., 1985; Furnham and Alibhai, 1985). In these published studies it was reported that international students, regardless of their study destination, tend to have a greater number of friends from their culture or similar culture and lesser number from the host students.

This appears to be an important issue to address as this research revealed that international Middle Eastern students consider interactions with local students to be very important for improving their English language skills. This finding is similar to that reported by Williams (2003) and Noels, Pon and Clement (1996) who found that interactions with LS help international students to enhance their language skills in second language. Nevertheless, the IME students in this study considered their contact with their co-nationals or other Middle East students to be most important for the purpose of having fun whilst they consider their interactions with other international students (OIS) to be most important for study purposes. Contacts of IME students with other students form the basis of developing networks of contact.

The results of this research indicate, the purpose of networks with their co-national or other ME students is to go out and obtain support when they feel homesick. Furthermore, the networks of contact with OIS are important for educational purposes, whilst the purpose of their networks with LS is more concerned with the need for IME students to improve their language skills and to learn new ways of doing things. The findings of this research regarding the purpose of the co-national networks are similar to that described by Furnham and Bochner (1982). These

authors commented that mono-cultural networks can decrease level of students' homesickness and disorientation during the adjusting period and help students to adapt to the host country's norms. However, in regards to the networks with other international students (OIS), Furnham and Bochner (1982) and Bochner et al. (1977) maintain that these networks are small, superficial and are used mainly for recreational and entertainment purposes. In this research this appears not to be the case with IME students' networks with OIS. The results presented in Chapter 6 supported by the focus group and interview data revealed that IME utilise these networks for study purposes.

A further conclusion that can be made from the results is that cultural differences and lifestyle preferences have inhibited IME students' interactions with LS. The cultural differences, as a factor which inhibits international students interactions and establishment of networks with local students, has been previously reported by various researchers (e.g. Furnham and Bochner, 1986; Church, 1982; Ward and Searle, 1991; Kim, 1998; Ward and Kennedy, 1993). These studies indicated that the more distant the cultures of international and local students, the more difficult it is for international students to adjust to the host culture and establish relationships with host students. In addition, the greater the cultural distance is, the greater the preference for co-national interactions. These conclusions are in agreement with the findings from this research. In this case, IME students tended to prefer interactions with their co-nationals or other Middle Eastern students and other international students over the interaction with local students because of cultural/religious similarities.

This outcome could have been expected as it is well documented that in the Middle East, the Islamic religion influences every aspect of daily life. For some students, especially the mature age students, Islam is a way of life. In this respect, interview data, presented in Chapter 7, demonstrated that religion not only prohibits drinking

alcohol, but also to sit with people who are drinking alcohol and be in places where alcohol is served. Interestingly these religious values decrease the opportunities for interactions with LS and thus increase the distance between LS and IME students. This finding is important as in the literature, religion as a factor that influences the interactions between local and international students is seldom fully considered. For instance, in Alreshoud and Koeske's (1997) study of Saudi-Arabian students in America, they merely suggested that vast cultural differences inhibited their interactions with local students. This present research has revealed that the vast cultural differences between IME students and local students with respect to different lifestyle preferences had a detrimental influence in achieving cross cultural interactions. This conclusion warrants further exploration and it is addressed in Section 8.4.

One of the well documented purposes for international students to study overseas, as shown in Chapter 2, is to improve their competency in English. The review of literature revealed that the impact of the English language competence on the level of IME students' interactions with local students (LS) was not explored in other studies concerning IME students. However, the results presented in Chapter 6 indicated that the standard of English language competence (SOE) influences the level of on-campus and off-campus interactions with LS as well as the establishment of their networks with LS. Explicitly, these results have revealed that in on-campus environment, students with good or better English language skills interacted primarily several times per week with local students whilst students with average English language skills had primarily monthly contact with LS. The impact of international students' English language skills is reported by various researchers (e.g. Perrucci and Hu, 1995; Huntley, 1993; Novera, 2004; Yang et al., 1994). These studies have revealed that greater English language skills could enhance international students' confidence to interact with local students whilst poorer

language skills could hinder interactions with local students due to fear of miscommunication.

The results presented in Chapter 6 indicated that besides the standard of English, the status of study and the length of stay in Australia are factors which influence the level of IME students' interactions with local students. However, in studies which examine the interactions between international and local students, the level of the interactions in regards to status of study has not been explored. Similarly, while the length of stay in the foreign country is considered by various scholars (e.g. Ward et al., 1998; Ward and Rana-Dueba, 1999) as an important aspect for international students' adjustment, its impact on international students' interactions with local students has not been explored. The findings of this research indicated that IME students in English/foundation studies and undergraduate courses interacted on-campus with local students several times per week, whilst IME students enrolled in postgraduate courses interacted monthly with local students. Similarly, IME students who have been in Australia for up to three years interacted with local students several times per week whilst those who have been in Australia for more than three years interacted on a daily basis with LS.

8.4 Recommendations

The conclusions from this research considered above indicate a need for recommendations that could help Australian Higher Education institutions to initiate educational interventions that could promote interactions of IME students with local students. The recommendations that follow have drawn upon the results from this research, the researcher's personal experience working in this area and the literature considered in Chapter 2. Ten recommendations presented below, are connected to three periods of time associated with IME students' endeavour in

Australian Higher Education institutes. Namely: the pre-departure period, arrival period (i.e. the settling in time in Australia prior to commencement of their study) and during the study period.

8.4.1 Pre-departure briefing and information

It is apparent from the results from the focus groups and interviews that the majority of IME students had limited understanding of the problems and issues they face studying in a country that has very different social, cultural and religious orientations. A further familiarisation of the situation by students, prior leaving their countries for study, can be addressed more purposely. This means active involvement by the student and university and the availability of information that is student friendly.

A number of recommendations presented below address this matter.

Recommendation 1

- *Higher Education institutions introduce orientation programs in the IME students' own country so that prior to their departure they would have firsthand oral information about the culture and education in Australia.*

Based on this researcher's experience and in talking to university staff the pre-departure orientation programs need to be conducted by university staff involved in student affairs. Currently, not all universities provide pre-departure orientation programs and if provided, the programs run mainly using recruiting agencies' staff. Although staff from recruiting agencies is trained by their respective university, they are often unfamiliar with the culture and education system in Australia. Thus, they cannot provide extensive and comprehensive information to students and their families. If pre-departure orientations were conducted by university staff involved

in student affairs they could address all the concerns of students and their families given they are familiar with the culture and education system in Australia.

Recommendation 2

- *Higher Education institutions provide a written simple set of guidelines about culture, values and norms in Australia, during pre-departure orientation programs.*

There is considerable anecdotal evidence that current practices tend to 'bombard' students with extensive written information which most of the time tends not to be carefully examined by students nor understood. Such information needs to be made available on universities' web-sites and be easily accessible. This information should contain specific information such as: who will collect the student from the airport; how can students reach university on the first day; where can students find halal food; where is the location of the mosques closest to university. Such information is needed by the students and their families. Based on informal discussions with participants and advice from university staff it is suggested that the following is used:

- Provide comprehensive and analytical information in the form of a booklet that contains information about immediate issues of concern.
- Provide information to starting students about the issues such as the above from former students.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that:

- *Higher Education institutions involve former students that have experiences in Australia at pre-departure functions for students.*

Drawing upon the issues and problems new students want to address, former students could help students to overcome their anxiety and give them some sense of comfort before they commence their studies. In this way it is possible to overcome difficulties arising from differences in education and culture. This type of support can help decrease the level of concern of a students' family.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that:

- *Higher Education institutions activate the Alumni networking system to connect students prior to their departure with former students from their own country.*

This recommendation could be actioned by universities through an alumni networking system and also involve alumni in the pre-departure orientation programs. The inclusion of Alumni in the pre-departure orientation programs is important because it could provide students with life experience firsthand information from former students.

8.4.2 Information and orientation programs upon students' arrival in Australia

It is most evident from the results presented in Chapter 6 that for many Middle Eastern students their level of English is usually low or average. It is for this reason that many Middle Eastern students initially complete an ELICOS course. This research has shown that a poor level of English inhibits opportunities for interactions. In practice the orientation programs run for one or two days. However, based on the experience of this researcher, students usually have difficulties in understanding and comprehending the amount of oral and written information provided to them in the first one or two days.

This suggests that university can address the problem by changing current formats used in the orientation programs.

Recommendation 5

It is recommended that Higher Education institutions:

- *Extend the orientation programs for students in ELICOS courses for a semester and provide them gradually with vital information.*
- *Use buddy student programs for newly arrived ME students. In this respect, identify co-national Australian students who are interested to participate in these programs and provide incentives for interactions.*

In order to provide more opportunities for cross cultural interactions during the ELICOS orientation day a practice can be to introduce IME students to local students involved in the buddy student program and advise them to spend time during lunch break.

Whilst it is a current practice at a number of universities to organise activities to bring international and local students closer, these activities usually take place in the evening. This is a time not well suited to IME students, from a cultural perspective.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended Higher Education institutes:

- *Organise activities in the university during class times and invite both local student and international students to join in.*

In this research many students indicated a preference to stay with host. This is because home-stay living arrangements are considered to be beneficial for

international students because they can practice their English, become familiar with the Australian culture and the norms. However, for IME students this has been a cause of frustration because hosting families are often not familiar with their dietarian habits and religious practices. In this respect the universities can be more proactive to address these problems and provide information and support to host families which accommodate IME students, about their cultural values and their dietarian habits.

8.4.3. Information and orientation sessions for students enrolled in university courses

It is generally acknowledged and suggested by this researcher that orientation programs have a critical role in helping settle students into the new circumstances. This research has shown that a particular problem faced by IME students is opportunities to meet with local students. However, the current orientation system tends to segregate local and international students even from the first day.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that:

- *Higher Education institutions have their entire orientation program that brings together both international and local students in a single event through a one-day for-all orientation.*

If one day-for-all is not feasible due to a large number of students, introduction of a two day-mix student orientation. Mixing local and international students from the first day at university provides students with the opportunity to meet with local students.

Mixing both local and international students from the first day of each semester could provide opportunities to meet 'others' from their faculty and rather than entering a room full of strangers they have a familiar face to turn to.

8.4.4 Support programmes for students during study term

The results of this research indicate that cultural differences inhibit interactions between international and local students. The IME students indicated limited understanding of the cultural differences and this made it difficult for them to have local student contacts and friends. It follows that both students and universities can become more proactive in addressing the chasm faced by IME students. The following recommendations are proposed.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that

- *Higher Education institutions initiate workshops where both local and international students could identify and address their cultural differences.*

In such workshops students could use various scenarios or problems and requested to explain how they acted upon them. The variety of solutions provided by students could help develop understanding that in different circumstances people act differently based on their cultural background. This approach capitalizes on a finding in this research which showed that local students with bi-cultural backgrounds were more readily able to interact with Middle Eastern students. The results revealed that IME students would like to have more opportunities for interactions with local students during university classes. In this regard university teaching staff could be more proactive.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that teaching staff:

- *Allocate international students to work with local students for different types of learning activities such as tutorials and lab work.*

The mixing of international students with local students could initiate interaction. This recommendation is based on the results of this research which revealed that in most educational activities IME students interact predominantly with other international students.

The increase of interactions between local and international students in the tutorials could lead to increase in the interactions outside campus. Currently, students select their group members and as it is easier to work with people they feel more comfortable, they select members from their own group. The segregation in the classroom can lead to further segregation outside the classroom, and as a result IME students rarely develop friendships with LS. In contrast they develop friendships with other international students.

As Leask (2003) asserts "Interaction is a two-way process". Hence, "Individuals involved in any interaction need to have the motivation to expend the effort required to interact and the skills to enable the interaction to succeed" (p. 2). Yet local students expect international students to initiate the contact and vice versa (Volet and Ang, 1998).

Recommendation 10

With respect to the above it is recommended that:

- *Strategies be developed that facilitate international Middle East students and local students to learn from each other.*

This research has demonstrated that interactions between international and local students to be beneficial for both. If local students have the opportunity to learn about other cultures this could be useful for future employment opportunities. International students on the other side can learn from their local peers the Australian culture.

8.5 Further research

The research that has been presented in this dissertation can be further extended. As noted in section 8.2, a relatively small sample was only available for this research. As such, it is appropriate that a similar study be undertaken. Specifically, it is important to explore the interactions between IME students and local students using a larger sample and one that contains a larger number of female students. Thus, replication of this research using a large sample can be undertaken to explore in greater details the following aspects:

- differences between male and female students in issues regarding cross cultural interactions with local students and other international students
- differences between male and female students in using networks of contact
- differences between male and female students in the purposes of networks
- differences between male and female students in regards to the importance of networks
- differences between male and female students in regards to the aspects which influence cross-cultural interactions with local students and other international students

It was also noted in section 8.2 that not all Middle Eastern countries were used. In this research participants originated from 11 countries, however the vast majority of the sample contained students from UAE and Oman. The inclusion of a larger sample of IME students from countries that were under-represented is warranted. Using a more representative sample of Middle Eastern countries it is possible to explore in greater details the following aspects:

- differences between students from various Middle Eastern countries in regards to cross-cultural interactions with local and other international students
- differences between students from various Middle Eastern countries in establishing networks with local and other international students
- differences between students from various Middle Eastern countries in regards to the purpose and importance of networks with local and other international students
- differences between students from various Middle Eastern countries in regards to the aspects which influence the establishment of networks with local and other international students.

Undertaking such research enables a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions that were explored in this research. The previous section has made a number of recommendations regarding how IME students, university staff and local students can be involved to address problems and issues associated with cross cultural interactions. Each of the recommendations forms a basis for some initial action research to determine their efficacy.

8.6 Concluding remarks

This research is one of only a small number of research studies about international Middle Eastern students. This research is considered important because it provided an insight into the aspects that influence IME students' interaction with local students and other international students. A major conclusion from this research is that IME students' interactions with local students are limited in both on-campus and off-campus settings. Specifically, IME students, in activities with social character, predominantly interact with their co-national, while for activities with educational character they interact mainly with other international students. However, there was evidence for contact with LS, although limited, predominantly with students from bi-cultural background. Nevertheless, IME students identified the limited number of LS in some courses and the abundance of OIS as factors which attributed to the limited contact with local students. In addition, IME students asserted that the limited attendance of LS in lectures and tutorials is an issue which influences their interactions with local students. Finally, IME students identified the preference of local and international students to group with the students with whom they are familiar, as factor which influences their interactions. In this respect this research has contributed to a more detailed understanding of Middle Eastern students' experiences in a western country, where education system and cultural norms are quite different to their own.

It is hoped that the recommendations presented above can be actioned and address identified problems and issues regarding interactions of IME students with others. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research will stimulate further research in this area to help understand more fully the issues concerning IME students' interactions with local students and other international students and explore ways IME students networks can be more extensively used.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Consent form for participants

Consent Form for Participants

(to be retained by the Researcher)

Central Queensland University

PROJECT: THE ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CROSS-CULTURAL SKILLS AND GLOBAL
UNDERSTANDING

Iof confirm that:

1. I agree to participate in the following parts of the research:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| a. The survey: | 10-15 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. The interviews: | 15-30 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Focus Groups: | 60 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> |

☒ Select the item(s) that apply.

2. The nature and the purpose of the study have been explained to me and I agree to participate.

3. I understand that the information gained during the study will be used within the PhD thesis and may be published.
4. I understand that I will not be directly identified by name in any publications.
5. I understand that if I agree to be interviewed, this interview will be recorded.
6. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any stage.
7. I understand that I have the right to refrain from answering any questions should I so wish.
8. I understand that I may not directly benefit from taking part in the study and that I will not receive any payment for participating in this interview.
9. I understand that confidentiality is guaranteed.
10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I will be provided with a summary of the results of the study before publication.
11. The data collected for this project is subject to the Code of Conduct and the requirement that all data relating to the research project be retained for a period of five years, and be stored in a secure location, in a locked filing cabinet.
12. I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.

Signature of participant:

Date:

Please contact Central Queensland University's Office of Research (Telephone 00-61-7 4923 2607) should there be any concerns about the nature and/or conduct of this research project.

If you would like to obtain feedback about the research please fill out your contact details below.

Name:

Organisation:

Mailing Address

.....
.....
.....

E-Mail: Telephone:.....

Appendix B – Survey themes and sub-themes

Generation of items from the themes identified in the literature review

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
1.0 Interactions/communication	<p>1.1 Types of interactions:</p> <p>1.1.1 Social:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ On campus social situations ➤ Off campus social situations <p>1.1.2 Recreational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sport activities ➤ Organised excursions <p>1.1.3 Educational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of educational activities, ME students seek help from local students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proof reading my writing for language mistakes ➤ Explaining class material ➤ Explaining assignment questions ➤ Using library facilities ➤ Preparing oral presentations • Type of educational activities ME students are interacting with local students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group assignments ➤ Study groups ➤ Exam revision ➤ Sharing class 	<p>I socialise with local students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On campus social situations • Off campus social situations <p>I interact with local students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In sport activities • In organised excursions <p>I ask local students to help me in:</p> <p>Proof reading my writing for language mistakes Explaining class material Explaining assignment questions Using library facilities Preparing oral presentations</p> <p>I interact with local students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in study groups • in doing assignments • in exams revision • in explaining subject topic <p>The majority of students in tutorials are local students.</p>

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
	<p>notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In study groups • Number of local students in tutorials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Majority are local students ➤ Majority are international students ➤ About equal numbers <p>1.1.4 Personal /psychological:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ personal development ➤ Psychological support ➤ Friendship development <p>1.1.5 Types of interactions with local students</p> <p>1.1.6 Types for interactions with ME students</p> <p>1.1.7 Types for interactions with other international students</p>	<p>The majority of students in tutorials are international students</p> <p>The number of local and international students is about equal</p> <p>I interact with local students for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My personal development • Psychological support • Friendship development <p>I interact with local students for Social purposes Recreational Educational Personal /psychological</p> <p>I interact with ME students for Social purposes Recreational Educational Personal /psychological</p> <p>I interact with other international students for Social purposes Recreational Educational Personal /psychological</p>
	<p>1.2 Places for interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorials/lectures • University events • At place of residence • Social/recreational events <p>1.2.1 Places for interactions with local students</p>	<p>I interact with local students in tutorials and lectures</p> <p>I interact with local students in university organised events</p> <p>I interact with local students in students share accommodation</p>

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
	<p>1.2.2 Places for interactions with ME students</p> <p>1.2.3 Places for interactions with other international students</p>	
	<p>1.3 Purpose of the interactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross cultural communication • English language • Study/learning purposes • Friendships • Religious/worship purposes • Development of new interests • Cultural events/hobbies <p>1.3.1 Purpose of the interactions with local students</p> <p>1.3.2 Purpose of the interactions with ME students</p> <p>1.3.3 Purpose of interactions with other international students</p>	<p>I interact with local students to experience Australian culture.</p> <p>I interact with local students to improve my English.</p> <p>I interact with local students because I value their help in educational issues.</p> <p>I interact with local students because I am interested to develop local friendships.</p> <p>I interact with local students because I do like to develop long lasting friendships</p>
	<p>1.4 Frequency of the interactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often • Very often • Rarely <p>1.4.1 Frequency of the interactions on campus with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local students • ME students • Other international students <p>1.4.2 Frequency of the interactions off campus with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local students • ME students • Other international 	<p>I daily interact with local students on and off campus</p> <p>I rarely interact with local students on and off campus</p> <p>I interact daily with local students on campus but rarely interact off campus</p>

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
	<p>students</p> <p>1.4.3 Frequency of seeking help from local students in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proof reading my writing for language mistakes ➤ Explaining class material ➤ Explaining assignment questions ➤ Using library facilities ➤ Preparing oral presentations ➤ With other home work 	I often seek help from local students in X activities
	<p>1.5 Problems and issues with the quality of the interactions(R.Q 1,2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural differences • Language difficulties • Personal issues • Different interests • Study/learning environment • Availability/unavailability of students <p>1.5.1 Problem and issues with the interactions with local students</p> <p>1.5.2 Problems and issues with the interactions with ME students</p> <p>1.5.2 Problems and issues with the interactions with other international students</p>	<p>Cultural differences influencing the quality and quantity of my interactions with local students.</p> <p>Language difficulties influencing my interactions.</p> <p>Issues related with my personality put pressure on my interactions with local students</p>
2.0 Students' networks	<p>2.1. Types of networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-national • International • Australian 	<p>My net works consist of students from my own country with whom I interact often</p> <p>My networks consist of Australian students with whom I interact on and off</p>

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
		<p>campus</p> <p>My networks consist of Australian, co-nationals and other international students</p> <p>My networks consist of my co national and other international students</p>
	<p>2.2 Purpose of the networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological/emotional support • Professional/academic support • Recreational aspects <p>2.2.1 Purpose of networks with local students</p> <p>2.2.2 Purpose of networks with ME students</p> <p>2.2.3 Purpose of networks with other international students</p>	<p>My network of local students is used for X purposes</p> <p>My network of ME students is used for Y purposes</p> <p>My network of other international students is used for Z purposes</p>
	<p>2.3 Frequency of networks' use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily • very often • often <p>2.3.1 Frequency of local networks' use</p> <p>2.3.2 Frequency of co national networks' use</p> <p>2.3.3 Frequency of international networks' use</p>	
	<p>2.4 Problems and issues with the networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural differences • Language difficulties • Different interests • Availability/unavailability of students 	

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
3.0 Students social /home environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.1 Place of residence: Home stay Student shared accommodation with: Australian students Co-nationals Other international students Mix of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am living in a home stay accommodation with an Australian family. I am living with friends from my own country in a student share accommodation I am living with Australian students in a student share accommodation I am living with other international students in a student share accommodation I am living with mix of students in a student share accommodation
	3.6 Problems and issues in participating in social/recreational events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different interests Language problems Cultural issues 	
4.0 Speaking with others	4.1 Language spoken more frequently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arabic English 	
	4.2 Where and when English is spoken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At University at tutorials and lectures At home stay accommodation with my host family At student shared accommodation with local and international students roommates 	
	4.3 Where and when Arabic is spoken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At university during 	

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
	break time with my co-nationals and other students from Arabic speaking countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At my living accommodation 	
5.0 Learning Environment	5.1 Places for I study: University Elsewhere	I am attending university
	5.2 Field of degree: Undergraduate Postgraduate	I am enrolled in X field of study
	5.3 Frequency of interaction in activities such: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group assignments Study groups Exam revision Sharing class notes 	I rarely interact with local students for these activities I often interact with local students for these activities
	5.4 Group of students with whom ME students prefer to do the above activities	I prefer to do the above activities with local students because they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiar with the requirements Helping to get better marks Helping me to learn the language Fun to work with I prefer to do the above activities with my co nationals or other international students because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have difficulties in understanding local students English I feel more confided to do work with students whose level of English is similar to mine I feel that local students are avoiding international students in educational activities
	5.6 Problems/issues in learning environment with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spoken language understanding the class material due to 	I face difficulties in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spoken language understanding the class material participating in class activities understanding assignment's requirements

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
	language difficulties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participating in class activities due to language difficulties • understanding assignment's requirements 	
	5.7 Satisfaction of ME students with the frequency of interactions with local students in educational activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with the frequency of interactions with local students • Not Satisfied • satisfied but there is a room for improvement 	I am satisfied with the frequency of interactions because I mix with local students in any available opportunity I am not satisfied because I hardly mix with local students I am satisfied but there is a room for improvement
6.0 Perceptions about local students	6.1 Nature of perceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive perceptions • Negative perceptions • Indifferent perceptions 	My perceptions about local students are negative because they are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfriendly with international students • Noisy in the class • Not mixing with international students • Often do Not attending classes • All parting and drinking My perceptions about local students are positive because they are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly with international students • Open minded • Concentrated in their studies • Working hard on their spare time
	6.2 Influence of the culture on these perceptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family values • Religion • Life style 	My perceptions about local students are influenced by my family values My perceptions about local students are influenced by my religion My perceptions about local students are influenced by the differences in life style
	6.3 Influence of gender on nature of the perceptions: Males hold positive	

Themes/areas	Sub-themes	Items
	perceptions about local students (female and male) Males hold negative perceptions about female local students.	
	Females hold positive perceptions about local students (male and female) Female hold negative perceptions about the female local students.	
7.0Background/demographics	7.1 Country of origin	I come from x Arabic speaking ME country
	7.2 Marital status	I am single I am married
	7.3 Duration of the study	The duration of my study is X years
	7.4Year of degree program	I am in the X year of my study
	7.5Language other than Arabic	I speak X languages apart from Arabic I do not speak other languages apart from Arabic
	7.6Previous overseas study experience	I have studied before overseas in X country
	7.7 Standard of spoken English	My standard of spoken English is: Very good Good Average Poor
	7.8Age	My age group is 19-24 25-30 31-36 37-41 42+
	7.9Gender	I am male
		I am female

Appendix C – Survey feedback form

		Yes	No	Comments
	General issues			
	Is the questionnaire easy to complete?			
	Are the instructions how to complete clear?			
	Is the structure of the questions well formulated?			
	Is the layout of the questions well formulated?			
	Are the questions clear and easy to understand?			
	Specific issues			
	In your opinion which question(s) is not clear? (Please mark the question(s) with a "Q")			
	Did you have any problems with the language used? (If yes please mark the question with an "L")			
	Did you find any question(s) too long? (If yes mark the question(s) with an "LO")			
	Did you had any problems to understand the scales used? (If yes marked the question(s) with an "S")			
	What other questions that should be asked have not been included in the survey?			
	Are there any other issues you would like to raise?			

Appendix D – Survey feedback form summary

		Yes	No	Comments
A	General issues			
1	Are the instructions on how to complete questions clear?	14	3	Questions 29 and 30: Missing instructions how many items to tick
2	Are the questions easy to understand?	17		
3	Is the survey easy to complete?	17		
4	Is the structure of the questions clearly presented?	17		
5	Is the layout of the questions clearly formulated?	17		
6	Did you find that the whole survey took long to complete?	17		
B	Specific issues			
7	In your opinion which question(s) is (are) not clear? (Please mark the question(s) with a "Q")			Question 42, 43: confusing wording
8	Did you have any problems with the language used? (If yes please mark the question with an "L")		17	
9	Did you find any question(s) too long? (If yes mark the question(s) with an "LO")		17	
10	Did you had any problems to understand the scales used? (If yes marked the question(s) with an "S")		17	
11	What other questions that should be asked have not been included in the survey?(Please write them down)			
12	Are there any other issues you would like to raise?(Please use the space to write comments)	<p>The number of items in questions 8,9,10 too long and some very similar (11 students)</p> <p>Questions 13, 14 and 15 too many items (9 students)</p> <p>The items 'shopping mall' and 'parks' in questions 13, 14 and 15 unnecessary ones (3 students)</p> <p>In question 6 the value 'other language' needs to be excluded while in question 7 the value 'Arabic' need to be excluded too (5 students)</p> <p>Questions 35 and 37 are identical (3 students)</p>		

An Exploration of Cross-cultural Communication between International Students from Middle East and Local Students.



Page 1 - Heading

Information to survey participants

Dear Participant

I am conducting research about international Middle Eastern students cross cultural interactions and communication with local students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. As part of my dissertation I have developed a survey instrument.

Ethical clearance to do this survey has been obtained from the Central Queensland University Human Research Ethics Committee.

This survey instrument seeks to find out the way, where and how you communicate with local and international students as well as your perceptions about local students and western culture.

The survey refers to the interactions between three groups of students:

Local students: These are students who are of any origin but are permanent residents in Australia, English is their first language and they have completed their Secondary Education in Australia.

International ME students: These are students who are from Middle Eastern Arabic speaking countries and who entered Australia with a student visa.

Other international students: These are students who came to Australia from different regions (excluding Arabic speaking countries) on a student visa.

In order to complete the surveys please click on the icon(s) that you agree to it (them).

Thank you for completing the survey.

Dimitra Antonelou Abusaleh

PhD candidate

Page 1 - Question 1 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

In order to complete the surveys please click on the icon that you agree to it.

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Do Not Agree

Cross cultural interaction survey (CCIS)

A. This section is about your Interactions/communication with others

Please use the following scale to indicate the extent of your face to face contact with the following groups of students on campus.

	Daily	Several times per week	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely
Local students	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
International M.E students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Please use the following scale to indicate the extent of your face to face contact with the following groups of students off campus.

	Daily	Several times per week	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely
Local students	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
International M.E students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Who usually initiates the face to face interactions between you and Local Students? (If necessary tick more than one box)

- ☐ Me
☐ Local students
☐ Another person, please specify

Approximately how many friends do you have in the following groups of students?

	1-5 friends	6-10 friends	11-20 friends	21+ friends
Local students	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
International ME students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Indicate the language usually spoken at events when you meet face to face with Local Students

	Arabic	English	Other language
At University	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a sporting event	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

At a social event	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a club	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a party	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At place of residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At friend place	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Other places	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Page 1 - Question 7 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Indicate the language usually spoken at events when you meet face to face with Other International Students

	Arabic	English	Other language
At University	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a sporting event	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a social event	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a club	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At a party	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At place of residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At friend's place	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Other places	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Page 1 - Question 8 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often you have the following face to face activities with Local Students

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Having coffee	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Having lunch/ dinner	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going parties	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to a sports game	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to the movies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Playing sports	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to excursions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going shopping	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social club events	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Prayer meetings	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Visiting family	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Preparing for exams	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Doing assignments	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing library work	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Preparing for lectures	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Sharing lecture notes	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 9 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often you have the following face to face activities with International M.E Students

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Having coffee	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going parties	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Having lunch/ dinner	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to a sports game	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to the movies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Playing sports	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to excursions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going shopping	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social club events	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Prayer meetings	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Visiting family	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Preparing for exams	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing assignments	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing library work	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Preparing for lectures	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Sharing lecture notes	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 10 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often you have the following face to face activities with Other International Students

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Having coffee	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going parties	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Having lunch/ dinner	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to a sports game	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Going to the movies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Playing sports	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going to excursions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Going shopping	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social club events	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Prayer meetings	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Visiting family	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Preparing for exams	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing assignments	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Doing library work	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Preparing for lectures	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Sharing lecture notes	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 11 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often do you ask Local Student for help or advice when doing the following activities?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Shopping	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Find places at the university	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Directions to go somewhere	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Where studying for exams	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
When in a study group	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Assignments proof reading	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Explaining class material	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Explaining assignment work	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Using the library	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Help with the computer	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 12 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often International ME Students ask you for help or advice when doing the following activities?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Shopping	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Find places at the university	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Directions to go somewhere	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Where studying for exams	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
When participating in a study group	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Assignments proof reading	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Explaining class material	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Explaining assignment work	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Using the library	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Help with the computer	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 13 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often you interact face to face with Local Students at the following places

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Lecture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Tutorial sessions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Library	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Place of residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
University's food court	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Student union	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Sport ground	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social club	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Shopping mall	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Entertaining venue	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Eating place/coffee shop	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Parks	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Places of worship e.g. prayer rooms, churches etc.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 14 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often you interact face to face with International ME Students at the following places

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Lecture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Tutorial sessions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Library	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Place of residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

University's food court	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Student union	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Sport ground	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social club	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Shopping mall	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Entertaining venue	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Eating place/coffee shop	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Parks	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Places of worship e.g. prayer rooms, churches etc.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 15 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how often you interact face to face with Other International Students at the following places

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Lecture	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Tutorial sessions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Library	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Place of residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
University's food court	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Student union	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Sport ground	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social club	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Shopping mall	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Entertaining venue	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Eating place/coffee shop	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Parks	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Places of worship e.g. prayer rooms, churches etc.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 1 - Question 16 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how important is to you to have face to face contact with Local Students for the following purposes

	Very important	Important	Moderately Important	Not Important at all
To use English language	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

To study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Friendships	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Have fun	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
For worship	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To development of new interests	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To do hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To do sport	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 1 - Question 17 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how important is to you to have face to face contact with International ME Students for the following purposes:

	Very important	Important	Moderately Important	Not Important at all
To use English language	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Friendships	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Have fun	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
For worship	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To develop new interests	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To do hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To do sport	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 1 - Question 18 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how important is to you to have face to face contact with Other International Students for the following purposes:

	Very important	Important	Moderately Important	Not Important at all
To use English language	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Friendships	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Have fun	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
For worship	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To develop new interests	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To do hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To do sport	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Please indicate the level of difficulty you find in face to face contact with the following groups of students.

	Very difficult	Difficult	Very easy	Easy
Local students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
International ME students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

How do the following issues affect your face to face contact with Local Students?

	Not at all	Slightly	Very much
Cultural differences	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Stereotyping	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Racial differences	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Language difficulties	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Religion	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Age	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Different hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
A place to meet	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Time availability	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

B. This section is about your face to face networks.

Face to face networks are ways to make contact with people and build relationships. Network of contacts refer to students whom you socialise during uni hours and spend your free time with, doing the activities mentioned in the section A of the survey

In your first year in Australia indicate what best describes your networks of contacts

- ☐ Local students only
- ☐ International M.E students only
- ☐ International students only
- ☐ Mix of local and other international students
- ☐ Mix of local and international ME students
- ☐ Mix of international ME students and other international students
- ☐ Mix of local, international ME students and other international students
- ☐ Mix of local students, who are from ME origin, international ME students and other international students

Indicate what best describes the current composition of your networks of contacts

- ☐ Local students only
- ☐ International M.E students only
- ☐ International students only
- ☐ Mix of local and other international students
- ☐ Mix of local and international ME students
- ☐ Mix of international ME students and other international students
- ☐ Mix of local, international ME students and other international students
- ☐ Mix of local students, who are from ME origin, international ME students and other international students

If your face to face networks include Local Students', who are not from a Middle Eastern origin, please indicate Local Students' origin (if known) by selecting from the following categories (Please select one or more if applicable)

- ☐ Asia
- ☐ Europe
- ☐ India subcontinent
- ☐ Africa
- ☐ Australia
- ☐ Other, Please indicate background if known

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The number of Local Students in my face to face networks is about right	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The number of Local Students in my face to face networks is limited although I wish to have more contact.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The number of Local Students in my face to face networks is limited because I prefer face to face networks with students from my own country.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The number of Local Students in my face to face networks is limited because I have limited opportunities for contact with Local Students.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

The number of Local Students in my face to face networks is limited because local students are not interested in establishing contact with International Students.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Local Students are not included in my face to face networks, because I have established networks with international students while attending ELICOS classes.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4

Page 2 - Question 25 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Where did you first make your face to face networks with the following groups of students?

	Local students	International M.E students	Other international students
ELICOS classes	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
English language foundation classes	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Uni orientation	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Club meetings	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At friend's place	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
At my accommodation	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Page 2 - Question 26 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate the level of difficulty you found to establish network with the following groups of students

	very difficult	Difficult	Slightly difficult	Not difficult at all
Local students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
International ME students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 2 - Question 27 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How often do you depend on your face to face networks with the following groups of students?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never
Local students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
International M.E students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

What is the purpose of your networks with Local Students? (Please tick one or more if applicable)

- ☐ Spend time together
- ☐ To have fun
- ☐ Learning new ways of doing things
- ☐ Supporting me when I feel homesick
- ☐ Learning about other culture
- ☐ Celebrating religious/national days
- ☐ Visiting prayer rooms/church
- ☐ Improve my language skills
- ☐ Getting help with assignments
- ☐ Find out information
- ☐ Arrange functions
- ☐ Seek help

What is the purpose of your networks with International M.E Students? Please tick one or more when applicable

- ☐ Spend time together
- ☐ To have fun
- ☐ Learning new ways of doing things
- ☐ Supporting me when I feel homesick
- ☐ Celebrating religious/national days
- ☐ Visiting prayer rooms/church
- ☐ Getting help with assignments
- ☐ Find out information
- ☐ Arrange functions
- ☐ Seek help

What is the purpose of your networks with Other International Students? Please tick one or more when applicable

- ☐ Spend time together
- ☐ To have fun
- ☐ Learning new ways of doing things
- ☐ Supporting me when I feel homesick
- ☐ Learning about other culture
- ☐ Celebrating religious/national days
- ☐ Visiting prayer rooms/church
- ☐ Improve my language skills
- ☐ Getting help with assignments

- ☐ Find out information
- ☐ Arrange functions
- ☐ Seek help

Page 2 - Question 31 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how important are your networks with Local Students in the following issues?

	Very Important	Important	Somehow	Not important at all
Spend time together	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To have fun	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Supporting me when I feel homesick	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Celebrating religious/national days	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Visiting prayer rooms/church	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Getting help with assignments	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Find out information	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Arrange functions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Seek help	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 2 - Question 32 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how important are your networks with International M.E Students in the following issues?

	Very Important	Important	Somehow	Not important at all
Spend time together	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To have fun	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Supporting me when I feel homesick	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Celebrating religious/national days	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Visiting prayer rooms/church	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Getting help with assignments	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Find out information	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Arrange functions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Seek help	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 2 - Question 33 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Please indicate how important are your networks with Other International Students in the following issues?

	Very Important	Important	Somehow	Not important at all
Spend time together	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
To have fun	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Learning new ways of doing things	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Supporting me when I feel homesick	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Learning about other culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Celebrating religious/national days	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Visiting prayer rooms/church	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Improve my language skills	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Getting help with assignments	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Find out information	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Arrange functions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Seek help	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 2 - Question 34 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How have your face to face networks been influenced by cultural differences with the following groups of students?

	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very much	Extremely
Local students	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Other international students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 2 - Question 35 - Choice - Multiple Answers (Bullets)

What aspect(s) influence(s) the use of your face to face networks with Local Students?

- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Interests/hobbies
- ☐ Access to students
- ☐ Time availability
- ☐ Age

Page 2 - Question 36 - Choice - Multiple Answers (Bullets)

What aspect(s) influence(s) the use of your face to face networks with International ME Students?

- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Interests/hobbies
- ☐ Access to students
- ☐ Time availability
- ☐ Age

Page 2 - Question 37 - Choice - Multiple Answers (Bullets)

What aspect(s) influence(s) the use of your face to face networks with Local Students?

- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Language

- ☐ Interests/hobbies
- ☐ Access to students
- ☐ Time availability
- ☐ Age

Page 2 - Question 38 - Choice - Multiple Answers (Bullets)

What aspect(s) influence(s) the use of your face to face networks with Other International Students?

- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Language
- ☐ Interests/hobbies
- ☐ Access to students
- ☐ Time availability
- ☐ Age

Page 2 - Question 39 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How the following aspect(s) influence(s) the use of your face to face networks with Local Students?

	Extremely	Very much	Moderately	Not at all
Culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Religion	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Language	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Interests/hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Access students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Time availability	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Age	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 2 - Question 40 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How the following aspect(s) influence(s) the use of your face to face networks with International M.E Students?

	Extremely	Very much	Moderately	Not at all
Culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Religion	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Language	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Interests/hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Access students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Time availability	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Age	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

How the following aspect(s) influence the use of your face to face networks with Other International Students?

	Extremely	Very much	Moderately	Not at all
Culture	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Religion	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Language	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Interests/hobbies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Access students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Time availability	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Age	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

What cultural similarities influence the establishment of face to face networks with Local Students?

- ☐ Dress code
- ☐ Choice of entertainment
- ☐ Male-female relationships
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Family values
- ☐ Religion values
- ☐ No similarities, please explain

What cultural similarities influence the establishment of face to face networks with Other International Students?

- ☐ Dress code
- ☐ Choice of entertainment
- ☐ Male-female relationships
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Family values
- ☐ Religion values
- ☐ No similarities, please explain

How the following cultural differences influence the establishment of face to face networks with Other International Students?

Extremely Very much Moderately Not at all

Dress code	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Choice of entertainment	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Male-female relationships	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Family values	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Religion values	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 2 - Question 45 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How the following cultural differences influence the establishment of face to face networks with Local Students?

	Extremely	Very much	Moderately	Not at all
Dress code	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Choice of entertainment	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Male-female relationship	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Family values	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Religion values	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 3 - Heading

C. This section is about your life

Page 3 - Question 46 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

Which of the followings best describes your living situation?

- ☐ Home stay accommodation with a local family
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with co nationals
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with other International ME students
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with other International students
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with local students
- ☐ Student shared accommodation with mix of students
- ☐ Private accommodation with other EM students
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 47 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How often do you have the following activities at your place of living with Local Students?

	Very often	Often	Never
Having dinner	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Watching movies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Going out	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Play sport / games	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
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Page 3 - Question 48 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How often do you have the following activities at your place of living with International ME Students?

	Very often	Often	Never
Having dinner	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Watching movies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Going out	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Play sport / games	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Page 3 - Question 49 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How often do you have the following activities at your place of living with Other International Students?

	Very often	Often	Never
Having dinner	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Watching movies	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Going out	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Play sport / games	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3
Study	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3

Page 3 - Heading

D. This section is about your study habits

Page 3 - Question 50 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How often do you study with Local Students at the following places?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never
At University	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
At my residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
At a friend's place	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 3 - Question 51 - Rating Scale - Matrix

How often do you study with the International ME Students at the following places?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never
At University	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
At my residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
At a friend's place	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

How often do you study with Other International Students at the following places?

	Very often	Often	Rarely	Never
At University	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
At my residence	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
At a friend's place	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I prefer to interact with Local Students because I am interested to know more about Australian culture.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I prefer to interact with Local Students because they show interest to learn about my culture.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I prefer to interact with Local Students because they better know how to do assignments and other uni work.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I prefer to interact with Local Students in order to improve my English language skills.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I prefer to interact with Local Students because they are fun to work with.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I prefer to interact with International ME Students and other international students because I have difficulties in understanding local students English	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I prefer to interact with International ME Students and other international students because I feel more comfortable to do uni work with students whose level of English is similar to mine.	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I feel that Local Students are avoiding me	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
I interact with any group of students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

who share similar interests with mine

Page 3 - Heading

E. This section is about your perceptions about other students and western culture

Page 3 - Question 54 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Indicate the extent you agree/disagree with the following statements. Local Students:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Like me for what I am	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Avoid contact with me	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Help me with my work when I ask	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Do consider me different because of my culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Are open- minded and interested learn about my culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Are understanding of my beliefs	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Are understanding of my cultural upbringing	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 3 - Question 55 - Rating Scale - Matrix

Indicate the extent you agree/disagree with the following statements. Other International Students:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Like me for what I am	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Avoid contact with me	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Help me with my work when I ask	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Do consider me different because of my culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Are open- minded and interested learn about my culture	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Are understanding of my beliefs	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Are understanding of my cultural upbringing	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 3 - Question 56 - Rating Scale - Matrix

What are the aspects of western culture that you most like/dislike, accept/reject?

	Like	Dislike	Accept	Reject
The equal gender status	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

The role of the women	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The employment opportunities for women	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Freedom in choice of partner	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The informality between teacher and students	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The dress code	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
The life style	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Use of alcohol	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Western food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Western entertainment	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4
Western religions	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4

Page 3 - Question 57 - Rating Scale - Matrix

To what extent is your perception towards local students/western culture influenced by the following aspects of your culture?

	Extremely	Very much	Slightly	Moderately	Not at all
Gender relationships	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Gender status	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Dress code	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Religious practices	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Life style	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5

Page 3 - Heading

F. This section is about you

Page 3 - Question 58 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

What is your age group?

- ☐ 19-24
- ☐ 25-30
- ☐ 31-36
- ☐ 37-41
- ☐ 42+
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 59 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

What is your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Page 3 - Question 60 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

What is your marital status?

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 61 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

What is the country of your origin?

- ☐ UAE
- ☐ Saudi Arabia
- ☐ Oman
- ☐ Jordan
- ☐ Syria
- ☐ Iraq
- ☐ Lebanon
- ☐ Egypt
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 62 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

What is the status of your study?

- ☐ Undergraduate
- ☐ Postgraduate
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 63 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

How long have you been in Australia?

- ☐ Less than 6 months
- ☐ One year
- ☐ Two years
- ☐ Three years
- ☐ More than four years

Page 3 - Question 64 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

In what year of your study are you currently enrolled?

- ☐ First year
- ☐ Second year

- ☐ Third year
- ☐ Fourth year
- ☐ Other, please specify

Page 3 - Question 65 - Yes or No

Have you studied overseas before, apart from Australia?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Page 3 - Question 66 - Yes or No

Did you learn any other language(s), apart from Arabic in your home country?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ If yes, please specified language :

Page 3 - Question 67 - Choice - One Answer (Bullets)

What was the standard of your spoken English before arriving in Australia?

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Poor

Page 3 - Question 68 - Open Ended - Comments Box

Is there anything else you would like to raise in regards to your cross cultural interactions in Australia? (Optional)

Page 3 - Heading

Thank you for completing the survey