

## **The Impact of the Religious and Cultural Factors on Saudi Female Studying in Western Institutions**

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**Abstract :** Due to the unique background of the Saudi female international students who study in western institutes, they face tough challenges as English as a second language (ESL) learners. This paper draws on a Ph.D. study that examines a wide range of challenges faced by Saudi female international students when they study the English language and other academic subjects in a new culture. This research project followed the phenomenological approach and, more specifically, used the in-depth interview to provide an opportunity to the seven female participants to make their voices heard through telling their stories. The data analysis indicated that the Saudi female international students who study in western institutes are faced with religious and cultural challenges that impact their academic performance. This study is significant for the authorities in Saudi Arabia and the hosting universities as it gives essential recommendations to both sides of the aisle. It also provides the Saudi female international students with vital recommendations to better cope with those challenges.

**Keywords :** English language learners, religious and cultural background, Saudi female students, tough challenges

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