



**University of
Nottingham**

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**Exploring the Experiences and Perspectives of Saudi Mothers in
Interaction with Their Primary School Children's Autonomy and Motivation within
COVID Learning Contexts**

A THESIS

Submitted to the School of Education of the
University of Nottingham in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Dheya Boudy

School of Education

The University of Nottingham

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Declaration

I certify that I wrote this entire thesis. Unless clearly mentioned otherwise, all written content on these pages is my own. My own and unique efforts produced the research report and findings. I have identified all the sources from which I drew ideas and excerpts. This thesis has never been presented, in whole or in part, as part of an application for any degree or professional qualification. This work is original and has not been submitted for publication anywhere.

Submitted on 06/10/2024.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my mum and dad, who have been my unwavering source of love, encouragement and inspiration. Your belief in my abilities and your endless support have been instrumental in shaping my academic journey.

To my loving husband, Ibrahim, whose constant support and understanding have been the anchor in my life. Thank you for standing by me during the challenging moments and for celebrating the triumphs with me. You are my confidant and my biggest cheerleader. Your love and your belief in my dreams have fuelled my determination to push through challenges and achieve my goals.

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted families worldwide; those in Saudi Arabia were among them. This period presented mothers with unique opportunities and challenges, including the chance to “get to know” their children better and explore strategies to promote autonomy and motivation during the primary school years. Despite Saudi Arabia’s ongoing development and implementation of Vision 2030 – i.e., a dynamic strategy that supports lifelong learning and individual potential – there is a notable lack of studies that focus on the role of the family and the importance of autonomy for children in remote learning. However, remote learning is a relatively new experience for Saudi society, especially for primary-aged children. This research aligns with the concept of “actualising tendency”, pioneered by Carl Rogers in 1961, which emphasises personal autonomy as an intrinsic motivation that drives individuals towards excellence. Understanding how Saudi families navigated these challenges during remote learning is crucial for children and future educational development and alignment with the goals of Vision 2030. This research is divided into two studies. The first study solely focuses on mothers with a background in Saudi Arabia; the second study concentrates on mothers with a multicultural “KSA-UK” background.

In order to explore the mothers’ in-depth subjective experience with remote learning, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is used to analyse the interview data and answer the following questions: 1. What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning? 2. What are the influential factors and strategies that Saudi mothers perceived and experienced when their children interacted with remote learning and multicultural contexts? The findings revealed a complex interplay of culture and mothers’ experiences, which seem to shape their self-concept, defined in this study as a person’s

perception and comprehension of themselves, including their beliefs, values, abilities and traits (Ismail & Tekke, 2015).

Furthermore, remote learning plays a role in collaboration between mothers and their children, allowing them to experience autonomy and self-determination. Mothers acknowledge their children's ability to adapt to challenges in remote learning contexts, which seems to contribute to increasing child autonomy. In both studies, mothers used rewards and punishment as motivational methods, which presents tensions with the person-centred approach (PCA) and self-determination theory (SDT), as these approaches emphasise intrinsic motivation and the importance of fostering autonomy rather than relying on external controls such as rewards and punishments. The second study reveals how the mother's experience abroad possibly influences her personal values and attitudes. Moving away may have disrupted the influence of others, allowing mothers more freedom to develop their parenting style. The findings are discussed in relation to previous research and relevant theories. The study also considers the implications of the findings for Saudi society and families, including Saudi mothers who study abroad, remote learning and childhood education.

Keywords: Saudi mothers, culture, autonomy, self-determination theory, person-centred approach, interpretative phenomenological analysis, acculturation to the UK.

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	2
Dedication.....	3
Acknowledgments.....	4
Abstract.....	5
Table of Contents.....	7
List of Abbreviations.....	19
List of Figures.....	20
List of Tables.....	21
Chapter 1: General Introduction	22
1.1. Chapter Overview	22
1.2. Purpose and Aims of the Research.....	22
1.3. Background.....	23
1.4. Significance of the Study	26
1.5. Motivation.....	29
1.6. Research Population of Interest	31
1.7. Theoretical Framework.....	32
1.8. Overview of the Methodology	34
1.8.1. Semi-Structured Interviews	34
1.8.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	34
1.9. Structure of the Thesis	35

1.9.1. Chapter 1: Introduction	35
1.9.2. Chapter 2: The Literature Review.....	35
1.9.3. Chapter 3: Methodology	36
1.9.4. Chapter 4: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the First Study.....	36
1.9.5. Chapter 5: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Second Study	36
1.9.6. Chapter 6: General Discussion	37
1.9.7. Chapter 7: Conclusion	37
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	38
2.1. Chapter Overview	38
2.2. Person-Centred Approach (PCA).....	39
2.2.1. PCA and Education	42
2.2.2. PCA in a Classroom Setting.....	45
2.2.3. The Role of Teachers in Person-Centred Education	46
2.2.3.1. Realness.	47
2.2.3.2. Acceptance (or Unconditional Positive Regard).....	47
2.2.3.3. Empathy.	47
2.2.3.4. Teacher as Facilitator.	47
2.2.4. A Modern PCA Perspective on Remote Learning	49
2.2.5. Towards Learner-Centred Online Instruction	50
2.3. Self Determination Theory (SDT)	51
2.3.1. Key Concepts in SDT	51

2.3.2. Autonomy.....	52
2.3.2.1. Defining Autonomy	53
2.3.2.2. Autonomy Support in Academic Settings.....	54
2.3.2.3. Autonomy in Early Childhood Education.....	57
2.3.3. Motivation.....	60
2.3.3.1. Defining Motivation.....	61
2.3.3.2. Types of Motivation.	61
2.3.3.3. Extrinsic Motivation	62
2.3.3.4. Intrinsic Motivation.	64
2.3.3.5. Motivation in Childhood Education.....	64
2.3.3.6. Fun and Games.	67
2.3.3.7. Focusing on Specific Subjects	69
2.3.3.8. Teacher Innovation.....	71
2.3.3.9. Technological Developments	72
2.3.3.10. An Opportunity for Parents, Not Just Teachers.....	72
2.3.4. Relationship Between Autonomy Support and Intrinsic Motivation in Context of Childhood Education	74
2.4. Relationship Between Roger’s Person-Centred Education and Self Determination Theory	78
2.4.1. SDT Terminology for Extrinsic Regulations	79
2.4.2. Interconnectedness of Autonomy and Personal Power.....	82
2.5. Parents’ Involvement in Their Children’s Education.....	83

2.5.1. Parent Educational Background.....	85
2.5.2. Parental Facilitation of Autonomous Support and Intrinsic Learning Motivation	87
2.5.3. Outlook of a PCA and PET on the Parent-Child Relationship	89
2.6. Remote Learning.....	90
2.6.1. An Overview of Remote Learning.....	90
2.6.2. Remote Learning Amid Covid-19 Pandemic.....	92
2.6.3. Remote Learning and the Role of Mothers.....	94
2.7. Context of Study	95
2.7.1. An Overview of Culture.....	96
2.7.2. Individualism versus Collectivism.....	96
2.7.3. Cultural Influence on Autonomy and Motivation.....	96
2.7.4. Acculturation Strategies	98
2.7.5. Acculturation Challenges	99
2.8. Overview of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).....	101
2.8.1. Cultural Context.....	102
2.8.2. Culture and Learner Autonomy in Saudi Arabia	103
2.8.3. The Integral Role of Religion in Saudi Culture and Society	104
2.8.4. Education in Saudi Arabia	106
2.8.4.1. History of Education in Saudi Arabia	106
2.8.4.2. Saudi Educational System.....	106
2.8.4.3. Education Stages in Saudi Arabia	109

2.8.4.4. Nurseries and Kindergartens	110
2.8.4.5. Primary Education	110
2.8.4.6. Secondary School.....	110
2.8.4.7. High School	110
2.8.4.8. University and Higher Education.....	111
2.8.4.9. International Saudi Students	112
2.8.5. Women and Saudi Arabia Vision 2030	115
2.8.5.1. Empowering Working Women.....	117
2.8.5.2. Qiyadyat Platform.....	117
2.8.5.3. Tamheer Platform.....	118
2.8.5.4. Transportation for Women (Wusool)	118
2.8.5.5. Qurrah Program – A Daycare for Children of Working Women.....	118
2.8.5.6. Freelance Financing Program	118
2.9. Research Gap	119
2.9.1. Limitations of Existing Studies.....	119
2.9.2. COVID-19 Pandemic and Remote Learning Focus	121
2.9.3. Mothers’ Perspective in Saudi Arabia.....	121
2.10. Identifying the Research Contribution.....	121
2.11. Chapter Conclusion.....	122
Chapter 3: Methodology	123
3.1. Chapter Overview	123

3.2. Research Methodology	123
3.2.1. Research Questions.....	125
3.2.2. Research Philosophy.....	125
3.2.3. Research Paradigm: Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology.....	126
3.2.3.1. Ontology	126
3.2.3.2. Epistemology	126
3.2.3.3. Axiology.....	127
3.3. Interpretive Paradigm (Subjective Regulation)	127
3.3.1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	128
3.3.1.1. Phenomenology.....	130
3.3.1.2. Hermeneutics	132
3.3.1.3. Idiographic	132
3.3.2. Rationale for an IPA.....	133
3.4. Overview of the Two Research Studies	135
3.4.1. Research Protocol	136
3.4.1.1. Techniques of Data Production.....	136
3.4.1.2. Sampling Technique.....	136
3.4.1.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria.....	136
3.4.2. Interviews Guide.....	137
3.4.3. Timing and Methods Used.....	139
3.4.4. Data Analysis Preparation.....	140

3.4.5. IPA Data Analysis	142
3.4.5.1. Reading Again and Again	142
3.4.5.2. Initial Notation	142
3.4.5.3. Creation of Emergent Themes	143
3.4.5.4. Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes	144
3.4.5.5. Moving to the Next Case	145
3.4.5.6. Looking for Patterns Across Cases	145
3.5. Ethics.....	146
3.6. Credibility and Validity Concerns.....	147
3.7. Reflexivity.....	148
3.8. Chapter Conclusion.....	150
Chapter 4: Study 1	152
4.1. Chapter Overview	152
4.2. Conducting an IPA	153
4.2.1. Interview Protocol.....	154
4.2.2. Data Analysis	155
4.2.3. Sampling	155
4.2.4. Participants' Profiles	157
4.2.4.1. Participant 1	157
4.2.4.2. Participant 2	157
4.2.4.3. Participant 3	158

4.2.4.4. Participant 4	158
4.2.4.5. Participant 5	159
4.2.4.6. Participant 6	160
4.2.4.7. Participant 7	160
4.2.4.8. Participant 8	161
4.3. Discussion of Key Emergent Themes and Subthemes.....	161
4.3.1. Themes Related to Mothers	162
4.3.1.1. Mothers' Self-Concept	163
4.3.1.2. Mothers' Background and Responsibilities	164
4.3.1.3. Possible Family Influence	166
4.3.1.4. Mothers' High Expectations and Aspirations	167
4.3.1.5. Mothers' Strategies to Motivate Their Children to Learn.....	169
4.3.2. Themes Related to Children from Mothers' Perspectives	173
4.3.2.1. Children's Self-Concept.....	174
4.3.2.2. Resilience in Children.....	175
4.3.3. Themes Related to Remote Learning.....	177
4.3.3.1. Mothers and Remote Learning.....	177
4.3.3.1.1. Mothers' Involvement.....	177
4.3.3.1.2. Remote Learning Challenges for Mothers	178
4.3.3.2. Children and Remote Learning	181
4.3.3.2.1. Autonomy and Growth in Remote Learning.....	181

4.4. Limitations	184
4.5. Potential Areas for Future Research	185
4.6. Chapter Conclusion.....	186
Chapter 5: Study 2	187
5.1. Chapter Overview	187
5.2. Conducting an IPA	187
5.2.1. Interview Protocol and Sampling	188
5.2.2. Mothers' Profile: Multicultural Exposure	190
5.2.2.1. Participant 1	191
5.2.2.2. Participant 2	192
5.2.2.3. Participant 3	192
5.2.2.4. Participant 4	192
5.2.2.5. Participant 5	193
5.2.2.6. Participant 6	193
5.2.2.7. Participant 7	194
5.2.2.8. Participant 8	194
5.2.2.9. Participant 9	195
5.3. Discussion of Key Emergent Themes and Subthemes.....	195
5.3.1. Themes Related to Mothers	196
5.3.1.1. Mother's Self-Concept.....	197
5.3.1.2. Mother's Strategies to Motivate Their Children	200

5.3.1.3. Impact of Alienation on Mothers	204
5.3.1.4. Mothers' Experiences of Autonomy	206
5.3.1.5. Promoting Autonomy through Empathy	209
5.3.2. Themes Related to Children from Mother's Perspectives	212
5.3.2.1. Resilience in Children.....	212
5.3.2.2. Children's Gender	214
5.3.3. Themes Related to Remote Learning.....	215
5.3.3.1. Engagement and Motivation.....	216
5.3.3.2. Autonomy and Growth in Remote Learning.....	217
5.3.3.3. Facilitator in Remote Learning.....	219
5.3.4. Themes Related to the KSA Scholarship Programmes' Impact.....	221
5.3.4.1. Cultural Sensitivity and Acculturation.....	221
5.3.4.2. Religious Guidance and Constraints.....	223
5.3.4.3. Family Cooperation	224
5.3.5. Themes Related to Returning to Saudi Arabia.....	226
5.3.5.1. Language and Communication Barriers	226
5.3.5.2. Choosing a School in the KSA	229
5.3.5.3. Saudi Arabia Cultural Shift.....	230
5.4. Limitations	234
5.5. Potential Areas for Future Research	234
5.6. Chapter Conclusion.....	235

Chapter 6: General Discussion.....	236
6.1. Introduction.....	236
6.2. Studies Overview	236
6.2.1. Study 1	236
6.2.2. Study 2	237
6.3. Interpreting the Findings in Association with the Theoretical Frameworks.....	239
6.3.1. Self-Concept and Personal Power.....	239
6.3.2. Mother Involvements	242
6.3.3. Reverse Cultural Transition and Acculturation.....	245
6.3.4. Mother’s Motivational Strategy	247
6.3.5. Child’s Autonomy and Growth in Remote Learning	249
6.4. Resilience Through Change: Empowering Mothers and Children with the PCA and SDT	252
Chapter 7: Conclusion.....	255
7.1. Reviewing the Findings	255
7.2. Validating the Findings	256
7.2.1. Sensitivity to Context.....	257
7.2.2. Commitment and Rigour	258
7.2.3. Transparency and Coherence	259
7.2.4. Impact and Importance	259
7.3. Contributions and Implications.....	260
7.4. Limitations	264

7.5. Future Research	265
7.6. Recommendations.....	267
7.7. Reflections on the Research Process.....	267
References.....	269
Appendix 1: Participants' Invitation Letter.....	300
Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet	301
Appendix 3: Research Participant Privacy Notice.....	303
Appendix 4: Consent Form.....	304
Appendix 5: Ethical Approval From UoN Ethics Committee	305
Appendix 6: Participants' Transcript Extract.....	306

List of Abbreviations

GDP: gross domestic product

MOE: Ministry of Education

ICT: information communication and technology

IPA: interpretative phenomenological analysis

KSA: Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

PCA: person-centred approach

SCL: student-centred learning

SDT: self-determination theory

UK: United Kingdom

UPR: unconditional positive regard

US: United States

List of Figures

Figure 1	62
Figure 2	62
Figure 3	99
Figure 4	162
Figure 5	196

List of Tables

Table 1	112
Table 2	123
Table 3	144
Table 4	156
Table 5	190

Chapter 1: General Introduction

1.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter sets the foundation for the research. It first outlines the research purpose, then provides an overview of the background, discusses the significance of the study and presents the research motivation. It addresses the research population of interest, theoretical frameworks, research aims and research questions. It also provides an overview of the methodologies that underpin the study. Lastly, this chapter considers the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Purpose and Aims of the Research

This research aims to understand Saudi mothers' perspectives on supporting their children's autonomy and motivation, as well as their experiences in facilitating these qualities during remote learning in the context of COVID-19. Additionally, it explores the influence of culture on mothers' self-concept, parenting and early childhood education. By conducting this research, I aim to contribute to understanding and exploring the experiences and perspectives of this specific group of mothers regarding their children's autonomy and motivation by giving them a voice that might otherwise go unheard during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aims of this research can be outlined as follows:

- Understanding Saudi mothers' perspectives on supporting autonomy and motivation for their children.
- Explore how parents' experiences facilitate their children's autonomy and motivation when engaged in remote learning in COVID-19 contexts.
- Explore how culture influences and shapes mothers' self-concept, parenting and early childhood education.

The following research questions are used to achieve these aims:

- What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning?
- What are the influential factors and strategies that Saudi mothers perceived and experienced when their children interacted with remote learning and multicultural contexts?

1.3. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a major shift in education, with online platforms becoming the new norm worldwide. Saudi Arabia was no exception since families in the country encountered both challenges and opportunities during this time. Many parents, especially mothers, had to swiftly adapt to new roles when supporting their children's learning at home due to this fast transition. They were presented with an unexpected opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of their children's educational needs and to explore strategies that encouraged autonomy during the primary years. Riley (2015) argues that children who receive their education at home tend to develop a greater sense of autonomy and self-confidence compared with their friends in traditional school settings. The recent shift has brought attention to the potential advantages of homeschooling while also revealing the unpreparedness of families for such a sudden transition. Teachers, students and parents were unprepared for the sudden transition to remote teaching and learning (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Jalongo, 2021). This increased mothers' responsibilities with regard to their children (Bubb & Jones, 2020; Garbe et al., 2020) and increased parental involvement in children's education (Novianti & Garzia, 2020).

However, efforts were made to foster social separation in order to limit the spread of the virus (McMichael et al., 2020; Viner et al., 2020). Social distancing was recommended and enforced on individuals and institutions to prevent the epidemic from spreading and schools became remote and from home. Most K-12 schools worldwide primarily provide

face-to-face instruction, but the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown affected approximately 94% of the world's student population (United Nations, 2020, p. 2). The pandemic prompted most institutions to swiftly transition online (UNESCO, 2020). Parents continued to actively participate in educating their children, involving themselves, the school and instructors in their children's learning process (Ntekane, 2018), especially the younger ones who need parental involvement. In contrast, the older students may have been better able to acclimatise to online learning without parental involvement (Novianti & Garzia, 2020; Lawrence & Fakuade, 2021). Parents may be faced with difficulties in knowing how they can best support their children's education when it occurs in a remote environment (Boulton, 2008; Murphy & Rodriguez-Manzanares, 2009), with some being uninterested in employing technology (Beckman et al., 2019). Moreover, the uncertainty of when life will return to "normal" can cause worry (Daniel, 2020; Garbe et al., 2020). At the same time, the experience of children changed during the pandemic due to school closures, confinement and the cancellation of social gatherings (Boland & Mortlock, 2020; Garbe et al., 2020).

However, Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), a key figure in sociocultural theory, emphasized the profound influence of social interactions and the cultural environment on learning (Vygotsky, 1978). His work underscores the importance of social context, particularly in early childhood, where children learn through interactions within their immediate environment (Daniels & Foyle, 2001). This perspective is crucial when considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, as the sudden shift to online learning disrupted the traditional social and cultural contexts in which children typically learn.

During the pandemic and navigating new educational environments at home, families were required to engage more deeply in their children's learning, fostering both opportunities and challenges. The need for self-directed learning became more apparent, particularly among younger students who, as Vygotsky's theory suggests, typically rely on social

interactions to guide their learning. The absence of these interactions in a physical school setting meant that both parents and children had to adapt quickly.

In this context, the concept of self-directed learning takes on new significance. According to self-determination theory (SDT), self-directed learning refers to autonomy – i.e., the ability of children to manage their learning independently, driven by their own motivations rather than external pressures (John, 2020). However, as Vygotsky's theory implies, younger students may struggle with this autonomy due to their still-developing capacities for self-directed learning (Daniela & Visvizi, 2021). This challenge was particularly evident during the pandemic, as parents had to support their children's learning in ways that aligned with their developmental needs.

Furthermore, according to a person-centred approach (PCA), self-directed learning reflects the actualising tendency, i.e., the internal motivation that drives individuals to achieve their potential (Rogers, 1959). The pandemic period, therefore, not only highlighted the need for external support in children's learning but also underscored the importance of nurturing intrinsic motivation and autonomy.

Our innate longing is to feel, experience and act in a manner that is consistent with our self-image and mirrors our ideal self. When our perception of ourselves closely matches our ideal self, we feel more consistent and congruent within ourselves. Additionally, this alignment contributes to an enhanced sense of self-worth. Moreover, Rogers suggested that, for individuals to undergo personal growth, they need to be in an environment that provides genuineness, characterised by openness, self-disclosure and acceptance, in which they are viewed with unconditional and positive regard, alongside empathy, where they can be heard and understood (McLeod, 2014). In this research, I discuss children's autonomy and motivation in their educational journey during the COVID-19 pandemic. Involving a PCA in this research allows for a focus on individualising education by supporting autonomy and a

learning environment. According to Rogers, a PCA in learning involves pupils choosing what to study and why (Rogers, 1951). His theory of human learning addressed both the learner and the motivational processes; for example, in his book *Freedom to Learn* (1994), learning and development are innate human impulses that educators should encourage as “facilitators”. He stressed the need to create a friendly, non-judgemental learning atmosphere for children to explore their ideas and interests. Rogers also advocated experiential learning, which involves hands-on projects that enable students to apply their knowledge. Students learn to think critically and understand the topic better using this strategy.

Rogers believed students should be self-directed and engaged in their education. Education professionals can help children build a lifetime love of studying by giving them opportunities, letting them choose goals and allowing them to follow their interests. In the end, Rogers’ educational philosophy stressed the need to treat each student as a person with distinct needs and talents rather than a passive learner. They learn best in an autonomous, exploratory and self-directed setting. Teachers can assist students in attaining their full potential inside and beyond the classroom by developing a tailored learning experience that promotes their growth and development (Rogers, 1983).

1.4. Significance of the Study

This research aims to understand Saudi mothers’ perspectives on supporting their children’s autonomy and motivation, as well as their experiences in facilitating these qualities during remote learning in the context of COVID-19. Additionally, it explores the influence of culture on mothers’ self-concept, parenting and early childhood education. My findings are beneficial in providing information on frameworks and practices of autonomy and motivation in remote learning. Few studies are based on empirical data that examine how early childhood educators utilised remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Steed et al.,

2022). After researching remote learning literature in general and, in particular, for autonomy, I observed that most of the literature offers an explanation of the opinions of teachers and parents on the distance education process during COVID-19 (see, for example, Ewing & Cooper, 2021; Güvercin et al., 2022; Treceñe, 2022). Other studies explored the lived experiences of parents who acted as learning supervisors, such as a tutor (for example, Agaton & Cueto, 2021; Budhrani et al., 2021). The impact on parental employment and child education has also been documented as a result of the pandemic (Del Boca, 2020; Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). Other studies have determined how involved students are in their remote learning programmes, how challenging it is for them and their parents (Misirli & Ergulec, 2021; Burns et al., 2022) and how beneficial it is for their education (Çelik Solyalı & Özreçberoğlu, 2020). However, in Saudi Arabia, there are more studies focused on investigating the teachers' perspectives and experiences with online education in Saudi Arabia (for instance, Al-Ghamdi, 2021; Alasmari, 2022; Alsubaie, 2022). Few studies have explored the influence of mothers, particularly when they take on other duties, such as teaching their children, in addition to their responsibilities as mothers. Others have studied the effectiveness of remote learning for public education in Saudi Arabia from the perspectives of students, teachers and parents (Alkinani, 2021). Another analysis explored parental involvement in children's education during COVID-19, with studies such as Hafidz et al. (2020), Novianti and Garzia (2020) and Alharthi (2022).

In my opinion, the child spends most of their time with their family and the mother is linked to the child from birth, unlike the teacher who changes every year; this makes the mother's role more important. She is critical to the child's existence, while studies on mother-child interaction, as well as the mother's attitudes and parenting style, should be expanded upon because her style and approach will be passed down to the child. This factor is crucial because, along with school education, it will help determine the thinking and approach of the

next generation. The professional and personal life of a mother is also substantially impacted. Given the lack of comprehensive and detailed research on children's autonomy and motivation to learn online during the pandemic, this study is particularly important as it provides a detailed overview of Saudi mothers' perspectives on these issues. The study aims to fill the gaps in understanding how Saudi mothers perceive, experience and influence their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning, especially in the context of early childhood education. Findings from Al-Jarf (2022), who highlighted the differing preferences of parents and teachers regarding parental participation in online classes for primary school students, underscore the importance of this research. While parents were generally more receptive to attending online classes, teachers preferred less direct parental involvement. Despite these differences, both groups recognised the critical role parents play in online learning and acknowledged that parental involvement could be beneficial in certain situations. These findings further emphasised the importance of enabling children to adapt autonomously to online learning while providing support as needed.

However, there remains a significant gap in understanding the specific experiences and perspectives of Saudi mothers in this context. My experiences have provided a starting point, but further research is essential to determine whether Saudi mothers truly desire to understand their children's interests and offer genuine support, aligning with a PCA. This study explores Saudi mothers' exposure to both single and multicultural societies as well as their experiences, challenges and the factors that may influence their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning. The insights gained from this research will be valuable not only for Saudi mothers but also for the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Saudi Arabia, schools, teachers, parents and researchers interested in early childhood education. Additionally, the study considers the broader societal changes impacting Saudi women, particularly in light of the Saudi Vision 2030. The Vision has provided new opportunities for

Saudi women, leading to a significant increase in women's labour force participation, reaching 37% by the third quarter of 2022 (2030: A Vision Whose Foundation is the Citizen). These changes may influence the mothers' parenting roles and approaches to their children's education. Therefore, my study aims to address this gap by employing an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to investigate the multifaceted perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers concerning early childhood autonomy, motivation and remote learning.

1.5. Motivation

My interest in educational research started when I pursued a bachelor's degree in childhood education and later pursued a master's degree in the same field in the United States of America (USA). During this time, I cultivated a strong interest in childhood education; however, upon my return to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), I noticed a significant shift in how people engage with education. It was a phase of blended learning where people were engaging with education, combining traditional and remote learning (Sharpe et al., 2006). I experienced the transformational aspect of education in my own life. For instance, I witnessed how my first daughter cultivated motivation and enthusiasm for studying using technology. This experience made me realise education was undergoing a revolution. Hence, I became more interested in exploring the perspectives of Saudi mothers regarding this revolutionary educational transformation and its impact on their preferences for traditional or remote learning. Coincidentally, shortly after I commenced my PhD journey, the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the world we live in, including education. This unexpected adverse event was the precursor to shifting my research topic interest towards investigating Saudi mothers' perspectives on children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning. The pandemic

imposed unexpected limitations, forcing Saudi mothers to engage in remote learning with their children.

Furthermore, I wanted to investigate how culture influences and shapes mothers' views on themselves, education, parenting and early childhood education. Moreover, recent publications (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020) have highlighted the challenges experienced in education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The global transition from face-to-face to online teaching in universities was a difficult one. Taking into account the impact I felt as an international student and mother of two daughters, it is likely that all mothers, including Saudi ones, shared this experience. Therefore, I intend to explore their perspectives in this research. Given my early childhood educational background and my role as a mother, I felt a strong sense of responsibility to conduct a study that went beyond investigating students' academic performance and level of knowledge. I strongly believe in the significance of a child's psychological well-being in life as well as the necessity of empowering their autonomy and motivation to learn, enabling them to develop a rounded character both in terms of their education and life in general. Moreover, having grown up in Saudi Arabia and being familiar with its culture, I can attest that the tendency among many Saudi families is to be too protective of their children, often hindering their freedom to make choices or develop their autonomy. This could result in a dual effect on their children: fear and lack of trust. As a result, children may face challenges in life because they are ill-equipped to face them.

Additionally, I am particularly interested in exploring strategies parents employ to promote their children's autonomy and motivation. Do mothers with a single-culture experience have unified approaches? Does a mother's exposure to a multicultural setting shape their parenting style and methods? These questions motivated me to investigate the impact of culture and the unexpected world-changing pandemic on Saudi mothers'

perspectives and experiences of their primary school children's autonomy, motivation and interactions with single or multicultural exposure during remote learning. In summary, in my research, I attempt to bring more cultural nuances through my reflexivity by reflecting on my personal journey and experiences of Saudi and multicultural contexts in association with my primary school children's education. Significant factors have contributed to this rationale: the unforeseen outcome of the pandemic and the lack of homeschooling in the KSA, which was likely to experience perceptual changes due to the pandemic.

1.6. Research Population of Interest

My experiences and understanding of my society led me to choose Saudi Arabia as the research context. However, to the best of my knowledge, there are not many studies on Saudi society that focus on the role of the family and the importance of autonomy for children. This is because remote learning and learning from home for primary-aged children are new experiences for our society, despite the KSA's orientation towards development and Vision 2030. I want to emphasise the importance of autonomy and family participation in education across all learning contexts, regardless of the instructional strategy. The second study's population consisted of Saudi Arabia's mothers studying in the UK. The United Kingdom is a highly diverse and growing nation. It is one of the most popular destinations for graduate students, particularly Saudis (Ahmed, 2015). The difficulties I faced with alienation as an international student in the UK had a large impact on my choice to concentrate on the UK environment and postgraduate students for this research. Furthermore, the systematic review of Al Qahtani (2021) concluded that other English-speaking countries, where the number of Saudi family members surpasses that of Saudi students, should also receive special consideration. Indeed, it is perplexing that there has not been much research about the

experiences of Saudi female students in the UK, despite the fact that the country hosts the second largest number of Saudi female students after the USA.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

To conduct any type of research, one needs to have a philosophical underpinning (Scotland, 2012). In my case, I locate myself in interpretivism: I wish to be close to the experience, as opposed to seeking to claim I possess the reality (Smith et al., 2009, p. 33). My intention is not to focus on a single culture but rather to compare how exposure to more than one culture influences mothers' perspectives on children's autonomy, motivation and engagement with remote learning. Thus, my research is cross-cultural, comparing how diverse cultural exposure influences Saudi mothers brought up in Saudi Arabia.

According to Ilesanmi (2009), cross-cultural research is a scientific method of comparative research that compares cultures in order to answer questions regarding the incidence, distribution and causes of cultural variation and complex problems across a broad domain, typically the entire globe. As a Saudi mother who experienced different cultures – i.e., both American and British – in addition to Saudi Arabia's culture, I realised those exposures influenced my perspectives on myself, life, motherhood, education, advantages, challenges and critics; it was important to ensure the research was conducted cross-culturally.

The epistemological stance for this study is interpretivism. Interpretive research seeks to understand the subjective world of human experience. Each research approach combines a unique ontology (view of reality), epistemology (theory of knowledge), methodology (procedures or strategies) and axiology (values or ethics) (Duffy & Chenail, 2008). Furthermore, this research uses two distinct lenses to support the understanding and analysis of key cultural and psychological aspects of the study. These are the person-centred approach (PCA) and self-determination theory (SDT).

The PCA was founded on the work of Carl Rogers (1902–1987), who is recognised by many as one of the key figures in the establishment of humanistic psychology. In the early 1950s, non-directive counselling underwent a transformation and became known as ‘client-centred therapy’, a term that rose to prominence following the publication of the seminal work of Rogers (1951) entitled ‘Client-Centred Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory’ (Merry, 1999). This term encapsulates key aspects of what is now known as the person-centred approach. Among the key aspects are three important factors: unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence (Murphy et al., 2017).

The second lens of SDT is a macro-theory of human motivation that focuses on human personality relating to basic human psychological needs (Adams et al., 2017). Moreover, the theory specifies the directing of motivational activities instead of controlling behaviours in order to achieve a reward (extrinsic) or autonomous motivation (intrinsic) through behaviours driven by enjoyment and interest (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT is a theory for developing motivation and focuses on human personality relating to basic human psychological needs (Legault, 2017). These lenses are the cornerstone for understanding the subsequent key concepts associated with mothers’ experiences of their children’s autonomy and motivation while engaging with remote learning.

Interpretivism, a PCA and SDT share common attributes that contribute to their compatibility. They shed light on the importance of understanding individuals, their motivations and their subjective experiences of distinctive social phenomena. For instance, interpretivism acknowledges the significance of personal interpretations and meanings people give to social phenomena (Smith et al., 2009). Likewise, Rogers’ PCA places individuals at the centre of their own growth while valuing their unique perspectives and experiences (Merry, 1999). Similarly, SDT suggests individuals possess innate psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. These needs determine their behaviour and

motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The combination of interpretivism, a PCA and SDT provides a holistic approach and a more nuanced view of individuals' experiences and perspectives on social phenomena. This compatibility contributes to clarifying how individuals understand, interpret and interact with the social world, which leads to comprehensions concerned with different processes such as self-discovery, self-determination and personal growth. The next chapter delves deeply into the theoretical frameworks guiding this research: a PCA and SDT.

1.8. Overview of the Methodology

1.8.1. Semi-Structured Interviews

I will use semi-structured interviews to gather data from mothers' narratives. These will give participants the freedom to express their emotions and experiences about their children's remote learning, as well as the influence of their culture. The semi-structured interviews allow the mothers to share their thoughts and feelings about their children's experiences during remote learning.

1.8.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

I chose an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) as an appropriate data analysis approach for a number of reasons. First, it employs a methodology that entails a careful examination of participants, which is consistent with the objectives of my study. An IPA assumes that data are mostly used for exploratory rather than explanatory purposes (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Second, the IPA method is best suited to understanding experiences that are very important to the people who live them. Third, employing an IPA enables me to be sensitive to each participant's particular culture and experiences, as well as to recognise any shared experiences between the participant's stories (Smith et al., 2009).

1.9. Structure of the Thesis

1.9.1. Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter presented the key aspects underpinning this research. The purpose, background, significance, motivation, problem statement and research aims were the driving forces behind selecting the theoretical and methodological frameworks suitable for studying the cultural and psychological nuances of Saudi mothers' experiences. A brief overview of the theoretical framework and methodology employed was provided at the end. The next chapter is a literature review that provides detailed accounts of the theoretical frameworks, the parents' involvement in their children's education, the implications of remote learning and the contexts of the study.

1.9.2. Chapter 2: The Literature Review

Chapter 2 begins with an introduction that outlines the purpose of the literature review and the key themes explored. It first examines the theoretical foundations and discusses the connection between the person-centred approach (PCA) and self-determination theory (SDT), focusing on autonomy, motivation and the relationship between autonomy-support and intrinsic motivation in childhood education. The chapter then reviews studies on parents' involvement in their children's education, particularly how this involvement influences autonomy and motivation. It also explores how parents facilitate autonomous support, intrinsic learning motivation and remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the chapter delves into the cultural context, including religion as an integral part of Saudi culture. It addresses acculturation strategies and challenges, as well as the specific cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia that impact learner autonomy. Detailed exploration of the study's context provides a comprehensive profile of Saudi Arabia, including its education system, cultural aspects, international Saudi students' experiences and the influence of Vision

2030 on education and women's roles. The chapter concludes by identifying a research gap and recognizing the research contribution.

1.9.3. Chapter 3: Methodology

In Chapter 3, my research methodology and approach are revealed, along with the research design. I list the amount of data collected and analysis the performed studies. The main topics covered are an introduction, research philosophy and theoretical foundations. The latter includes ontology-epistemology-axiology, qualitative research, an IPA and everything related to it, selecting an IPA, research protocol, data collection, interviews (semi-structured), ethical considerations and research credibility. Finally, the chapter concludes with reflexivity.

1.9.4. Chapter 4: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the First Study

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to provide the findings of the first study's IPA. My emphasis is on parents who have only ever known and interacted with people from a Saudi Arabian background. I gathered the information from these parents' stories through semi-structured interviews. This allowed these Saudi mothers to freely express their feelings and share their experiences regarding their children's remote learning and the influence of their culture. I also completed the data analysis using an IPA approach to answer the first research question: "What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning?"

1.9.5. Chapter 5: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the Second Study

In Chapter 5, I explain the results of the IPA for the second study. My focus is on parents brought up in the KSA but who have also interacted with and got to know people

from different cultural backgrounds, e.g., British people or people of other nationalities living in the UK.

I also used semi-structured interviews to obtain information about these mothers' stories; this gave them the freedom to express their thoughts and opinions regarding their children's remote learning and the influence of cultures other than the KSA. As a result, the second research question is answered: "What are the influential factors and strategies that Saudi mothers perceived and experienced when their children interacted with remote learning and multicultural contexts?"

1.9.6. Chapter 6: General Discussion

In Chapter 6, I review and contrast the previously discussed findings from both studies through the lens of the theories of a PCA and SDT, highlighting their similarities and differences and exploring potential factors that may have influenced these results. I aim to provide an interpretation that considers the role of various contextual elements and theoretical perspectives.

1.9.7. Chapter 7: Conclusion

The final chapter brings together the findings and insights obtained from the study. This chapter begins by discussing the impact and importance of the research. It also addresses the limitations of the study, acknowledging any constraints or challenges encountered during the research process. A section on implications and recommendations for future research follows, offering suggestions for further studies to build on the current findings. Furthermore, the study's outcomes inform the recommendations, which provide practical advice for mothers, educators and researchers. Finally, the chapter concludes with reflections on the research process that was experienced throughout the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Chapter Overview

This research is about “Exploring Saudi mothers’ perspectives and experiences of primary school children’s autonomy, motivation and interactions with single or multicultural exposure during remote learning” and, in order to conduct my research, a review of key literature is necessary. My review provides a background review of essential notions related to this research.

In the first section, I explain the connection between the PCA and SDT in understanding motivation and facilitating the autonomous environment, starting with a PCA in education, the role of teachers in a PCA and the role of the teacher as a facilitator. After a summary of SDT, I discuss the relationship between Rogers’s PCA and SDT in the last part. In the second section, I focus on the literature on autonomy and support in academic settings; the first part is about autonomy and support in academic settings and autonomy in early childhood education.

In the third section, I discuss intrinsic motivation in learners. First, I explain motivation concepts and intrinsic motivation in childhood education before expounding on the links between autonomy support and intrinsic motivation in learners and the relationship between autonomy support and intrinsic motivation in the context of childhood education. Moreover, I concentrate on the thesis focus. In the fourth section, I explain the importance of parents being involved in their children’s education, mentioning the factors that affect their involvement in their children’s education. In the fifth section, I examine the impact of remote learning that occurred during COVID-19 and, in the last section, I cover the context of the study and the cultural context, including religion as an integral part of Saudi culture. This addresses acculturation strategies and challenges, as well as the specific cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia that impact learner autonomy. A detailed exploration of the study’s context

provides a comprehensive profile of Saudi Arabia, including its education system, cultural aspects, international Saudi students' experiences and the influence of Vision 2030 on education and women's roles. This chapter concludes by identifying a research gap and identifying the research contribution.

2.2. Person-Centred Approach (PCA)

Motschnig (2012) argued that Rogers held a prominent position among the most influential psychologists in both American and global history. The fundamental proposition that forms the foundation of Rogers' PCA posits that individuals possess extensive internal reservoirs for comprehending themselves and modifying their self-perceptions, fundamental dispositions and self-directed actions. These resources can be accessed if a clearly identifiable environment characterised by supportive psychological attitudes is established. Moreover, the innovative work of Rogers is where the PCA method began. It serves as evidence for the idea of individualised learning, changing it into a setting that encourages not just positive autonomy but also a rich and helpful learning environment. This viewpoint emphasises the inherent value and potential of each person and places the learner at the centre of the educational experience (Motschnig, 2012).

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was Roger's initial employer. Over time, he became disillusioned with conventional psychology, which prioritises assessment and intervention, and proceeded to develop his own theories and methods for client engagement. He had a negative view of the prevalent approach in psychology at the time, which seemed to view individuals as mere objects of study rather than as unique beings deserving of empathy and consideration. Rogers' distinctive approach, known as 'non-directive counselling', became apparent when he published *Counselling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice* (Rogers, 1942) after receiving his doctorate from Columbia

University. In the early 1950s, non-directive counselling underwent a transformation and became known as ‘client-centred therapy’, a term that rose to prominence following the seminal work of Rogers (1951) entitled ‘Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory’ (Merry, 1999). This term encapsulates key aspects of what is now known as the person-centred approach. Among the key aspects are three important factors: unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence (Murphy et al., 2017).

Interestingly, these key features have been recognised and applied not only in counselling but also in education. The reason is that educational settings represent an ideal context for achieving self-actualisation, another key attribute of a PCA. The educational setting could be an ideal environment that fosters individualism actualising tendency; Rogers was adamant that actualising tendency is the only source of motivation. Following this, the term person-centred approach was adopted as a result of emerging evidence that demonstrated the applicability of the principles and beliefs that underpin the use of counselling theory in diverse contexts, where the focus on the personal growth and development of individuals was of utmost importance.

According to Rogers, a PCA is a pedagogical technique whereby learners have the autonomy to choose not just the subject matter they want to explore but also the methods and rationales for engaging with that particular issue (Rogers, 1983). In contrast to earlier theories of human motivation and agency, his theory of human learning considers not only the processes by which an individual is motivated but the learner as a whole.

Rogers supported John Dewey’s notion of openness and personal experience (Zimring, 1994). Hence, he adopted a positive philosophical perspective on human nature, describing it as ‘essentially trustworthy’. According to Rogers, humans share standard tendencies with all living organisms. They are born with an innate motivational drive and actualising tendency (Rogers, 1959; 1964). The purpose of this innate drive is to facilitate people’s attainment of

their highest potential. Individuals possess an inherent drive to cultivate their own capabilities, skills and potential in a manner that is congruent with their genuine selves. This process entails cultivating a heightened sense of self-awareness, embracing one's authentic self and actively striving towards individual objectives and ambitions that align with one's fundamental beliefs and sense of self. People possess the ability to realise and identify solutions to their problems through the self (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

According to Rogers, the key to effective psychotherapy and teaching is helping people discover and make use of their own wealth of inner resources for self-understanding. It is also important to consider the positive and negative effects of an individual's social environment on their level of intrinsic motivation. An individual's natural state is one of seeking independence from others and following their own sense of happiness and regulation. Self-directed behaviour and core beliefs about one's identity may be altered as a result of this process. The efficient use of these assets, however, is dependent on the existence of a well-defined setting that is characterised by encouraging psychological attitudes (Joseph et al., 2020).

The concept of person-centred approaches has been expressed using several phrases interchangeably, such as 'client-centred', 'patient-centred' and 'person-centred'. The idea of being person-centred is not new or revolutionary; its roots may be traced back to Rogers' work more than fifty years ago (Joseph, 2021). Individuals are assisted, facilitated and empowered to contribute to self-care via shared decision-making, honest communication and mutual respect.

A PCA is the cornerstone of many international studies related to education and mental health. Rogers' theory is concerned with the social environment and its influence on a person's psychological development; thus, applications of his theory may be concerned with education, parenting, public policy, etc., and not just with problem resolution in

psychotherapy and clinical psychology (Joseph, 2021). In the field of education, *Freedom to Learn* (Rogers, 1983) argued for the need for support to be given to each teacher to ensure they can care for and maintain the well-being of their students. In particular, it involves focusing on how to motivate their students to learn, with Rogers examining this issue from the individual student's perspective.

Accordingly, his theory is regarded as highly significant, with the result that it has received particular attention in previous works. Moreover, a PCA in education is considered the cornerstone of modern education theories, including but not limited to SDT (Sheldon, 2013). Rogers (1969) contended that the teacher-student relationship might be similar to the relationship between a therapist and a client.

2.2.1. PCA and Education

According to Rogers (1977), the educational system has a significant influence on the development of individuals, surpassing that of the family, the church, the police and the government. It plays a crucial role in moulding the interpersonal dynamics of individuals as they mature. A PCA offers a robust alternative pedagogy in which individuals learn to be themselves and actualise their potential in ways that appear to be increasingly relevant in today's environment (Murphy, 2020). A PCA views the instructor as a facilitator who encourages self-regulated learning, empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard; these are the foundations of this approach (Sun Yong, 2017). Teachers who utilise these skills have a positive impact on their students (Gatongi, 2007). A PCA emphasises genuine interpersonal connections in which the student and facilitator share responsibility for learning (Cornelius-White, 2007).

As presented in *Freedom to Learn* (Rogers, 1983), the latter approach to education focuses on trusting the students' capacity to improve and grow when provided with the

freedom to learn. This freedom to know is an inner quality that flourishes without external control, where students can create their own internal and external worlds. In contrast, more traditional learning is typically characterised by the educator holding power and control. Therefore, in an educational context, the teacher should strive to create a suitable environment. In the educational setting, the classroom environment and the level of personal engagement with students play crucial roles in facilitating the development of innate tendencies within the context of person-centred education (Rogers, 1983).

Accordingly, the teacher's role in a PCA in an education model is as a 'facilitator' to create a positive environment to aid significant learning (Rogers, 1969). Consequently, the educator plays a vital part in facilitating natural motivational tendencies, thus assisting students to reach their full potential, learn and develop. Furthermore, the *freedom to learn* within an educational context allows all students to benefit from this learning experience and gain confidence and liberty. In *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers (1969) classified learning into two broad types. The first describes learning without meaning, which exercises the mind without evoking any meaningful feelings among students (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994). The second type is defined as significant learning involving meaningful experiences. This type will not be quickly forgotten and can be differentiated by comprising the following five elements (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994):

1. The student is a full participant in the learning process.
2. Learning emanates from the self, "even when motivation comes from the outside, the sense of understanding and discovery comes from within".
3. Learning creates an effect and makes a difference in terms of behaviour and personality.
4. Evaluation comes from the learner, who knows if it meets their needs and leads to what they want to know.

5. It conveys meaning to the learner and can be built into the whole experience.
6. Furthermore, it provides a guideline for teachers as facilitators in the classroom to deal with the most commonly occurring problems in school settings, such as relationships between students or their teachers.

The sensation of autonomy, which is an intrinsic motivation for learning, is correlated with the experience of being competent. This is a rationale for person-centred learning environments that enable students to feel competent throughout the learning process. Intrinsic learning motivation is required for the sustained, continuous learning required in today's era of accelerated change; adaptation to change cannot occur without it (Rogers et al., 2014).

Other research has investigated the person-centred theory of education. For instance, Bremner et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review of learner-centred pedagogy (LCP). The first finding suggested that the efficacy of the LCP programmes is currently lacking in terms of 'objective' evidence. The prevalence of subjective research, which involves the presentation of perspectives from teachers and students, outweighed that of empirical and quantitative research. Second, subjective research findings indicate a prevailing inclination towards positive experiences is associated with LCP, particularly with regard to non-academic outcomes. The observed results encompassed enhanced student motivation, heightened self-assurance and strengthened interpersonal connections.

Moreover, academic policymakers may not always prioritise non-academic outcomes, but they are nonetheless crucial. Fourth, future research should aim to provide more objective evidence and establish stronger links between the implementation of LCP and non-cognitive outcomes. Last, a significant number of students and educators expressed favourable encounters with LCP. Although there are limitations to relying on self-reported experiences, they may suggest a gradual trend towards increased acceptance of these approaches over a

period of time. Further, the evolution of beliefs related to LCP often transpires gradually rather than instantaneously.

A study by Benlahcene et al. (2020) investigated students' perceptions towards language courses using a student-centred learning (SCL) approach at *University Utara Malaysia* (UUM). The findings of the study from the interviews' interpretation revealed that students had an explicitly positive view of SCL. Furthermore, a qualitative study with students and faculty from a large private university in the Philippines, conducted by Trinidad (2019), showed that there are particular facets of SCL that faculty and students eagerly subscribe to, particularly in terms of class engagement, skill building and having motivated students. However, they fail to readily question the nature of assessments and power relations between teachers and students as part of SCL. It suggests that this approach is viewed and reduced to effective classroom practices that have little to do with more foundational aspects of the teacher-student relationship and manifold possibilities for learning.

Finally, the study conducted by Cheng and Chen (2022) investigated the associations between teaching paradigms (student-centred and teacher-centred) and students' academic motivation and learning behaviours in Chinese secondary schools. In terms of the results of the data analyses, it was suggested that, compared with student-centred instruction, teacher-centred instruction was more important in relation to students' academic motivation and learning behaviours generally.

2.2.2. PCA in a Classroom Setting

According to the work of Rogers, a PCA illustrates the significance of providing a supportive, empathetic and growth-promoting environment. Adopting a PCA in a traditional classroom environment requires creating an environment for learning that is centred around the students.

Rogers thought that students should be actively involved in their own education and that learning should be self-directed. Education professionals can support the development of a lifelong love of learning by empowering students to set their own objectives and pursue their own interests. In the end, Rogers' educational philosophy placed a strong emphasis on the value of treating each student as a unique individual with specific needs and abilities rather than as a passive taker of information. They optimally learn in an environment that supports autonomy, exploration and self-directed learning. Educators can help students reach their full potential both inside and outside of the classroom by designing and supporting a personalised learning experience that supports each student's growth and development (Rogers, 1983). In the following section, it is critical to delve into the application of the person-centred approach (PCA) in the context of remote learning. The challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic have necessitated a shift from traditional classroom settings to remote learning. Understanding how a PCA can be effectively implemented in remote learning is crucial, particularly in prioritising the diverse requirements and well-being of each student.

2.2.3. The Role of Teachers in Person-Centred Education

Rogers clarified the relationship between instructors and their students: students will appreciate the trust of teachers. People will respond to you if you are genuine; if you promote exploration, they will develop; by gratifying their curiosity, you can educate them; they will respond positively if you treat them as individuals; children will develop and learn more in literacy, mathematics and other subjects if you can comprehend their emotions and they will think independently, solve problems, communicate independently and work diligently in the environment you have created (Rogers et al., 2013). He identifies three core attitudes required

for teachers to facilitate significant learning in the classroom and facilitate a student's self-actualising tendency: realness, acceptance and empathy (Rogers, 1959).

2.2.3.1. Realness. This describes when educators display transparency in terms of who they are when they are with their students. It will facilitate learning, regardless of whether the instructor is furious, sensitive or compassionate, when they accept their sentiments as their own but have no need to impose or urge their students to feel the same way.

2.2.3.2. Acceptance (or Unconditional Positive Regard). This refers to when educators accept students as they are, showing care and concern for them without imposing any conditions to facilitate significant learning.

2.2.3.3. Empathy. It facilitates a learning climate wherein teachers can understand students' feelings, including frustration and worry about a new subject or material, and have the capacity to view the situation from the students' point of view (Rogers & Freiberg, 1994).

At the same time, in order to implement significant learning in the classroom, the teacher's role is to facilitate the classroom climate (Rogers, 1969). Rogers identifies methods that should be taken into consideration in this setting so as to aid the achievement of this type of learning. First, the subject should matter to the students and relate to their own purposes. When learning involves self-organisational change, it will be viewed as threatening and can be resisted. Conversely, learning will be more positively perceived and assimilated when it encourages self-evaluation and removes external threats. Under less threatening circumstances, learning will proceed. In an environment that reinforces personal security, students will be free to move forward in their learning through their behaviour and activities that lead to significant learning.

2.2.3.4. Teacher as Facilitator. "We cannot teach another person directly, we can only facilitate his learning" (Rogers, 1951). In a PCA, much of the authority in the learning environment is held by the students. Teachers must recognise that they do not have complete

control over the learning process. In *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers and Freiberg (1994) outline the following elements for teachers to apply in their role as facilitators:

- 1) Facilitators trust their students and create an environment that helps them explore and learn.
- 2) Facilitators support and help each student identify their goals and needs.
- 3) Facilitators support students in setting out a way to achieve the goals that have meaning for them, which will motivate them to engage in significant learning.
- 4) Facilitators strive to source multiple learning resources and make them available in the learning environment.
- 5) Facilitators regard themselves as a flexible resource available to their students.
- 6) In classroom group situations, facilitators accept all attitudes and academic materials. However, they also focus on each student or group.
- 7) As the classroom atmosphere grows and develops, facilitators can become participants, learners and members of the group. Hence, they can express their ideas as those representing a single individual.
- 8) Facilitators take action by expressing themselves and their ideas and feelings within the group in ways that are not demanding or enforcing in any specific way but simply constitute a personal sharing that students may accept or reject.
- 9) In the classroom, facilitators continue to observe expressions that indicate profound or intense emotions. They make every effort to understand these emotions from the individual's perspective, which assists in bringing them to the surface for positive comprehension.
- 10) Facilitators seek to acknowledge and accept their own limitations as facilitators of learning by understanding that they are able to give their students freedom to the extent that the facilitator feels comfortable providing it.

Jeffrey Cornelius-White (2007) analysed the correlational and causal links between teacher-student interactions and emotional, behavioural and cognitive student outcomes in different traditions. The meta-analysis found that person-centred teaching practices, including positive teacher-student relationships, are associated with positive student outcomes. These outcomes encompass both cognitive and affective aspects of student development.

2.2.4. A Modern PCA Perspective on Remote Learning

According to McCombs (2015), over the twenty-five years of research by McCombs and others, they have produced a definition of “learner-centred” that is applicable to a variety of learning environments, including traditional and online classrooms. The collaborative research endeavour has been instrumental in elucidating principles, theories and pedagogical methodologies across various educational tiers, spanning kindergarten through to higher education. Learner-centred classrooms and institutions are characterised by the strategic application of technology to facilitate individual student learning and the quality of instructional practices, according to the primary finding. Furthermore, it is supported by research that learner-centred principles and related practices provide a systemic, universal structure for imparting instruction of superior quality in a variety of educational settings. In order to promote active engagement in knowledge construction and correspond with the needs of students, educational media frequently utilises social media platforms to satisfy needs related to personal connections, interpersonal relationships and a feeling of inclusion. Hence, the learner-centred framework that is being proposed is ecological in nature since it considers the impact of both individual and situational elements on motivation and learning.

2.2.5. Towards Learner-Centred Online Instruction

McCombs (2015) shared growing evidence from the academic community that online teaching methods should represent those of successful classroom instruction in whatever setting. The following were viewed as important factors:

- The attitudes of students about technology regulations in the classroom were influenced by the credibility of the teacher, regardless of whether wireless communication equipment was allowed or restricted.
- Not all students have a high level of comfort when using emerging technologies. Consequently, teachers shown to be most successful are those who actively work towards mitigating any adverse effects that these technologies may have on students who have significant apprehensions about them.
- The results of the study indicate that individuals engaged in online learning show intrinsic motivation and value the autonomy afforded by open educational resources. These resources enable learners to choose subjects that align with their professional or personal interests.
- Contemporary scholarly investigations are progressively substantiating assertions that online learning methodologies need to replicate efficacious pedagogical approaches, regardless of the educational setting, whether it involves digital technology or not.

Rogers' PCA and McCombs' learner-centred online instruction share a common philosophy of prioritising individual learner needs, independence and active participation. A PCA is based on humanistic psychology, emphasising the inherent value and capacity for development in every person. McCombs' learner-centred method, on the other hand, emphasises the unique characteristics, needs and capabilities of each learner, aiming to create a constructive and empowering learning environment.

A PCA emphasises individual experiences, self-directed development and personal investigation, acknowledging diverse learning methods. McCombs' learner-centred online instruction focuses on customising educational experiences to meet individual needs, allowing for a wide range of learning preferences.

Active participation is fundamental to both approaches, motivating individuals to engage in self-discovery and personal growth. Autonomy and empowerment are also fundamental values for both approaches. These two approaches emphasise the importance of constructive interpersonal connections between the educator and student, fostering a secure environment for learning.

2.3. Self Determination Theory (SDT)

SDT is a macro-theory of human motivation that focuses on human personality related to basic human psychological needs (Adams et al., 2017). Moreover, the theory specifies the directing of motivational activities instead of controlling behaviours in order to achieve a reward (extrinsic) or autonomous motivation (intrinsic) through behaviours driven by enjoyment and interest (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT is a theory for developing motivation and focuses on human personality related to basic human psychological needs (Legault, 2017).

2.3.1. Key Concepts in SDT

When investigating SDT, it is important to comprehend key concepts that contribute significantly to the understanding of the theory. The central concepts that my research focuses on are autonomy and motivation. The distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation was the original core of the SDT. Intrinsically motivated behaviour is prompted by interest, genuine enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment. In contrast, extrinsically motivated behaviour serves objectives that are not central to the activity, such as acquiring material

rewards or social status and escaping being punished. Intrinsically motivated behaviours are autonomous in the sense that they appear to emanate autonomously from the self. When individuals feel forced into acting in a manner that is not completely aligned with their needs, goals and values, extrinsically motivated behaviours are controlled (Krettenauer & Curren, 2020).

Learning can meet students' competencies and interests and satisfy their curiosity, making them happy when they learn (Brophy, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to SDT, there are three psychological needs: autonomy, relatedness and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2017). More details on each are given below:

- 1) Autonomy. People have a natural need to feel they have freedom in their lives and choices.
- 2) Competence. Achievement and ingenuity in the tasks they are undertaking are other aspects needed by individuals in general and students specifically.
- 3) Relatedness. Refers to the connection people need to feel that they belong and connect with the community and family; this occurs when all three psychological needs are satisfied. Relatedness promotes autonomous motivation and leads to autonomous internalisation of an initial extrinsic behaviour's origin. The satisfaction of the three psychological needs depends on a supportive environment for the student (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.3.2. *Autonomy*

The concept of autonomy is fundamental to SDT (Deci et al., 1999). To be autonomous implies being self-governing and behaving with free will (Ryan & Deci, 2006). Under SDT, when behaving autonomously, a person supports or approves of their own actions.

Conversely, the experience of being controlled or forced to act in specific ways reflects a loss

of autonomy. According to SDT, autonomy supports the necessity of teachers being tolerant of their students, avoiding criticising them, respecting their autonomy and guiding their learning process so they can set goals effectively (Reeve, 2002).

2.3.2.1. Defining Autonomy. To properly define autonomy, the external world must be considered as being fully autonomous; this implies that an individual's behaviours are compatible with both self and the environment (Deci & Vansteenkiste, 2004). Not all contexts in which people join are of interest to them and, thus, they are spontaneously embraced or adopted. This is often the case in environments involving children, as they typically require numerous interventions by adults. Even if initially motivated extrinsically, some behaviours can eventually elicit feelings of autonomy and increase persistence.

Autonomy in SDT refers to people's natural inclination for integration and synthesis (Le, 2017). Individuals gain autonomy as they acquire the ability to self-regulate and integrate beliefs into direct actions (Ryan & Deci, 2006; 2000). Consequently, understanding how healthy personality growth occurs and how people can be resilient and self-regulating as they face challenges is dependent on the principle of autonomy (Niemic et al., 2010). Autonomy in SDT is one of the fundamental psychological requirements for people to grow and engage with others in their environment (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Autonomy is an essential natural tendency for people and it should be available to all learners. It is a psychological condition in which students feel they have agency and influence over their learning goals and outcomes (Niemic & Ryan, 2009). To meet the requirement for autonomy, a person must experience self-affirmation or the will to regulate their actions (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986). Autonomy can manifest in different ways for parents and teachers (Benson, 2013, p. 15) and is signified by a sense of freedom from control and the availability of choice (Guay et al., 2000). According to Benson (2013), autonomy indicates students' capacity and responsibility in their learning.

Moreover, autonomy refers to learners' behaviour and the significant role they play in their learning. Initially, children with high autonomy typically demonstrate positive adaptation and achievement (Deci et al., 1989). Thus, growth in autonomy is essential. According to Wenden (1991), autonomous learners are students who have the ability to develop learning strategies, knowledge about learning and the attitudes necessary to confidently, flexibly, appropriately and autonomously apply these skills and knowledge without relying on a teacher. Weinstein et al. (2012) established three elements of the principle of autonomy as follows:

1. Authorship or self-congruence. The human experience of owning one's behaviour.
2. Interest-taking. The tendency to think freely about internal and external events.
Interest in anything increases self-concept and self-understanding.
3. Lack of internal and external stimuli.

2.3.2.2. Autonomy Support in Academic Settings. Academic settings refer to the environments in which instruction and learning occur. They can include field experience, classroom experience, teacher methods, relationships with other students, parents, teachers and available resources. Additionally, students are surrounded by such elements in their environment; these can positively or negatively impact their autonomy (Reeve, 2006). First, research has shown a strong correlation between an autonomy-supportive environment and more effective education and fostering intrinsic motivation (Reeve et al., 2003). Second, the tendency for people to be curious about their surroundings and to be interested in learning and expanding their awareness is part of human nature.

In contrast, in heteronomous environments, educators tend to implement external controls. Yet, these controls can suffocate the normal discretionary processes entailed in high-quality learning. Hence, they reduce the sense of connectedness between teachers and students. The students encounter tasks that they are required to do but do not interest them;

they are based on regulations and, thus, intrinsic motivation is not present (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). Therefore, supporting students' autonomy is a fundamental aspect that teachers must consider in the classroom (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Autonomy support is a personal behaviour provided by a person to include and support another person. In a classroom context, teachers demonstrate autonomy-supportiveness when they involve their students in the learning plan (Reeve & Jang, 2006). An autonomy-supportive environment enables students to understand the content better, thereby increasing their engagement. Being supportive of students' autonomy significantly impacts their outcomes and facilitates their internalisation (Niemi & Ryan, 2009). Teachers who exhibit autonomy-supportiveness in their teaching style offer students an opportunity to express their opinions and engage in discussion. Consequently, students feel that their viewpoints are both respected and considered significant. Likewise, autonomy-supportive teachers enable students to participate effectively in the classroom by acknowledging their interests and needs and providing an environment that corresponds to these same factors. Moreover, autonomy-supportive teachers enable their students to acquire a more in-depth comprehension of the content (Benware & Deci, 1984; Grolnick & Ryan, 1987). In addition, Cheon et al. (2019) noted that autonomy-supportive teachers foster their students' intrinsic motivation by offering them choice, comprehending their perspectives and respecting their ideas. Similarly, Deci et al. (1994) identified three autonomy-supportive conditions that also foster a sense of acceptance for individuals:

1. Provision of a meaningful rationale. It makes sense of the activity, thereby enabling an understanding of its benefits for the individual.
2. Acknowledgement of the behavioural perspective. Recognising that the activity or request may oppose the individuals' tendencies, which are both respected and legitimate.

3. Expressing choice, not control. Controlling language should not be used in the presentation of the request; instead, flexible phrasing should be employed to generate a sense of choice.

Furthermore, autonomy-supportive teachers allow their students to make their own decisions about their learning paths and offer them helpful feedback (Reeve, 2002; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Katz and Assor (2007) contended that offering students choices can be a motivational factor when these choices align with the student's age, apparent abilities and cognitive competence. It equips students with a sense of freedom of choice and the freedom to explore their surroundings in their chosen way. Moreover, it limits actions that entail deadlines, external incentives and potential penalties. In contrast, autonomy support encompasses promoting choice, minimising pressure to operate in a particular manner and fostering initiative (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 1991).

Teachers who are supportive of autonomy help students develop a link between their inner motivational resources and their behaviour in the classroom. Internal motivational resources include psychological requirements, interests, preferences, aims, endeavours and values. Teachers cannot provide an autonomous experience to students directly; they can only support such an experience by facilitating the students' inner motivational resources and creating opportunities in the classroom for students to associate these resources with the activity at hand.

Teachers have several tools to promote student adherence to the teacher's plans, such as offering extrinsic incentives, establishing external goals, communicating in a pressuring manner, undertaking relevant external evaluations and overall shaping students' thoughts, feelings and behaviours according to behaviour modification programmes. Teachers adopting this autonomy-limiting approach require students to follow a teacher-centric agenda while disregarding their inner motivational resources in a controlling context. Essentially, the

concept is to establish a list of what learners are expected to do as well as what they should not do, and then use external forces and coercive language to shape learners to conform to this strategy. Thus, as Reeve and Jang (2006) asserted, when students are controlled, they are not motivated by their inner motivational resources; instead, they are driven by external contingencies and pressuring language. This shift from internal to external motivation has significant implications for learning outcomes. In contrast, research by Wilde (2014) suggests that students taught in an autonomy-supportive environment have better conceptual knowledge than those taught in a controlling one.

2.3.2.3. Autonomy in Early Childhood Education. “Autonomy is perhaps best described as a capacity ... because various kinds of abilities can be involved in control over learning. Researchers generally agree that the most important abilities are those that allow learners to plan their own learning activities, monitor their progress, and evaluate their outcomes” (Benson, 2003, p. 290).

Autonomy in early childhood education is exhibited when children can be independent in their opinions and choices. They can solve their problems and study. Moreover, autonomous students are responsible for their learning and are typically lifelong learners (Lüftenegger et al., 2012), which is significant, especially in the twenty-first century. Early childhood education is subjected to a range of extrinsic elements to motivate students to learn and accept new experiences and roles in their environment. The strategies in the classroom are intended to encourage and promote the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness, which support intrinsic motivation by helping children be more understanding of their intrinsic motivations while still respecting external motivation. Satisfaction of basic psychological needs leads to identified intrinsic motivation, enabling the children to become autonomous.

Generally speaking, the most popular method in schools is the guidance approach, as teachers can use it to control students' behaviours in the classroom. Teachers claim that this method creates more control and respect from students. Millei (2011) explained how external control only leads to changing students' behaviour, whereas teacher practice and guidance aimed at encouraging autonomous behaviour in children better impacts children's thinking. Moreover, from the students' perspective, all they need from their teacher is trust. Conversely, under the guidance approach, students encounter tasks that they must do in an educational setting, even though they are not interested. They are based on school regulations and, thus, intrinsic motivation is not present.

Several research projects have demonstrated settings that support students' autonomy in early childhood education and how it makes the learning process more enjoyable and exciting. Barrable et al. (2022) explored how classroom space can be shaped by teaching practices committed to supporting autonomy and how such use of space helps shape autonomy-supportive practices. Her research showed that giving children aged 3 to 8 years the opportunity to try and make decisions and equipping them with the knowledge of what a healthy and safe tree is like allows them to make their own decisions regarding choosing suitable trees. The outcome found through observations, interviews and photographs shown to the children is that the support and promotion of autonomy concerning risk and unsafe activities led to greater self-regulation and a better environment for practitioners.

Similarly, a qualitative study conducted by Prompona et al. (2020) investigated the perspectives of primary school students ages 6 to 12 on the role and meaning of play during school break. The researchers recognised the role of the children as agents in their own development. They considered play to be a sociocultural activity developed and invested with meaning by the children themselves. The findings showed the children expressed a conviction that the experience of freedom to behave as they want to, take the initiative, make

choices, take decisions and implement them constitutes key parts of play during school break. Moreover, children obtain skills that increase their self-esteem and self-confidence because they like playing. The process is achieved by becoming more competent players, mainly through the recognition they receive from their classmates. The study shows the importance of freedom in children's environments because they can choose what they want to play. In classrooms, teachers typically implement rules and limit the children's freedom, which conflicts with children's need for discovery and creation, which are essential factors in supporting students' autonomy in the classroom. Children usually enjoy playtime as they have freedom of choice outside of class restrictions. The studies mentioned above highlight the importance of liberty in childhood and its role in supporting children's autonomy.

Additionally, several studies have noted that autonomy support is a valuable aspect of teacher practices and children's outcomes, including benefits to children. For instance, Reedy and de Carvalho (2021) identified possible strategies that might improve school practices in supporting reading for pleasure. They examined the viewpoints of year 5 pupils from a school in East London, UK, on reading for pleasure. Sixty children completed a questionnaire and two focus group interviews were conducted. Their responses were used to identify two groups: children whose feedback indicated a positive attitude towards reading for pleasure and those with a negative attitude. They found that children's choice of reading books or material positively affected their enjoyment of reading. They suggested supporting reading for pleasure by creating a library based on students' choices and suggestions.

The abovementioned study demonstrates the importance of the educator's role in supporting children's autonomy with the available and existing resources in the education environment. Admiraal, Nieuwenhuis, Kooij, Dijkstra and Cloosterman (2019) examined primary school teachers who recorded the actions they take to support their students' autonomy, while students listed how they perceived autonomy in the classroom. They

discovered that students' freedom in primary school is essential. Furthermore, some teachers claimed that students can handle more independence than other teachers believe. They argued that students should have some freedom of choice to be autonomous in the classroom; however, not all teachers have dared to grant this.

Furthermore, the connection between teachers and students significantly affects the transition between autonomous and controlled motivation in the learning process. Teacher methods can support their students' autonomy in academic settings, which positively impacts students, thereby benefitting both the teachers and the learning process. Students need to feel comfortable, accepted and have a sense of freedom in their environments; therefore, rather than exerting control, teachers should explain the benefits of a particular activity to encourage students' engagement and learning. Moreover, students need to feel relatedness, so the teacher must involve students in the activities and utilise teaching methods that positively impact students' feelings of connection and respect from their teachers, affecting their engagement in the classroom. Teachers play a significant role in students' autonomy. Students can experience improved well-being, optimal psychological functioning and positive experiences when participating in activities that make them feel autonomous (Vansteenkiste et al., 2008). Certain environmental variables, according to SDT, are responsible for predicting or determining the degree to which students possess autonomous motivation. This effect, however, is indirect and is mediated by basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence and relatedness) that must be met. Autonomy and motivation are strongly correlated.

2.3.3. *Motivation*

Motivation plays a significant role in our lives. It is a key concept in SDT and reflects its strong association with individuals' behaviour. Understanding motivation is crucial not

only for theoretical frameworks like SDT but also for practical applications. Motivation can drive individuals to adopt healthier habits. It serves as a guiding force in achieving personal and professional goals and has the power to evoke a range of emotions, including happiness.

2.3.3.1. Defining Motivation. Motivation can be described as why an individual or group chooses to behave in a specific manner and, subsequently, continue to engage in a particular type of conduct (McInerney, 2019). It is also regarded as a power that acts as a strong motive in shaping human behaviour, thus prompting people to set goals and pursue goal-directed behaviour (Jenkins & Demaray, 2015). On the other hand, the motivation concept explains why people think and act in a particular way to reflect normal behaviour associated with achievement. For example, conducting a study is viewed as a project operating within a time sequence that must be sustained and then is later terminated (Graham & Weiner, 1996).

Conversely, failure to be motivated can result in an inability to fulfil deadlines, pressing backlogs or the crushing disappointment of being unable to adhere to a diet (Kispál-Vitai, 2016). According to B.F. Skinner, in school learning, motivation entails exciting, persistent, sustaining and guiding desired behaviour (Amutan, 2014). Woodworth (1918) argued that motivation is the state of the person that enables them to pursue a given form of conduct. Furthermore, Buchanan and Huczynski (2019) regarded motivation as a cognitive decision-making process in which a component is intended to achieve a specific goal. Initially, older theories of motivation focused on basic needs and how they could be satisfied; they revolved around what the students needed to make them interested and motivated from an educational perspective. According to SDT, teachers and caregivers must understand the motivation applied to children to encourage them to learn.

2.3.3.2. Types of Motivation. Deci and Ryan (1985) posited that two types of motivation exist based on the various causes or goals that lead to behaviour. Fundamental

differences occur between innately attractive or positively motivating factors and foreign motivation, which refers to undertaking something because it leads to a specific result. The different types of motivation can be described as extrinsic or intrinsic (Figure 1).

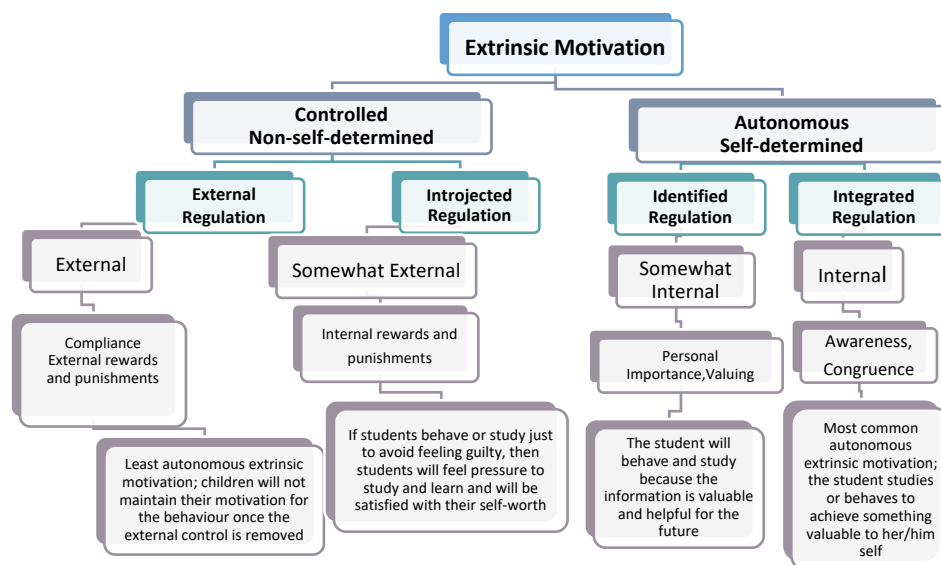
Figure 1

The Two Types of Motivation



Figure 2

Extrinsic Motivation Subtypes



2.3.3.3. Extrinsic Motivation. Extrinsic or external motivation arises from within the individual and involves rewards such as trophies, social recognition or praise. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation, such as the motivation to do a challenging crossword puzzle, originates from outside the individual's self-interest. Organismic integration theory (a sub-

theory of SDT) proposes that four different types of extrinsic motivation exist, which are explained in Figure 2.

These extrinsic motivation subtypes are believed to lie along an internalisation scale. The greater the internalisation of the extrinsic motivation, the more autonomous the individual's behaviour will be (Formal Theory: SDT's Five Mini-Theories – selfdeterminationtheory.org, 2021). These subtypes are as follows:

- A. External regulation. This is the least autonomous subtype. It describes when students behave in a particular manner to achieve something; they will be unable to maintain this behaviour once the controls have been removed.
- B. Introjected regulation. It describes when students behave or study to avoid feeling guilty and where ego is involved. As a result, students will feel pressured to study and learn to be satisfied with their sense of self-worth. The exporter of external regulation and introjected regulation remains outside the self.
- C. Identified regulation. The student will behave and study because the information is valuable and helpful for their life and future.
- D. Integrated regulation. This is the most common autonomous extrinsic motivator and occurs when the student studies or behaves in a particular manner to achieve something valuable to themselves.

Extrinsic motivation plays a fundamental role in engaging students, especially concerning educational activities that are not interesting or enjoyable. There is a connection between autonomous types of extrinsic motivation and the reinforcement of students' learning. In an environment seeking to support children's basic psychological needs regarding competence and autonomy, it relates to positive outcomes regarding their self-confidence and behaviours. Therefore, extrinsically motivated behaviours are carried out for a particular reason other than engaging in the activity itself. In contrast, intrinsic motivation describes

participating in an activity to satisfy inherent needs so that the individual is happy and finds the experience enjoyable.

SDT assumes that, in order to grow, learn and develop, learners have a natural need to study their environment. As a result, one of the most essential goals of education is to encourage the learner's natural curiosity (Education – selfdeterminationtheory.org, 2022). Furthermore, behaviours connected with intrinsic motivation but having an external impact have inherent enjoyment and excitement (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.3.3.4. Intrinsic Motivation. The phrase 'intrinsic motivation' refers to something innate in nature. Also referred to as 'inner', it denotes something that originates from within. Intrinsic motivation is considered the most effective type of motivation from a psychological perspective. It describes a person's willingness to engage in an activity for entertainment purposes or a challenge rather than gain a reward. Intrinsic motivation has emerged as an essential phenomenon for educators to understand. It has been recognised as a natural source of learning and achievement that can be systematically encouraged or inhibited by parents and educators (Ryan & Stiller, 1991).

Intrinsic motivation is important in innovation. Several studies have highlighted the function intrinsic motivation performs in promoting innovative activities, especially where more scientific employment is concerned and where there is a certain level of autonomy involved (Stern, 2004; Sauermann & Cohen, 2010). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation leads to high-quality learning and creativity; it is, therefore, crucial to understand the variables and circumstances that facilitate or impede it (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.3.3.5. Motivation in Childhood Education. The pleasure and contentedness of children should define their childhood experiences. Due to feelings of concern or love for children, overcautiousness might characterise educators' and parents' approaches. In contrast, the contentedness and success of the children in their care should be a priority for parents and

educators. Ryan and Deci (2000) established that children achieve psychological fulfilment and pleasure from engagement in learning if they are intrinsically motivated, even if home and school assignments are considered unpleasant by most of them. Yet, to promote the motivation of children to participate in activities, external and not intrinsic motivation is typically encouraged by educators and parents. However, the child's happiness and welfare will be undermined due to the child feeling stressed if the advantages of the specific activity are not clarified.

In contrast, Froiland et al. (2012) suggested that when children find pleasure in a task, they become more engaged in the subject matter, exploring and studying it further due to their intrinsic motivation. However, educators often prefer methods that prioritise conveying knowledge and meeting school and educator objectives. Both parents and educators tend to emphasise listening to and following instructions, as they place a significant emphasis on academic achievement. While a focus on play and exploration of their interests is more prevalent during nursery and preschool years, children's enjoyment and autonomy in the educational process start to diminish as they enter primary school. Free play becomes limited as instruction and knowledge attainment take precedence. As Ryan and Deci (2000) clarified, the societal and educational context in which an individual resides should enhance intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, Deci and Ryan (1985) defined intrinsic motivation as an inclination to participate in a task based on interest and pleasure, absent of any extrinsic impact. When taking into account personal learning and comprehension, children's memorisation, perception and focus are typically expected in primary school as part of the educational process. However, active engagement is a prerequisite for students to engage in these cognitive processes. As Dewey (1934) related, greater learning motivation will be achieved if learners participate in activities. Essentially, children's inherent curiosity, which is

fundamental to comprehending and acquiring new capabilities, should be considered the foundation for educators facilitating learners to become objective-focused and active since learners are optimally engaged through play and discovery during early childhood. In terms of learning and development among individuals, one of the foremost aspects is intrinsic motivation. Accordingly, next, I explore extant research on SDT in correlation to childhood education in the context of intrinsic motivation, specifically for those aged five to eleven (choosing to concentrate on children aged five to eleven aligns with the primary focus of my study).

One sub-theory of SDT, *Cognitive Evaluation Theory*, is concerned with how intrinsic motivation is weakened or strengthened through environmental and social variables and how fulfilling autonomy, competence and relatedness as fundamental psychological requirements may enhance intrinsic motivation. If children perceive their bonds with their educators and schools to be strong, they will feel relatedness. A feeling of choice in and control over life may fulfil a child's sense of autonomy, while a sense of solid performance can provide a feeling of competence.

Fluckiger, Dunn and Stinson (2018) explored the perspectives on learning, the preferred approach to learning, what they appreciated about learning, effective learning context and the significant factor of who facilitates their learning among 200 children aged three to eight in Australia. They were given an opportunity to engage in learning procedures. The findings established that a genuine willingness to consider children's recommendations and concepts while shaping plans and activities should be shown, as should discussing these aspects with them more regularly; this is because robust perspectives and an inherent capacity to convey them is a characteristic of children. In addition, the children noted motivation – which may have diverse origins – as a factor that could effectively facilitate their studies. One instance is how a child defined motivation as having their learning significantly assisted by a sense of

genuine pleasure in and concentration on the task. For them, it was a process that they particularly wanted to carry out and be engaged in. Thus, it is important to consider how most children's willingness to learn may be promoted through improving pleasure and engagement. Moreover, the children sought entertaining, cooperative, imaginative, inspiring and motivating tasks. For example, it was discovered that children concentrated enthusiastically on learning procedures in which they had control, active engagement and could research, test and investigate.

Furthermore, providing children with the chance to engage in tasks in which they cooperated, along with an inclination towards experiential, lively and active learning, was favoured by each child in the overall dataset. It is essential to acknowledge the varying preferences of children during this stage and, thus, the need for their age and interests to be considered in the teaching approach. In this regard, a more effective learning procedure may be shaped through novel curricula and actions. Learning while simultaneously discovering and playing is something for which children express motivation, willingness and intrinsic motivation. As various studies have established, strengthening children's learning impetuses and their involvement should be pursued through tasks and curricula as a priority.

2.3.3.6. Fun and Games. Numerous investigations have focused on how children's learning impetus and willingness to study while having fun can be nurtured through specific teaching approaches. For example, Li and Chu (2020) undertook mixed-method research focusing on reading-associated sustainability, conduct, cognition and academic attainment, investigating how reading abilities among children are influenced by gamification pedagogy. The impact of an internet-based gamified reading platform and the endurance of such effects were assessed through three sub-investigations. The assumed differences between two sets of learners' academic attainment – participants had been allocated according to varying degrees of participation – were explored in the first investigation. The second investigation assessed

how educators, parents and learners viewed the acquisition of gamified platform-related abilities and motivation among learners. Lastly, a longitudinal study of the gamified platform's impact and sustainability was analysed during investigation three. It was established that enhanced reading skills and impetus to read could be nurtured through the online gamified platform due to the in-depth participation of learners. Furthermore, over several semesters, the impact endured.

Similarly, Reamoinn, Susan and Devitt (2019) investigated the facilitation of language development through play using programmable floor robotics. The opinions of 48 students aged between six and seven regarding robotics and the Irish language were sought, with two early-year classes participating in the two-day pilot study. The language and how its adoption was facilitated using robots were investigated through a pre- and post-task questionnaire completed by the children. Furthermore, data was obtained via observations by the educator, a focus group, photographs and videos. Additionally, interviews with the learners clarified that their intrinsic enjoyment of reading could be nurtured through the gamified platform, which strengthened their innate reading motivation. With robotics play incorporated into language tasks, affirmative responses among the children were observed during the pilot research. Meanwhile, the adoption of robotics also enhanced the children's motivation to learn.

Duncan (2020) investigated grade 3 learners' critical thinking, innovation, communication, learning capabilities and level of engagement in association with the impact of immersive game-based learning. One group of learners involved in a standard small-group approach was compared with a set of learners participating in a Breakout EDU (BOEDU) approach, a type of immersive game-based learning task (specifically a class-based escape room activity). Regularly recurring concepts applied to motivational participation initiators were enjoyment, challenge and teamwork. Ultimately, focus group interviews showed that

this learning approach was deemed enjoyable and something both unmotivated and motivated learners sought to participate in more regularly.

The use of educational computer games for revising second-grade mathematics, in addition to the off-activity and on-activity conduct of learners, was investigated by Beserra et al. (2017). At the same time, the rate of declining activity time was measured from March to December over the course of the school year. When an instructional drill-and-practice computer game was adopted for revising mathematics, learners' engagement and impetus were strengthened. Essentially, the research highlighted the need to alternate in-class activities as well as the duration of school arithmetic lessons.

2.3.3.7. Focusing on Specific Subjects. The opportunity-propensity (O-P) learning model was used by Desoete et al. (2018) to measure propensity factors in students for learning arithmetic, specific prior capabilities and inherent motivation, as well as metacognitive post-diction capabilities. Grade one to six Belgian school pupils were assessed between January and June. It was discovered that, in grade three, precision, but not fluency, was influenced by intrinsic motivation. A particularly crucial propensity factor was previous mathematical precision; moreover, lower metacognitive accuracy and reduced intrinsic motivation were seen among ineffective mathematics students.

In another study using a specific teaching method, Hendrickson and Peterson-Hernandez (2020) investigated the impact on third-grade pupils' writing abilities when participating in an interactive pen pals project. It was found that more pupils take part in realistic writing and reading activities due to framing the writing task around a pen pal project. Meanwhile, the development of reading skills, the transformation of perspectives regarding writing and the development of writing skills, which are significantly greater in length and replication of letter formats, were positive outcomes. Furthermore, the study identified the significance of improving children's ability to learn, giving them the inherent

power and capacity to express their viewpoints; children at this stage were eager to establish social relationships. Furthermore, Anderson and Meier (2018) found that such methods contribute to children's education, whether as writers, engineers or scientists. Education via effective learning is a contributing element to the process. Offering children the freedom to paint and engage in art enhances their learning motivation.

Moreover, in the qualitative study of Anderson and Meier (2018), content analysis was applied to assess engagement in art and science tasks by 23 second-grade learners, where cohesive, concurrent art and science teaching was used instead of individual disciplines. The focus of the task was problem solving and role play in the context of civil engineers' activities, joined with creative construction and drawing to study erosion. Autonomous learning was encouraged through the development of stimulating lessons, with art stressed as the basis of learning.

Overall, many studies have identified approaches to facilitating the adoption of and support for combined art and science learning that educators can take, including emphasising scientific notions via artistic creation through social learning and interaction for learners. Correspondingly, it is important to respond to specific pupils' requirements, experiences, strengths and interests while developing the syllabus. A well-designed syllabus should consider the needs, experiences, strengths and interests of each individual student. This method of curriculum development promotes personalised and efficient learning environments. Furthermore, pupils should be included in appraising comprehension by their educators using communication and active discussion. Lastly, fun, mutual responsibilities and collaboration should be stressed in the classroom environment, with enthusiasm and social learning being facilitated by educators. Ultimately, effective educators help develop learners' intrinsic motivation.

2.3.3.8. Teacher Innovation. Näkk and Timoštšuk (2017) explored the connection between pupils' learning engagement and educators' class-based activities in an Estonian primary school education environment. The emphasis was on how learning engagement is affected by autonomy-supportive and structured teaching; their study involved 46 pupils and two primary school educators. Over two years, grade two and grade four classes were assessed concerning how educators' class-based activities affected learners' study engagement. Irrespective of the educational grade, pupils' learning was identified as being strengthened through an autonomy-supportive and structured teaching approach. This suggests giving educators more confidence in personally formulating, disseminating and applying innovative concepts.

In a similar study, Klaeijsen, Vermeulen and Martens (2017) investigated how innovation in educators is shaped by intrinsic motivation, self-efficiency at work and contentment and fundamental psychological requirements. Self-efficiency at work and essential psychological requirements were identified as being strongly correlated. Greater confidence in one's personal capacity to successfully adapt to job changes was connected to educators' fundamental psychological requirements being more effectively nurtured. Consequently, innovation and development procedures, in addition to personally formulating, disseminating and applying novel concepts as part of an innovative approach to teaching, were all linked to self-efficiency at work and fulfilling fundamental psychological requirements. When this is done, learners' attraction to and pleasure derived from learning are promoted, along with their intrinsic motivation, in addition to the impact on teaching techniques. Fluckiger, Dunn and Stinson (2018) also suggested that children should be provided with the right to convey their perspectives and suggestions in a way that is convenient for their orientation and interests.

2.3.3.9. Technological Developments. Meanwhile, it is necessary to consider developments during the 21st century, where a choice of activities must be made pertinent to children's tendencies and the changes in technology. It is possible for educators to use technology to fulfil the aim of providing children with information in a satisfactory manner. Beserra et al. (2017) also found this method an effective learning approach. The previous research referred to in the above sections (i.e., Sections 2.3.3.3 to 2.3.3.7) proves the significance of providing children with the freedom to express their opinions and have them heard, along with the adoption of various learning methods appropriate to their interests. It assists children in developing a sense of belonging in the classroom and the learning process, granting them greater independence and limiting the intervention of the teacher or educator to that solely of a guide. Additionally, the child will have a sense of competency following the task's completion, in that they have contributed to selecting the job and have had autonomy while carrying it out. In this case, the educator has helped fulfil the child's basic psychological needs, which will subsequently enhance their intrinsic learning motivation, as mentioned in SDT. Deci and Ryan (2000) posited that fostering students' needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence results in greater engagement and honing of self-regulation skills, which are a significant component of the learning process, while also helping students to listen and stay attentive during the learning process.

2.3.3.10. An Opportunity for Parents, Not Just Teachers. The teacher's role should not be overlooked. As observed in the studies already mentioned, enabling student autonomy is also crucial to fulfilling the students' needs. It allows students to feel part of the class and school, thus ensuring their effective teaching delivery. It helps contribute to innovation and development, which significantly promotes meeting children's needs, maintaining pace with technological developments and enriching the learning process. Furthermore, the studies are

all concerned with specific topics and the class-based and school learning processes, thus placing the most significant learning responsibility on the teacher.

To the best of my knowledge, no studies have been concerned with intrinsic learning motivation among students in early childhood in relation to the parent's role, which can prove significant in connection with children's lives and education. A child is accompanied by their family for much of the time – on summer holidays and so forth – which makes the parental role particularly crucial in enhancing children's motivation to learn and build their personalities. Parenting should be undertaken in a manner that corresponds to the differing stages of a child's development, providing them with self-confidence and independence, alongside listening to their perspectives and requirements, while avoiding the methods of authoritarianism and the imposition of views that suit the parents rather than the interests of their children's generation.

The coronavirus pandemic has transformed the dominant learning strategies. The adoption of technology is becoming far more significant while learning is undertaken at home, with students not having a teacher or colleagues to follow them during academic tasks (Abuhammad, 2020; Dong et al., 2020). For Saudi Arabia, this presents a novel approach for parents and students (Salam et al., 2022). Furthermore, societal developments and the openness that has emerged in the KSA and through Vision 2030 require a generation with ambition, strong personalities and self-confidence. Until recently, Saudi Arabia was closed in many respects and the upbringing of children was simpler compared with the present time. The country has become open in numerous respects in order to maintain pace with global developments.

Some societies have been undermined in such circumstances, where only parents are perceived as knowing what is correct for their children. Thus, they opt to mould their children's future, particularly girls, without considering wider changes. Some communities

do not listen to a girl's opinion and consider that once she reaches a certain age, she should marry according to her parent's wishes. She has no right to continue studying or select a job that reflects her interests and intrinsic motives.

An essential aspect of my research is the cultivation of a child's right to choose from an early age, in ways mentioned in previous studies, with their voice and opinions being heard by the teacher or educator. Indeed, when the teacher is willing to listen to their students, it enables ways and means to be invented that suit them or contribute to their intrinsic learning motivation. The learning process is shared between the teacher and the student. It presents the students with an opportunity to act as an active element in the learning process instead of simply receiving information. It increases children's passion for lifelong learning and reduces the boredom of study time; in fact, it can become a fun period during their day, featuring numerous games and means that attract them and maintain their learning motivation.

As is readily apparent, children have a considerable motivation to play. Numerous studies on childhood suggest giving children time and sufficient space to play since it is a fundamental need during their development. Why should the learning process not be fun and exciting, comprising substantial play and activity? It should not just be part of kindergarten or preschool because even children in primary grades must be free to play and enjoy the learning process.

2.3.4. Relationship Between Autonomy Support and Intrinsic Motivation in Context of Childhood Education

In the previous sections, I began exploring the significance of the learning environment in supporting the autonomy of children and the critical role of motivation. Thus, clarifying the importance and function of the two is vital. Furthermore, I have determined that the most basic form of motivation for human beings is intrinsic motivation. Most people's attitudes

and behaviours are driven by the pursuit of internal benefits or rewards. Therefore, both society and the environment are pivotal in supporting intrinsic autonomy and motivation.

Childhood is also a hugely significant time of life. Typically, children are under the control or care of at least one adult most of the time, such as a parent or teacher. It is primarily to protect the child because adults (usually) better understand circumstances, environments, behaviours, ramifications, etc. Generally speaking, adult intervention in children's behaviour is undertaken in an attempt to prevent mistakes from occurring. The human organism is active, actualising and directional (Rogers, 1963). Life is a highly complex process that encompasses numerous aspects, ranging from one end of the scale to the other; for example, successes and failures, love and hatred, and fear and bravery. The prospect of making errors should not induce fear in children; mistakes and their accompanying feelings are simply a natural part of child development on the path to adulthood.

During childhood, a child continuously grows and develops their thinking and skills to help them survive and thrive. Hence, children especially need their basic needs of oxygen, food and water met – the 'deficiency requirements' established by Maslow (1954). They also develop more generalised skills that help them progress towards a state of autonomy, such as developing abilities to solve problems, learning to communicate effectively and creating social relationships. Correspondingly, it decreases their control by external forces (Rogers, 1959). It enables the child to develop and better adapt to life and all the problems they will encounter as they grow. Barrable et al. (2022) conducted a study examining the impact of being in an autonomy-supporting environment that allowed children to act in accordance with their own choices rather than a more controlling environment. The study outcomes demonstrated the importance of freedom and the significance of the teacher's willingness to promote autonomy in children through self-directed activity. Essentially, this means that a

child's autonomy will be supported if, where possible and sensible, a child is given freedom of choice in terms of their actions. It further verifies the SDT stance that intrinsically motivated behaviour is regulated by the degree of autonomy.

Baten et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating the effect of autonomy-supportive instructions versus a controlling instructional style. The researchers distributed a comic book to the participating children. The children solved a series of maths exercises, which were classified as easy, medium or complex, and then completed a questionnaire. In addition, the participating children were allowed to choose the level of difficulty for a final set of exercises, which they then completed independently. The outcomes of this study confirmed that children are more motivated to take on new challenges when given autonomy-supportive instructions rather than more controlled instructions. It is significant as it indicates that there is potential to increase the likelihood of academic or professional success later in their lives when they have greater autonomy.

As per SDT, three primary outcomes of social contexts promote and support internalisation and autonomous motivation. Initially, it maintains or increases the level of intrinsic motivation. Then, it enhances the development of people's aspirations. Finally, it improves psychological well-being. When discussing emotions, intrinsic motivation essentially refers to the degree of interest and enjoyment a person has in or derives from something. It drives the levels of engagement and absorption (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The model of behaviour classified as autonomous or self-determined is *naturally motivated action*. Deci and Ryan (1985) maintain that intrinsic motivation can be sustained when behaviour is seen as autonomous. This view is supported by the person-centred approach (PCA) developed by Rogers in the early 1940s. According to the PCA, human beings have an innate motivational drive from birth and the actualising tendency advances people towards being more autonomous. A study carried out by Leotti et al. (2010) supported

this theory. The authors state that human beings are born with a desire to control, which can be observed before developing any social or cultural autonomous values; individuals strongly object to having this control removed. For instance, when young children learn to use utensils to eat independently, it provides them with a sense of control. Subsequently, rejecting or objecting to attempts by their parents to feed them, even at such a young age, they view this as a removal of their independence. The authors reported that a sense of autonomy is crucial even for very young children across diverse cultures.

The environment in which a person grows up has a hugely significant bearing on their autonomy. It can either promote or impede the development of the person's autonomy. In a positive environment, the child's tendency to grow is supported; the direction of growth will be clear and led by the child. This view is supported by Green (2018), who investigated spatial autonomy and young children. The study determined that young children would try to claim a place as their own within their home in an attempt to gain spatial autonomy. Within this space, they will establish their own set of rules and attempt to control their environment. This is essentially a bid to solidify their independence and is very significant to their development as autonomous beings in three main aspects: (i) it helps to form their identity, (ii) it increases their self-confidence and (iii) it helps to develop their sense of self.

In the previous chapter, from an SDT perspective, I highlighted the importance of autonomy and internal motivation for learning in primary education. Freedom within the classroom is one of the most important methods used by the teacher to support the autonomy of students and their internal motives. In addition, the student plays a crucial role in terms of the focus of the learning process. Teachers can be guided by the recommendations set out. In previous sections, I also highlighted the importance of autonomy and the intrinsic motivation for learning at the primary education stage, underpinned by SDT. The latter demonstrates the importance of freedom in the classroom to support student autonomy by drawing on intrinsic

motivational factors and moving away from controlling approaches that rely upon extrinsic motivation. This area has received significant attention from researchers, but the aspect of culture and the family has not been given sufficient attention. In the next section, I address the importance of the family in children's education and the role of culture in supporting autonomy.

2.4. Relationship Between Roger's Person-Centred Education and Self Determination Theory

Rogers's book *Freedom to Learn* (1994) is an essential reference for every teacher interested in supporting student motivation. It explored student learning from a humanistic perspective. The theory was met with significant interest and, as a result, has since become a cornerstone of modern theories, including SDT (Sheldon, 2013).

Behaviour emanating from inner impulses is characterised by greater autonomy, self-determination and satisfaction with inherent and internal inclinations. SDT aligns with a PCA in that both regard individuals as constantly evolving and growing in order to achieve their potential within their environment. In addition, humans are inherently pre-emptive. They possess the ability to act and control both their internal forces (i.e., their motives and emotions) and the external (i.e., environmental) forces that they encounter. Rather than being negatively controlled by these forces and the organic tendency towards verifying that they have opposite poles, the social environment can facilitate or discourage this subjective inclination. Both SDT and a PCA view behaviour as either internally or externally motivated.

However, extrinsic motivation can negatively impact intrinsic motivation and autonomy. It is the equivalent of what Rogers describes as an individual's self-concept actualising in line with their *organismic valuing process* (OVP) under favourable social-environmental conditions. OVP refers to evaluating events in a way that aligns with one's

inherent requirements. When humans display conditional regard for others, this will result in the relocation of the individual's OVP and the introduction of conditions of worth, both of which will negatively impact their psychological well-being (Maurer & Daukantaitė, 2020). It occurs when the teacher or parent uses a reinforcement method to control the student's behaviour in an educational setting. Therefore, the student is always waiting for this assessment; when the teacher's approach changes and they cease, for example, offering rewards, it negatively affects the process of continuous development and learning.

In accordance with SDT, expressed as an external motive that affects internal motives, when the intervention of the extrinsic motivation weakens the intrinsic motives, this, in turn, affects the individual and the purpose of the behaviour will be to satisfy external motives. SDT proposes that there are fundamental needs for the individual to continue to develop in order to achieve self-determination, namely competence, autonomy and relatedness, which is the most crucial determinant of the behaviour of the environment or society that has been affected by the individual's continued development and growth. On the other hand, a PCA values realness, acceptance (or unconditional positive regard) and empathy. Rogers' view was that there is a natural tendency for human beings to be autonomous and move away from extrinsic control, which he described as "heteronomy" (Patterson & Joseph, 2007).

2.4.1. SDT Terminology for Extrinsic Regulations

Since this subsection discusses the relationship between a PCA and SDT, the next subsection explains the four extrinsic regulations of motivation using the SDT terminology. In SDT, external regulation means the application of external motivators, such as rewards or punishments, to guide students' behaviours and control them (Studer & Knecht, 2016). However, it is essential to prioritise the use of these extrinsic motivators in a way that is both supportive and empathetic, thus adhering to the core principles of person-centred theory.

Rather than relying solely on external regulatory measures, a more deliberate strategy could be utilised to promote desirable student behaviours and cultivate a safe and conducive educational environment. Unconditional positive regard (acceptance) cultivates an environment that is characterised by support and the absence of judgement, wherein individuals are embraced and appreciated for their intrinsic worth and identity (Sun Yong, 2017). When implementing extrinsic regulations within an SDT framework, educators have the option to utilise the concept of unconditional positive regard as a strategy to mitigate the adverse effects of external motivators.

According to Rogers and Freiberg (1994), the implementation of empathy by educators creates an environment conducive to learning wherein they are able to empathise with students' emotions, such as feelings of frustration and apprehension towards unfamiliar subjects or materials and possess the ability to perceive the situation from the student's perspective. This differs from introjected regulation.

Introjection is a form of internal regulation that can be quite controlling. It involves individuals performing actions under duress in order to avoid feelings of regret or anxiety or to enhance their ego and pride. Another way to state it is that introjection is regulated by conditional self-esteem (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When examining introjected regulation within the context of PCA, educators can establish a connection with the internalised pressures experienced by individuals by employing empathy. Educators are able to validate the emotions and challenges that individuals experience in relation to their introjected motivations, which may be the result of societal norms, parental expectations or cultural influences. This is attained through demonstrating empathy. Its cultivation fosters an atmosphere in which individuals feel heard and supported, thereby facilitating autonomy and the pursuit of authentic motivations.

Identification is a type of extrinsic motivation within the framework of SDT. It involves individuals internalising the personal importance of behaviour and adopting its regulation as their own. Individuals align themselves with the significance of a particular learning activity when they perceive it as relevant to their individual goals and principles (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Furthermore, the concept of realness holds a fundamental position within the framework of a PCA. The term pertains to the practice of educators displaying a high level of openness and honesty in their engagements with students. When educators exhibit authenticity, they actively embrace and effectively communicate their genuine emotions, thoughts and reactions, thereby cultivating an atmosphere characterised by trust and empathy. Realness emphasises the significance of authenticity, personal relevance and empathy in the educational setting. Educators who establish an environment characterised by authenticity, in which they understand and appreciate the emotions and aspirations of their students, are more likely to cultivate a sense of connection between their students and their educational goals. Students are consequently more likely to align themselves with these learning objectives and to actively engage in a self-directed and purposeful learning process.

Regulatory integration refers to the process whereby recognised regulations are fully incorporated into an individual's being. This process is facilitated by introspection and the alignment of newly established regulations with one's existing values and personal needs. As a person internalises and assimilates the reasons for their actions into their sense of self, their level of self-determination in their actions increases (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Moreover, an individual who possesses congruence is capable of accurately comprehending their own emotions and thoughts while simultaneously experiencing unconditional positive regard and empathetic understanding. In the context of individual behaviour, authenticity refers to the

quality of being open, transparent, realistic, responsible and fully conscious of one's words and actions (Joseph, 2021).

Integrated regulation in SDT and congruence in a PCA emphasise the significance of internal alignment, authenticity and self-directed behaviour. When individuals experience congruence, where their actions are consistent with their genuine self-concept, they are more likely to experience increased levels of intrinsic motivation and personal growth. Similarly, integrated regulation incorporates an internalised form of motivation that is congruent with one's authentic self, thereby fostering a greater sense of autonomy and personal satisfaction.

2.4.2. Interconnectedness of Autonomy and Personal Power

Rogers' concept of personal power, as demonstrated in his person-centred approach, strongly corresponds to the idea of autonomy within the context of self-determination theory (SDT). Both approaches emphasise the significance of people having a feeling of control and autonomy in their lives. Autonomy, as identified in SDT, is recognised as a primary psychological need that motivates human behaviour. Furthermore, under the framework of SDT, it refers to the basic need to see oneself as having control over one's acts, experiencing a feeling of choice and ensuring that one's behaviour is congruent with personal values and interests (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Rogers' theory of personal power, based on his person-centred approach, highlights an individual's power to have autonomy, create their own experiences and connect their actions with their own personality. Personal power, in this setting, refers to the capacity to create one's life in a manner that really reflects authentic self-expression and self-determination (Rogers, 1959). Both Rogers and SDT acknowledge the importance of people experiencing autonomy, connecting their actions with their beliefs and developing a sense of autonomy. The concept of autonomy, as proposed by SDT, aligns with Rogers' concept of personal

power, emphasising the connection between personal well-being and the capacity to exercise full self-determination. The development of autonomy and personal power extends beyond the authority of the educational system. Parental influence is of the highest priority in developing these characteristics.

2.5. Parents' Involvement in Their Children's Education

First, parents have an essential role in students' educational success. Parent involvement has been defined as “a multidimensional concept, referring most generally to a partnership between school actors and parents [or other family members] that promotes the social, emotional and academic growth of children”. The involvement of parents in their children's education starts within the home, where they provide a safe and supportive environment, facilitate pertinent learning opportunities, provide support and foster positive behaviour towards schooling (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). Indeed, they can provide a positive learning experience that supports a child's motivation to learn. Since children learn through regular interaction with people they love and trust, when it is enjoyable such encounters serve as modelling behaviours and provide the foundation for learning. Second, parents influence their children's academic engagement and performance by implementing certain attitudes and values in them through active involvement in their children's schools and classrooms. Subsequently, parents' increased participation in schooling and improved educational results for children are the precursor to their aspirations for their children's future academic achievements (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012).

Following this, parents represent the most influential factor in their children's lives. They are the primary educators for children until they enter nursery or begin school; moreover, they significantly affect their children's learning throughout school and beyond. A mother, for instance, is usually closest to her children (Beqja Hamit, 2002). By the same

token, Krage (2018) asserts that parents' capacity to support learning in a positive way affects the child's academic and social future. Likewise, parents' involvement in their children's education has a vital role in the psychological and educational aspects of the child's life. Theirs is the primary influence on a child's early years. More specifically, it is in the primary stage when the child is still attached to their parents.

I worked as a teacher for a while and observed that many parents are ignorant of the importance of their role and place the learning burden solely on the teacher. Yet the process of educating the child is a partnership between the family and the school and is not limited to the teacher. As a matter of fact, parents and teachers should support each other's responsibilities. Initially, parents should have greater responsibility for teaching social skills than schools. All in all, families and schools should share responsibility for children's academic achievement (Rattenborg et al., 2019).

On the same note, the family's involvement has an impact on students' learning and achievement throughout the school year (Hall, 2020). The conducted meta-analysis found that the influence of family-school interventions on children's social-behavioural abilities and mental health was greatest for children living outside of cities. This occurred because of the increase in social capital gained when families and schools cooperate in under-resourced contexts (Sheridan R. et al., 2019).

Moreover, Korosidou et al. (2021) examined the PIECE (parental involvement for the engagement, cooperation and empowerment) programme, which aims at improving parental involvement in a preschool context where a foreign language is used. The outcome suggested that parental involvement has a significant effect on foreign language learning in the early years. The findings also indicate that parents' involvement at the beginning of language learning programmes contributes to young children's oral and literacy skills.

Further studies have claimed that parental involvement in primary school children's reading development has a significant effect on children's progress in decoding skills, reading fluency and reading comprehension (Kigobe et al., 2021). Likewise, Pace (2020) examined the *Reading Adventures* programme, which included taking home a bag containing a simple maths problem and a scientific investigation along with a related book. The aim of this programme was to improve student reading scores by involving families in the learning process. The study suggested that the involvement of parents, not income or social status, is the best predictor of academic achievement.

Furthermore, Xia et al. (2020) studied the impact of parenting style on the connection between various dimensions of parental involvement and the school readiness of the children. The study found that parents' home-based involvement showed a solid relationship to children's school readiness. Some parents enjoy and want to contribute to and participate in their children's learning. Family-school cooperation is critical for empowering families to become more involved in their child's problem-solving instead of waiting for school officials to contact them or offer solutions. Moreover, Gerzel-Short et al. (2018) investigated family engagement in response to interventions. The study discovered that parents felt more at ease in the position of teacher at home, reported more problem-solving and felt more involved academically and in helping their children. There are two main factors that affect parents' participation in their children's education. These are given in the following two subsections.

2.5.1. Parent Educational Background

The background and level of education of parents can impact their views and opinions about their children's education. Indeed, parents with higher levels of education reported a greater level of involvement. Even families with college-educated parents but lower incomes were more interested in school and home activities, such as taking their children to libraries

(Ogg et al., 2021; Davis-Kean et al., 2021). This seems to explain the importance of the parents' level of education, no matter their income. They will give everything they can to support their children's education.

Similarly, another study maintained that mothers with high education levels provided their children with more books at home and reduced their children's TV hours daily. These contributions were associated with better performance in language and literacy (Tan et al., 2019). A higher maternal education level was associated with providing children with more books and extracurricular activities at home; both of these were associated with better performance in maths. Because the characteristics listed are all adjustable, intervention measures that make reading materials available to children at home, restrict children's exposure to excessive TV and encourage participation in extracurricular activities may boost children's academic performance. It may also be helpful to offer interventions to raise a less educated mother's understanding of the value of giving reading materials to their children at home, limiting children's TV viewing time and immersing children in extracurricular activities.

Conversely, the cultural capital hypothesis asserts that the family's cultural resources and surroundings do have a significant impact on children's educational goals and performance. Indeed, parents possessing high cultural capital are more conscious of the school's regulations. They invest more in cultural resources and place greater focus on cultivating their children's educational goals and interests. They also assist children with the school curriculum and enable them to excel academically compared to families with low cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

To conclude, there is a connection between parental autonomy support and autonomous study motivation. Conversely, a controlling interpersonal style hinders individuals from autonomously regulating their behaviour by exerting pressure on others to conform to

specific thoughts or actions or by manipulating their choices through the use of rewards or punishments (Vail et al., 2020).

2.5.2. Parental Facilitation of Autonomous Support and Intrinsic Learning Motivation

Young children spend most of their time with their parents. Parents have a long-term influence on a child's emotional well-being, education, developmental outcomes and capacity to achieve in life. As a result of SDT-based research, the benefits of autonomy and autonomy support have been documented in contexts such as families, schools, etc. These findings have been used to enhance human potential, as reflected in behavioural, relational and experiential outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2006).

Furthermore, parents are often seen as inspirational role models by their children; their words and attitudes have a significant impact on them. Therefore, when parents encourage a child's autonomy, this promotes the child's self-esteem and confidence, which impact many facets of their lives. Langhinrichsen-Rohling (2017), for example, investigated how children's self-esteem levels influenced their susceptibility to bullying and the psychological impact of being tormented. The study indicated that children with greater self-esteem are less susceptible to the psychological effects of being bullied.

Zhang and Whitebread (2019) also discovered that if parents supported children in exploring their own ideas and promoting their initiatives, children would have more opportunities to learn and internalise problem-solving strategies and, therefore, be more capable and confident when completing tasks independently compared to children whose ideas are controlled and devalued. Parents have an important role in supporting children's motivation to learn. When parents' facilitation focuses on backing up children's autonomy, it affects children's motivation to learn (Katz et al., 2011). Moreover, SDT shows that parental

autonomy support occurs when parents encourage their children to begin and make their own choices rather than controlling their children's behaviour (Kocayörük et al., 2015).

SDT also maintains that parenting style, as a socialisation agent, plays a vital role in supporting the link between the perceived need for support and adolescents' well-being (Grolnick et al., 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, parents who encourage their children's autonomy have a positive effect on their children's lives. Vasquez et al. (2016), for instance, discovered a positive correlation between parental autonomy support and a variety of positive academic and social outcomes, including academic achievement, autonomy, motivation, psychological health, perceived competence, perceived control, engagement and effort, attitude toward school and self-regulation.

The relationship between parents and their children has a comprehensive effect on the child. Parents have an essential and primary role in their children's levels of autonomy (Effendi et al., 2018). Moreover, since children spend most of their time with their parents from birth, the parents' methods of bringing up their children have a long-term impact, not simply for a specific time period, i.e., childhood. Grolnick (2016) found that the academic performance of children with controlling parents declined over time. On the other hand, the results of Zong et al. (2018) highlighted the necessity for a comprehensive approach to parental participation and the detrimental psychological effects in Eastern cultures if parents regulate their children's behaviour rather than support their autonomy.

Since children need support from their parents for homework or in-home learning, the parents will tend to deal with them in the same way as before: either controlling or supporting their autonomy. Parenting styles and techniques are related to various outcomes in children's psychological development and academic achievement (Baumrind, 1967). Similarly, Silinskas and Kikas (2017) investigated the relationship between children's views of parental participation in maths homework (control and support) and arithmetic performance and

motivation (task-persistent homework behaviour and maths self-concept). According to the findings, low maths self-concept predicted more parental control, which in turn predicted low maths performance, task perseverance and maths self-concept. Second, improved task perseverance during schoolwork was associated with perceived parental support. Finally, parental control had a negative impact on boys' task perseverance and maths self-concept. Linkiewich et al. (2021) also assessed the connection between parental autonomy support and children in preschool and their display of autonomy. They focused on examining if mothers' and fathers' use of positive direction, negative control and responsiveness during their interaction with their child predicted the child's level of autonomy. The results showed that children exhibited more autonomy when their parents exhibited autonomy-supportive behaviours; for example, children were more self-reliant when they received more favourable advice from their fathers.

2.5.3. Outlook of a PCA and PET on the Parent-Child Relationship

Thomas Gordon, a psychologist, devised parent effectiveness training (PET) after conducting extensive research at the University of Chicago with Carl Rogers. Gordon was selected for a move to preventive approaches following additional clinical experience; he trained parents in interpersonal skills with the intention of promoting better family relationships and consequently influencing positive behaviour changes in their children. His Theory of Healthy Relationships from 1970 was developed on the foundations of parental assertiveness and self-disclosure (Jourard, 1971), listening skills (Rogers, 1951) and conflict resolution in accordance with the educational theory of inquiry of Dewey from 1938 (Wilkinson & Pearce, 2006). Gordon's PET and Carl Rogers' PCA both emphasise communication and relationships in parent-child interactions. Rogers emphasizes empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard in interpersonal connections, while PET

emphasizes active listening, understanding and supportive communication. PET promotes accepting and appreciating the child's perspective, identifying their unique experiences and creating a setting of reciprocal respect. Rogers is known for his non-directive therapy, which encourages individuals to explore their emotions and ideas. PET promotes a non-coercive and non-punitive parenting style, allowing children to express themselves and engage in decision-making when appropriate. Both systems endorse positive reinforcement and unconditional positive regard, promoting positive behaviour and creating an enjoyable emotional environment within the family. Both approaches aim to foster a supportive and accepting environment for children's development.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic altered the children's environment and the way they learn, with parents becoming more involved in their children's education due to an increase in distance learning. In the following section, I will discuss remote learning in general and specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.6. Remote Learning

Remote learning is a fundamental aspect of this research. It represents the setting in which mothers share their perceptions and experiences of their children's autonomy and motivation when they are engaged in remote learning.

2.6.1. An Overview of Remote Learning

According to Greener (2021), remote learning, also known as distance learning, is an educational approach characterised by the absence of physical proximity between the teacher and the learner. This mode of learning allows for asynchronous engagement, meaning that the teacher and learner may not be actively involved in the learning process at the same time.

It is also referred to as ‘parent-led home-based education’ or ‘homeschooling’, something that has been a prevalent educational option across various cultures for thousands of years. The current terminology employed by the majority of individuals in contemporary society refers to this educational practice as homeschooling (Ray, 2017). Parents make decisions regarding the choice of schooling by taking into consideration their preferences, the quality of schools in their local area, as well as the constraints imposed by their income and the amount of leisure time available to them (Isenberg, 2007).

Ray (2017) conducted a systematic review of empirical research on homeschooling as a school choice, which yielded noteworthy findings. There is evidence suggesting a favourable impact on homeschooled students in comparison with their counterparts in institutional schooling, although a limited number of studies contain findings that are inconclusive or indicate adverse outcomes. In relation to the domain of social and emotional development, a substantial body of research consistently demonstrates favourable outcomes for homeschooled individuals when compared with their counterparts in traditional educational settings. The majority of research conducted on the comparative achievements of individuals who were homeschooled and later transitioned into adulthood consistently demonstrates favourable outcomes for the home-educated group in contrast to their counterparts who received a conventional school education. However, there is a lack of academic study in the Arab world that examines the phenomenon of homeschooling and explores its potential benefits. In addition, it is worth noting that the majority, if not all, Arab nations currently lack legislation that permits homeschooling, and this matter continues to be disregarded. This assertion can be substantiated by examining the official websites of the ministries of education (Nazar & Nasrallah, 2021).

2.6.2. Remote Learning Amid Covid-19 Pandemic

The global proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic compelled governments and organisations to combat its effects. As a precaution against the spread of the virus, face-to-face classroom teaching was banned for a time (Rahman, 2020). The necessity of social distancing necessitated the acceleration of the required adjustments, which resulted in the emergence of substantial changes in a variety of educational domains (Mishra et al., 2020). In order to keep up with the resulting rapid digitalisation of the curriculum, educational institutions had to overcome obstacles such as online instruction courses and their dissemination (Crawford et al., 2020). Despite the difficulties, educators and institutions adapted to changes by implementing innovative solutions such as virtual classrooms and interactive online platforms. These changes have not only made it possible for students to continue their education online but have also created new opportunities for those who may not have had access to traditional educational settings.

There are numerous arguments against e-learning. Arguments pertaining to online pedagogy include accessibility, affordability, adaptability, learning pedagogy, lifelong education and policy. It is considered a relatively inexpensive mode of education due to the reduced costs of transportation and lodging, and overall institution-based education. Another intriguing aspect of online learning is its adaptability; learners can schedule or plan their time to complete online courses (Dhawan, 2020).

It is evident that education will continue to change in response to the new circumstances. It will be essential for institutions and educators to remain adaptable and innovative to meet the needs of students in a world that is rapidly transforming and continually enhancing their teaching skills and knowledge in online and flexible contexts (Clinton, 2020). However, the COVID-19 epidemic has presented unanticipated challenges

for many families, and these ongoing obligations are likely to contribute to an increase in parental stress.

Teachers, families and students all participate in remote learning. Based on research in studies related to the transformation of remote learning, some have measured the extent of parental involvement in their children's education remotely. One example of this is the work by Alharthi (2022), which revealed that the COVID-19 epidemic impacted parental engagement in their children's education. Parents have been forced to educate their children regardless of their own educational levels or experience in education. Other studies concerned the challenges faced by mothers. According to Darmody et al. (2020) and Moore et al. (2020), the homeschooling of children imposed additional demands on mothers, who assumed increased domestic responsibilities. An example is Parczewska (2019), who found that a number of Polish mothers characterised the pandemic situation as challenging and that the responsibilities linked to home education were beyond their capabilities.

Similarly, O'Reilly (2021) discovered that during the pandemic, the majority of outdoor activities for children stopped and mothers had little to no spare time. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2021) and Burns et al. (2021) both found that many mothers reported having difficulty balancing multiple responsibilities, including their own employment and/or education, as well as domestic responsibilities. In the work of San Jose et al. (2022), all the mothers admitted that the new arrangement caused them considerable difficulty; in terms of time and their children's dispositions, they simply had to adapt. Studies such as Said et al. (2021) that researched the experiences of mothers in Arab Gulf countries, like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), found that mothers faced a lack of time managing multiple roles and responsibilities, such as being a university student, which was among the responsibilities of many of the mothers interviewed.

Other studies explain these challenges in detail. An example is Misirli and Ergulec (2021), who stated that there are several challenges that home tutoring parents experience, such as not knowing the content of the lessons, having trouble keeping the child motivated, not having enough time and not having access to the internet (Alshaikh et al., 2021). The study also found that the absence of face-to-face contact throughout the transition to online education presented some additional challenges. Most teachers said it was difficult to convince students to participate actively in class. Furthermore, Putri et al. (2020) and Rasmitadila et al. (2020) discovered that teachers in Indonesia recognised additional challenges and limitations, including some restrictions in the choice of teaching methods ordinarily applicable in a traditional face-to-face class, less coverage of curriculum content and a lack of technology skills that inhibits the potential of remote learning.

2.6.3. Remote Learning and the Role of Mothers

As I have shown, many studies investigating the impact of remote learning have focused on the percentage of parent's participation in their children's remote learning, with some studies focusing on the challenges facing education during this pandemic. However, some studies about the mother's role have been undertaken. For example, Kamas et al. (2013) found that mothers were more involved in their children's education than fathers, especially in Saudi Arabia. According to research conducted by Alshahrani (2014), mothers in Saudi Arabia are more likely than fathers to be active in their children's education. The study showed that mothers' engagement in their children's schooling was also related to improved academic achievements. Al-Mogheer and Al-Lheem (2015) also indicated that mothers were more likely than fathers to participate in their children's education by undertaking jobs such as helping with homework, supplying needed materials and talking to the child's teacher.

As I have noted, some studies have determined that mothers have suffered from challenges and difficulties in relation to remote learning, and some works have touched on some of these difficulties. At the same time, there is no existing study discussing the importance of autonomy for children during the pandemic or the experience of mothers in supporting their child's motivation to learn while engaging in other parental responsibilities. These studies also did not focus on mothers who have different and unusual circumstances, such as alienation from their families during the pandemic due to postgraduate studies. Therefore, I will explore the additional challenges and factors that may affect Saudi mothers in supporting the autonomy of their children and their educational motivation during remote learning.

The transformation in the KSA through Vision 2030 impacted mothers as it gave them the opportunity to work in all fields; one example is the ability to go out to work and not limit her role to the house with her children. This reduces the children's dependence on their mother. Then there are the mothers who are on scholarships to study abroad and who have all the responsibilities on them as a mother, a student and an expatriate who faces the challenges of alienation for herself and her children. Since my study includes Saudi mothers who grew up in Saudi society, the section below will include information about the KSA; I will provide information about the kingdom and its culture, education system, developments and changes that have occurred due to the implementation of Vision 2030.

2.7. Context of Study

Before exploring the Saudi context and fundamental aspects that significantly influence this research, it is important to discuss 'culture'. Below, I also discuss the associated dimensions of *individualism*, *collectivism* and *acculturation strategies*.

2.7.1. An Overview of Culture

Culture refers to the shared cognitive patterns that distinguish members of a specific social group or classification from members of other groups. However, the phenomenon in question exhibits associations with a variety of other collectives. There is an assortment of individuals within every collective. The concept proposes that the distribution of individual characteristics can be represented by a bell curve, and that the distinctions between cultures can be understood as the shifting of this bell curve as individuals transition from one society to another (Hofstede, 2011).

2.7.2. Individualism versus Collectivism

Individualism and collectivism represent contrasting societal traits. Individualism pertains to the emphasis on individual independence and self-reliance, while collectivism relates to the degree of societal integration into organisations. On the individualist side are cultures with loose ties between individuals: everyone is expected to care for themselves and their immediate family. On the more collectivist side of the continuum, one can observe cultures wherein individuals are ingrained from an early age into tightly knit in-groups, often comprising extended families that include aunts, uncles and grandparents. These in-groups provide ongoing protection to their members in return for unwavering loyalty and a stance of opposition towards other in-groups (Hofstede, 2011).

2.7.3. Cultural Influence on Autonomy and Motivation

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), SDT posits that the presence of autonomy and intrinsic interest in learning contributes positively to emotional well-being across various cultural contexts. For them, autonomy is a fundamental human need and is expressed differently in individualistic and collectivist cultures. Autonomy is widely regarded as a

fundamental aspect that holds significance across different cultural self-construals, regardless of the specific students' affiliations. However, the significance of culture becomes particularly salient when examining the disparities between individualist and collectivist self-construals.

When examining the perspective of cross-cultural researchers on autonomy, it is also important to consider why autonomy, which is commonly associated with autonomy, is not regarded as essential to well-being in collectivistic cultures. According to their perspective, the dissatisfaction of individuals living in collectivistic contexts can be attributed to the conflict between autonomy and the prevalent cultural value of interdependence. In some cultural contexts, contentment is not derived from the pursuit of personal goals but rather from conforming to external influences and expectations. According to Oishi (2000), in individualistic societies, children are taught to view dependence negatively and independence positively; such cultures tend to produce adults with a strong propensity for independence. Similarly, children living in collectivistic societies learn the significance of nurturing cooperation with others and accepting responsibility for their assigned roles. When the goals of society align with the goals of individuals, normative behaviour demonstrates the pursuit of individual goals.

Hence, in accordance with the argument, the notion of autonomy within SDT, which pertains to internal standards, cannot be universally applicable to collectivistic cultures due to their adherence to external standards. Instead, individual happiness is determined by the degree of alignment with the prevailing characteristics of a specific cultural framework. To a certain extent, the attainment of a heightened state of well-being can be attributed to adherence to cultural norms and values. The value placed on autonomy in individualistic societies contributes to the enhancement of well-being within those cultural contexts. In contrast, the collectivist interpretation prioritises external norms, and adhering to these norms

leads to increased levels of life satisfaction among individuals who have a strong sense of interdependence (Bryja, 2011).

2.7.4. *Acculturation Strategies*

Since my thesis considers the perspectives of mothers with multicultural experiences, it is important that I provide a brief introduction to Berry's *Acculturation Strategies* (1997).

Acculturation refers to the dynamic process of cultural and psychological transformation that occurs when members of distinct cultural groups interact. The process of acculturation occurs after migration and persists among various ethnocultural communities within culturally diverse societies. Gradually, acclimatisation to cultural contact environments occurs.

Occasionally, the experience may induce tensions, but it typically culminates in a mutual adjustment. The study and practical application of acculturation have become prominent areas of study in recent decades. Significant progress has been made in comprehending the various facets of acculturation and adaptation, including their processes and outcomes. This improved comprehension has facilitated the formulation of policies and programmes designed to nurture favourable outcomes for all parties involved (Berry, 2017).

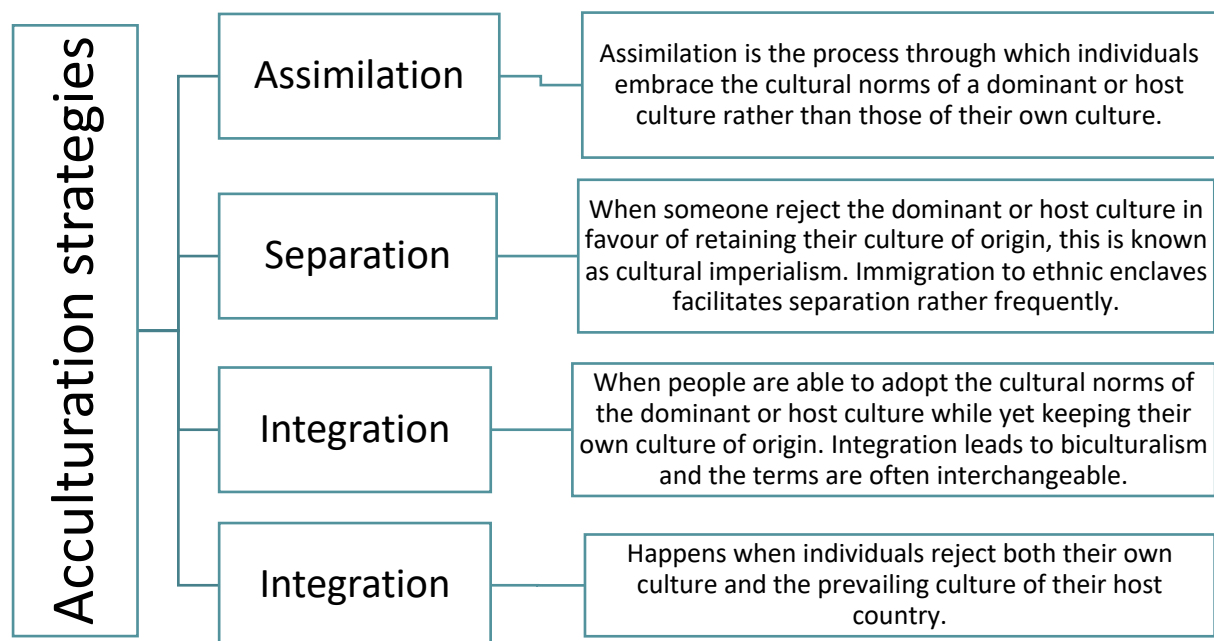
Berry (1997) proposed an acculturation model that categorises individual adaptation strategies according to two dimensions. The first dimension relates to the maintenance or abandonment of a person's indigenous culture (i.e., it is deemed important to maintain one's identity and distinctive characteristics). The second dimension is approval or rejection of the host culture. Is the maintenance of relationships with a broader society considered valuable? From these two issues, four acculturation strategies emerge.

First, assimilation is the process by which individuals assume the cultural norms of a dominant or host culture, thereby replacing their native cultural practices. Second, separation occurs when individuals reject the dominant or host culture in favour of preserving their

native culture. Immigration to ethnic enclaves facilitates separation on a regular basis. Third, integration refers to the process by which individuals are capable of assimilating the cultural norms of the prevailing or host culture while simultaneously preserving their original cultural heritage. It is a process that frequently aligns with and is commonly used interchangeably with the concept of biculturalism. Fourth, individuals are marginalised when they reject both their native culture and the dominant host culture (Berry, 1997). All four strategies are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Acculturation Strategies (Berry, 1997)



2.7.5. Acculturation Challenges

International students who are adjusting to a new academic environment and culture can frequently face acculturation stress; Asian students may be particularly susceptible to this stress due to the substantial cultural differences that exist (Ma et al., 2020). Anxiety regarding

a second language, academic pressure, alienation, loneliness and future uncertainty are all examples of internal stressors. The learning of a second language and its practical implementation may induce psychological unease, whereas the pursuit of scholastic distinction introduces additional stress. A lack of support networks and homesickness are potential factors that contribute to experiences of loneliness and isolation. Additional factors that contribute to the exacerbation of acculturation stress include political climate shifts and uncertainties regarding visa status.

Language barriers, interpersonal conflicts, academic difficulties, financial limitations and unjust treatment or discrimination are all examples of external stressors. As a result of language barriers preventing meaningful connections with peers and faculty, academic performance suffers. Loneliness and despair may result from interpersonal difficulties. The adjustment to diverse pedagogical approaches and classroom interactions presents difficulties for Asian students who are accustomed to conventional learning modalities. Due to restrictions on working outside the university, financial constraints may hasten graduation, thereby increasing the risk of mental health issues. Unjust treatment can have a significant impact on the psychological health of a minority group. Ma et al. (2020) acknowledge that differentiating internal and external stressors is difficult as a result of their interdependence.

Additionally, this review contextualises the challenges within the broader landscape of global mobility trends, highlighting the preferences of Saudi nationals and the specific challenges they face upon returning to their home country. Challenges faced by international students were built on the work of previous studies (Brown & Holloway, 2008; David et al., 2009; Junzi, 2009; Misra & Castilla, 2004; Sovic, 2009). International students, including those from Saudi Arabia, encounter difficulties adapting to life in a foreign country, such as language barriers, cultural disparities and adjustments to unfamiliar educational systems, which emerge as consistent obstacles (Sherry et al., 2010; Rabia & Karkuti, 2017). Furthermore, a recent

study by Jamil et al. (2022) investigated the diverse obstacles perceived by international students studying abroad. These obstacles encompass psychological, social, cultural and academic dimensions, requiring mental acclimatisation to the new environment. The literature indicates that the UK and the USA are the preferred destinations for many Saudi graduate students, with Canada also being a notable choice (Ahmed, 2015). The shifting preferences underscore the dynamic nature of international education and its impact on individuals and families. This challenges them not only in the host country but also upon their return to the KSA. Upon returning to Saudi Arabia, parents, as highlighted in a study by Al-Qahtani and Al Zumor (2016), prefer enrolling their children in private primary schools. This preference is driven by the recognition of the importance of English as a global language, seen as a factor that can enhance their children's future prospects.

2.8. Overview of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

In this section, I present a cultural overview of Saudi Arabia (the KSA) to create a background for my study. This section is divided into three subsections. The first provides an overview of the geography and demographics of the country. The second examines the Saudi religious and cultural framework, explaining how religion influences and distinguishes Saudi culture; in particular, the effect of Islamic ideas and practices on the foundations of educational aims and policies in Saudi Arabia is emphasised. Furthermore, I provide a general explanation of the position of women in Islamic society and Saudi Arabian culture; this will assist the reader in comprehending the environment in which Saudi mothers live. In the last subsection, I discuss the Saudi Arabian education system in general and primary education in particular.

2.8.1. Cultural Context

The ‘culture’ of a society significantly affects the interventions in children’s education, whether by the school or the family. Many schools criticise parental lack of interest due to the parents’ lack of awareness of the importance of participation; it is expected that parents should make limited interventions and follow the school’s guidance. Sheridan S. M. et al. (2020) investigated family engagement across the pre-kindergarten to kindergarten transition. They identified whether involvement is different for families in areas outside cities compared with those in urban settings. The study showed that rural parents reported far less engagement than urban parents with respect to helping their children with learning at home.

On the other hand, some schools may limit parental involvement in their children’s education when they start primary school. Such schools focus on academic skills that may include limited parental involvement in their children’s education because it interferes with the school’s teaching focus. Hence, the parents’ job consists of merely supervising their children doing their homework; they do not have time for freedom of learning or playing with their children. Tao et al. (2019) investigated mothers’ expectations and experiences with regard to their involvement when moving to primary school. Their study suggested that mothers needed to become more involved in schoolwork monitoring. Although mothers anticipated spending the same amount of time reading with their children as before, they reported having less time due to the considerable number of formal learning assignments. In terms of social and emotional guidance, they believed they would have the prerequisite capacity to lead their children’s social and interpersonal interactions. Still, they said they did not have time since they were preoccupied with academic work. Mothers were dissatisfied with the unexpected drop in parent-school contact regarding school engagement. Parents usually do the best they can to facilitate their children’s education. Subsequently, all these factors affect the parents’ involvement in their children’s education. Indeed, the difference in

their cultural and educational background should include support for parents. This can be in the form of workshops that explain the importance of their roles in supporting their children's education.

In their research, Wood et al. (2021) offered parents seminars on either early literacy or socio-emotional learning to investigate the influence on their children's reading and social skills development. It revealed the importance of the workshop and educating parents. Their findings indicated that parental participation in instructional workshops on early literacy and social development may have a substantial impact on children's academic progress. The study provided evidence that involving parents in their children's educational interventions has the potential to be a significant addition to or alternative to traditional child-directed intervention programmes in terms of increasing positive outcomes, lowering costs and increasing parental efficacy.

2.8.2. Culture and Learner Autonomy in Saudi Arabia

The concept of 'culture' is difficult to define; according to Spencer-Oatey (2012) and Tylor (1870), culture is a set of attributes that a group of people possesses. It is also defined as the primary aspect of culture, consisting of traditional (i.e., historical) thoughts and their attached values. On the one hand, "cultural systems may be considered products of action or as conditional elements of future activity" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 324). Culture consists of the derivatives of experience created by individuals; then, it is learned and transmitted from previous generations and contemporaries (Schwartz, 1992). Most people assume that autonomy is a Western cultural construct that may be foreign to certain people from other countries. On the other hand, some philosophers have different perspectives about the role of culture in autonomy. Some think that autonomy is more about a psychological phenomenon and can be transferred to the individual regardless of their cultural background

(Littlewood, 2001). In contrast, Aoki and Smith (1999) argued that learner autonomy is related to societal culture.

Saudi society is considered a conservative and interconnected society that adheres to customs and traditions, which in turn affect the upbringing of children. When children grow up in a more uniform social environment, their decisions and choices are considered to be linked to the entire society. In the past, society prohibited many decisions, especially in relation to girls. Some families formerly held opposing ideas that resulted in the overprotection of women and even prevented them from attending school. While, in the past, these more conventional beliefs were challenging to overcome, they are now outdated.

Education is available to everybody in Saudi Arabia and the equity between women and men in educational settings is assured. As a result, the new steps towards increased openness and freedom of choice may usher in further improvements, such as a stronger emphasis on students' autonomy. Moreover, from my experience of Saudi culture, I assume that the concept of 'learner's autonomy' is new for most parents, teachers and students. Most Saudi schools provide the teachers with all the power to teach, with the students as receivers (Al-Mutawa & Kailani, 1989). Moreover, it is assumed by most Saudi people that optimal learning involves physical classrooms under the guidance of a teacher. The learning process is typically organised in the classroom setting and is usually carefully evaluated by several supervisors. These beliefs, in turn, impact the education of students as well as the methods of parents. This perspective on learning says that it is all about teachers and school, not about parents.

2.8.3. The Integral Role of Religion in Saudi Culture and Society

According to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Constitution, it is a fully sovereign Arab Islamic state. Its religion is Islam, its constitution is the Qur'an and the Sunnah of His

Messenger, may God bless him and grant him peace, and its language is Arabic. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's government derives its authority from the Qur'an and the Sunnah of His Messenger. These two authorities are responsible for governing this system and all the others within the state. Education aims to instill the Islamic faith in the souls of the young, providing them with knowledge and skills and preparing them to be useful members when building their society, loving their country and being proud of its history. Islamic teachings shape Saudi Arabian societal norms, which aim to uphold the esteemed ancient Arab traditions. The virtues included in this list are bravery, benevolence, welcoming nature and strong familial bonds (Saudi eGovernment Portal, n.d.).

In the KSA, society, culture and religion are connected and cannot be separated; each has an important role and a significant impact on the others. This influences the values of individuals in social situations (Esteban et al., 1990). Importantly, religion has a specific impact on self-determination and congruence within a person-centred approach. When religious beliefs align with personal values and are intrinsically motivated, they can be positive and contribute to well-being and authenticity. However, the potential for external pressures or incongruence with individual values should be evaluated critically, as they can represent a threat to the principles of autonomy and self-congruence (Vail et al., 2020). There is no doubt that the Islamic religion and religious culture are closely linked. The first is the argument from revelation and God, and the second is from human thought in terms of what is inspired, understood and received from the religion according to its outward appearance (Atea, 2018).

The KSA has global responsibilities that include propagating and preserving the Islamic faith in partnership with other Muslim nations, especially as the protector of Islam's two holy mosques – Makkah and Madinah (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). Thus, it is clear from the above that the Islamic religion is a major factor in Saudi culture. Although culture has a

significant role in both the development of an individual's character and the formation of a country, it should come as no surprise that Islam plays a significant role in everyday life in Saudi Arabia. Islam, the state religion of Saudi Arabia, values education and understanding.

2.8.4. Education in Saudi Arabia

In this section, I include the history of education in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi educational system and its scholarship programmes.

2.8.4.1. History of Education in Saudi Arabia. Formal primary education started in the 1930s and, by 1945, the country's founder, King Abdulaziz bin Abdel Aziz Al-Saud, had initiated an intensive effort to establish schools throughout the Kingdom. In 1951, six years later, there were 226 schools with 29,887 students. In 1957, Riyadh's first university, known today as King Saud University, was established. 1954 saw the establishment of the Ministry of Education (MOE), followed by the Ministry of Higher Education in 1975. In 1964, the first school for girls provided by the government was founded and, by the end of the 1990s, girls' schools had been constructed all over the country. Today, female students comprise more than half of the nearly 6 million students enrolled in Saudi institutions and colleges ("Education | the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia").

2.8.4.2. Saudi Educational System. Educational policy in Saudi Arabia is designed to meet the educational goals set by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The general education process begins with the primary education stage, which is the basis of the educational pyramid. This stage consists of six years and starts for children at the age of six; children under the age of three months can enter first grade, especially if they have received a basic education. All schools in this category hold classes each day and attention is paid to religious and Arabic education, as well as general culture and science.

According to the MOE, the proportion of primary school children is 49%, which is the most significant proportion of students compared with other levels. The MOE is working to achieve general goals through which the environment and its educational institutions can be improved along with its outputs in order to achieve the principle of global competitiveness in education and development, in accordance with the following general goals and objectives (2022):

- The enhancement of the family's contribution in preparation for the future of their children.
- The building of an integrated journey of education.
- The improvement of equal access to education.
- The improvement of the ranking of educational institutions.
- The improvement of basic educational outcomes.
- Providing education and expertise of the highest quality to individuals recognised for their excellence in priority fields.
- Ensuring alignment between educational outcomes and labour market needs.

The aim of Vision 2030 is to create “a globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by 2030”. Moreover, it aims to provide a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment. It clarifies the country's ambitions based on its particular strengths and abilities and supports its aspirations towards a new developmental phase: to create a dynamic society in which all citizens can see their hopes and dreams realised. In the KSA, the central government's goal for educational policy has always been to provide pupils and educators with guidelines that they should follow. The goal of Vision 2030 clarifies this and seeks to achieve comprehensiveness and develop the outcomes of education at all levels, starting from early education to higher education ('Saudi Vision 2030', 2016).

In recent years, the KSA has focused on improving and developing the educational system and curriculum each year. These improvements encompass not only the formal education structure but also the cultural and contextual aspects, which include societal expectations, traditions and customs (Alromi et al., 2014). Addressing common cultural concerns that affect teaching and learning is crucial. To achieve inclusivity and equality, as well as advancement and improvement in education, the government's schools are committed to the development of technology to allow children from all segments of society to access valuable education. Moreover, Vision 2030 aims to connect the outcomes of the educational process with real-life needs by working to develop a curriculum. It also aims to replace traditional instruction methods with active instruction, which encourages students to engage in the learning process.

According to the Saudi Press Agency, after the pandemic started, the MOE provided five options for virtual distance education to more than six million students across the Kingdom, just ten hours after the decision to suspend study and without stopping the educational process. It was done under the direct supervision of the MOE as part of efforts to reduce the spread of coronavirus. The school's virtual options include Ain Channels, Ain's YouTube link, Ain Enrichment Portal, Future Portal and the Unified Education System, which have benefited more than 35 million people since March 2020. The Ain TV channels are broadcast through 20 television channels through the Virtual School Content Production. The centre is located in Riyadh; it includes 187 live broadcasts and 1,026 classes run asynchronously, along with free education. There were more than 31 million views on the YouTube channel, where they provide sign language throughout the lessons offered.

The content production centre for the virtual school, which the MOE set up, includes 20 smart boards containing the latest educational technology and 20 classrooms. The educational content is prepared to suit the current academic context and enables students to complete their

education. It has helped ensure the progress of the educational process on behalf of 34,000 schools in the kingdom.

The MOE's figures and statistics for students through its educational channels available for interactive education included 34,000 digital enrichments, 15,000 lessons and 100,000 questions for self-assessment. The number of beneficiaries exceeded one million through the future portal for middle and secondary school levels. In contrast, the number of beneficiaries for the unified education system prepared for all stages exceeded two million, with more than 1,600 learning sessions contained on the Ain educational portal. All this makes Saudi Arabia an exciting setting for this research. Virtual learning is new in Saudi Arabia, creating novel experiences for both students and parents who are involved in their children's learning.

Moreover, according to the MOE, Saudi Arabia intends to provide a virtual school for all stages of education in the near future after the ministry launched its virtual kindergarten project last year, targeting children whose specific circumstances prevent school attendance; this will help expand admission to kindergartens across the country. At the same time, early childhood education research in Saudi Arabia is lacking and most studies have focused on the outcomes of learning, not psychological needs. The MOE oversees all levels and types of public education (i.e., primary, intermediate (preparatory), secondary, special education, adult education and illiteracy elimination). In addition to providing strategic advice to schools, the MOE is also responsible for the planning and supervision of development operations. Additionally, the MOE oversees both public and private Saudi universities.

2.8.4.3. Education Stages in Saudi Arabia. The education system proceeds on the basis of four stages: kindergarten, six years of primary school, three years of intermediate school and three years of high school. The goals of the educational system in the KSA are to simultaneously meet the religious, social and economic requirements of the kingdom while also ensuring that students are adequately prepared for life and work in the modern world.

The study of Islam is central to the current Saudi educational system, which also offers outstanding training in a variety of arts and sciences disciplines. Education is important for all Muslims, male and female. The Qur'an and hadith (the teachings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad) repeatedly emphasise the need for education.

2.8.4.4. Nurseries and Kindergartens. These span three years up to age six, including nursery, kindergarten and preschool. Kindergarten is not part of the formal education ladder, as it is not a prerequisite for enrolment in the first grade of primary education. It serves children between the ages of three and five. It prepares youngsters for subsequent educational stages and life in general, giving them a strong foundation.

2.8.4.5. Primary Education. Primary education is comprised of six years of learning (grades 1–6). It serves as the foundation for the development of young people at subsequent educational levels. The Holy Qur'an, fiqh and behaviour, hadith and biography, Arabic language, social and national schools, mathematics, science, English language, art education and national education are among the disciplines and courses taught in primary education.

2.8.4.6. Secondary School. General secondary school comprises a unified and compulsory public education, the duration of which is three years (grades 7–9) and a primary school completion certificate is required for enrolment. Students in intermediate education study the Holy Qur'an, its interpretation, hadith, Islamic law, monotheism, mathematics, science, English, Arabic, social and national studies, computers, art education and physical education.

2.8.4.7. High School. The duration of study in high school is three years (grades 10–12) after completing intermediate proficiency. It includes two types of education, i.e., general high school and technical high school. More details on which are now given:

- a. General high school. 10th grade is general and unified, in which students study mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, the Noble Qur'an,

monotheism and hadith, English language, social and national studies and other subjects. After this initial year, education is divided into three tracks or sections: administration and social sciences, natural sciences and Sharia and Arabic studies. Students in the natural sciences section study scientific subjects with the omission of some of the literary subjects; in the literary section, they study literary subjects with the exclusion of scientific subjects.

- b. Technical high school. This school provides training programmes in the fields of industry and commerce. It emphasises the practical preparation of students for the labour market.

2.8.4.8. University and Higher Education. University and higher education are the stages of all levels and forms of practical specialisation. It consists of the following:

- a. General university education is provided by universities and colleges and lasts four years in the majority of university programmes, but between five and six years in agriculture, engineering, medicine and law.
- b. Technical university education is comprised of diploma programmes lasting two years and bachelor programmes lasting three years. This type of education is provided by industrial institutes and technical colleges (for both men and women). Graduates can obtain an intermediate diploma (assistant engineer) or a bachelor's degree in one of the technical specialisations, such as computing (technical support), or professional specialisations such as designing and producing clothes and women's decoration (for women working in plants), in addition to administrative disciplines such as accounting and office management.

The most notable information is found in Table 1.

The Saudi Arabian education system has undergone a remarkable shift in recent years. Currently, the system consists of over fifty public and private universities, with more on the

way, around thirty thousand schools, and a vast number of colleges and other institutions. The system is accessible to all people and offers free education, books and health care to pupils.

Table 1

Education Indicators

Indicator name	Year								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of students in kindergarten	4.2	4.7	4.9	5.2	5.1	5.5	6.2		
Percentage of primary school students	49.1	48.9	49.6	50.4	50.5	50.1	49.5		
Percentage of secondary school students	22.9	23.2	22.9	22.4	22.2	22.3	22.4		
Percentage of high school students	22.8	22.1	21.6	20.9	21.2	21.1	21.0		

Note. Sourced from Ministry of Education, n.d.

2.8.4.9. International Saudi Students. In this section, I discuss the percentage of Saudi nationals who study abroad and the history of scholarships for Saudi students. Saudi Arabian citizens received scholarships to study abroad during the reign of King Abdul Aziz (1876–1953). The first scholarship was to Egypt, followed by ten to the same country. In 1930–1931, three pupils were sent to the United Kingdom on a scholarship. During the reign of King Khalid in 1936, the number of scholarships, especially to the United States, increased to 11,000. Under the tenure of King Fahd, a catalogue of scholarships and training for university instructors was published in 1996–1997.

The availability of external scholarships persisted; for example, in 2005, King Abdullah established a programme consisting of three phases, each lasting five years, which contributed to a qualitative shift and included many sectors of society. The first and second phases were designed to resolve the need for more academic seats and scientific specialisations at universities (Taylor & Albasri, 2014). Considering the need to develop the programme's work as a result of indications that some programme graduates were late in obtaining jobs commensurate with their aspirations and evidence of duplication between some scholarship-awarded specialisations and those available in Saudi universities, the programme's third phase featured a new pattern of scholarship distribution. In the 'scholarship leading to a job' course designed to ensure people secure positions, the implementation method is first based on the direct relationship between the mission and the job in the requisite specialties. In light of this, the required number of seats, specialisations and study levels for scholarships are determined and announced, and candidates are then nominated for the mission based on these criteria.

To meet the cadre, specialties and educational level requirements of institutions and public sectors, organisations provide graduates with the employment opportunities for which they were sent (Al-Mousa, 2009). The number of Saudi students studying abroad continues to rise, notably since Vision 2030 was implemented. According to MOE statistics for 2022, the greatest proportion of students are in Britain and the United States.

The following link displays the percentage of scholarship pupils in each country, along with the proportion of males and females: safeer2.moe.gov.sa/Portal/Statistics. Since this subsection discusses how Saudi Arabian mothers interact with multicultural contexts, it is worth noting that the KSA is a country with a single dominant culture: everyone has to adhere to the prevailing culture and methods followed, whether they are parents or schools. There are now a large number of Saudi citizens who have obtained the opportunity to study abroad,

including Saudi mothers, and this is not only for academic development but also for this group of citizens to get acquainted with other cultures.

The Saudi government is striving to develop skills and knowledge in all fields. Thus, the KSA has witnessed an extensive external scholarship programme to send qualified Saudi men and women to study at the best universities in various countries worldwide. According to Waterbury (2019), the KSA is one of the top ten nations in terms of the number of its students enrolled in prestigious international universities. The aim of these scholarships is to exchange cultures and scientific experiences. Moreover, in 2005, a new programme was initiated by the custodian of the two holy mosques for King Abdullah, May God have mercy on him. It was a great leap forward and led to a dramatic rise in the number of male and female students going abroad. Many were sent from all fields to many countries worldwide; as has been noted, most Saudi students prefer the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada for graduate study (Ahmed, 2015).

Earlier studies have addressed the challenges faced by international students in adapting to living and studying overseas (Brown & Holloway, 2008; David et al., 2009; Junzi, 2009; Misra & Castillo, 2004; Sovic, 2009). However, international students have always struggled to adjust to life in a country where the language, culture and educational system are foreign to them (Rabia & Karkuti, 2017). Moreover, according to Andrade (2005), language and cultural barriers make it difficult for international students to adapt to their new environment and satisfy their school's requirements. Similarly, Jamil et al. (2022) investigated the psychological, social, cultural and academic obstacles perceived by international students studying in a foreign country that forced them to mentally adapt to a new environment. The results show that adapting to a new environment is the greatest obstacle for these students and poses significant mental and emotional challenges. Significant psychological, social and

cultural differences can exist between students at a university. These obstacles can result in feelings of homesickness, loneliness and even depression.

Indeed, I have benefited from this remarkable opportunity to discover different cultures, live in another country and engage with different people from different places. The experience had a significant impact. The experience of different cultures and educational methods encountered in the United States of America and the United Kingdom led to the twin focus of my research project: mothers who have never mixed with other cultures and mothers who, like me, have had experience in a multicultural context, i.e., in different foreign settings.

2.8.5. Women and Saudi Arabia Vision 2030

In April 2016, the Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, unveiled Saudi Vision 2030. The objective of the vision is to increase the contribution of SMEs to GDP from 20% to 35% (see www.saudiembassy.net/vision-2030). The KSA has had a longstanding tradition of gender segregation, wherein men have historically held a dominant role in decision-making. Throughout history, women in Saudi Arabia have encountered limitations in their ability to engage in the workforce, particularly in positions that involve substantial decision-making authority. Historically, their participation in entrepreneurial endeavours has been limited.

Vision 2030 has had a significant impact on the advancement of women's empowerment. Parveen (2021) reports that the Saudi Arabian government has implemented various legal and policy changes with the objective of promoting gender equality and enhancing women's professional empowerment. Al-Qahtani et al. (2020) assert that regulations and laws play a crucial role in facilitating the advancement of women's empowerment in various sectors of the economy and society.

There has been a discernible rise in the proportion of women who own residential properties as a result of the vision. The data indicates a notable increase in the figures, which have escalated from 47% in 2016 to 60% in 2021. Hassan et al. (2022) have observed a distinct alteration in the employment prospects that are accessible to women in Saudi Arabia. The government also conducted an assessment of the effectiveness of governmental initiatives designed to promote the empowerment of women, in alignment with its pursuit of the goals articulated in Vision 2030. The document entitled *Saudi Vision 2030* outlines the strategic plan for the future development of Saudi Arabia. Al-Qahtani et al. (2020) posit that the promotion of women's empowerment across all domains of the economy and society is significantly influenced by regulations and laws.

According to the teachings of Islam, women are members of society, and so among the most prominent achievements of Vision 2030 to impact women is the lifting of the ban on them driving cars (June 2018). The Crown Prince has also worked to improve the work environment for women and increase their job opportunities. Women are now allowed to conduct their government services without a guardian, with the aim of improving their lives legally and economically. Women are allowed to participate in and prepare for sports competitions and attend football matches in the stadium. Before this new trend and options for women to work and go out, women were largely responsible for caring for and raising their children at home, while dads worked outside the home to generate money to support the family. Women have now become an integral component of the economy and have access to various opportunities in all professions in which they are competent. A woman no longer needs the approval of her husband or father.

These new advancements have been welcomed by Saudi society, particularly by women. Without question, these improvements have enabled many women who were previously unable to fulfil their goals to do so. As an active member of society who does not

require the presence of a male to complete her transactions or fulfil her responsibilities, the societal perception of women has also evolved. Additionally, since women can travel freely, job opportunities have become available in all fields. As a result, women have begun to consider looking for work and going out to work in greater numbers than in the past, despite the majority of women being housewives or performing specific jobs that may not suit their interests.

In addition, the government has enacted reforms to encourage women's participation in economic development by establishing equality for men and women, prohibiting gender discrimination in relation to salary, type of job, work field and hours, and allowing females to undertake business without obtaining consent first from a husband or father. In addition, as of my most recent update in January 2022, Saudi Arabia has developed many programmes to support women in the workforce as part of larger efforts to promote gender equality and enhance women's involvement in employment. These initiatives incorporate strategies to assist women in obtaining job opportunities, enhancing work-life balance and supporting their professional growth. Examples of such initiatives are now given.

2.8.5.1. Empowering Working Women. The government introduced leadership training for women, which included training and an orientation programme, with the goal of enhancing the skills of working women and increasing the number of women in leadership positions. This has been used in projects like the remote work strategy in the civil service, children's hospitality centres at workplaces, attaining gender parity in the civil service, women leaders' empowerment in decision-making positions and the National Platform for Saudi Women Leaders.

2.8.5.2. Qiyadyat Platform. This is an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development and is an interactive national platform that contains information about female leaders in the country to enable rapid access to women leaders in the

government, the private sector and society generally. Furthermore, it will document the accomplishments and progress of Saudi women.

2.8.5.3. Tamheer Platform. The Tamheer training programme consists of the following:

- Preparing and enhancing the abilities of the nation's personnel and equipping them with the expertise and skills required in the workplace.
- Employment assistance in the workplace.
- Training certificates awarded to trainees upon completion of a training course.

2.8.5.4. Transportation for Women (Wusool). Wusool is a conveyance programme for working women in thirteen of the KSA's regions. The Human Resources Development Fund (HRDF) provides the programme to support female employees. HRDF assists working women by providing a discount of 80% on each journey to and from their employment. Wusool was launched as part of the Kingdom's efforts to reduce the price of travel for employed women in the KSA while also improving travel to and from places of work through partnerships with ride-hailing services approved by the Ministry of Transportation.

2.8.5.5. Qurrah Program – A Daycare for Children of Working Women. This consists of an online portal that consolidates all information pertaining to the children's hospitality industry in the KSA. The portal seeks to facilitate communication between children's hospitality centres so that they can offer and market their services to parents searching for centres to register their children, in addition to empowering working mothers to enter and remain in the workforce.

2.8.5.6. Freelance Financing Program. The development of financing for self-employment is a significant factor in augmenting the efficacy and effectiveness of those seeking self-employment, as well as their productivity, talents and experience in stable,

productive work. The Social Development Bank has been set up to establish a suite of financing products to service this type of beneficiary.

2.9. Research Gap

In light of the convergence of ideas in a PCA and SDT, both of these theories have been incorporated into the current research, underpinned by Rogers' work, which has shaped modern education theories. In particular, his book *Freedom to Learn* (1969) is a vital reference document for every teacher. Furthermore, the results and recommendations of studies that have used SDT are similar to those informed by a PCA, but this similarity was not supported by a robust evidence base at the time. On the other hand, the similarity between hypotheses, recommendations and the two theories highlights their importance. As a result, they have been used to inform both earlier and modern theories.

2.9.1. Limitations of Existing Studies

While some studies have explored the role of parents in their children's education, they primarily focus on the extent of parental contribution, the parent-teacher-school relationship and the impact on learning outcomes. Although valuable, these studies often do not directly address the potential of a PCA in guiding parents to support their children's autonomy and motivation during distance education, where parental involvement becomes more critical.

In my view, the theory underpinning a PCA is of greater interest in Western societies than in Eastern ones, which lack studies and evidence to illustrate the importance of applying this theory in learning environments. Given that the theory of the axis of self-determination adopts the same hypotheses and ideas, it is possible to integrate these theories by using SDT to differentiate internal and external human motives. Furthermore, all teachers can use a PCA as a reference when seeking to support inner motives and facilitate the learning process

among their students. The previous segments highlighted the importance of intrinsic autonomy and motivation in the classroom and for students' and teachers' methods. In addition, the family plays a crucial role in children's lives since children typically spend most of their time with their parents and wider family. It was especially evident following public health restrictions implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, where primary school students were required to study remotely. Accordingly, the family has an increasingly vital role to play in their children's education since the increase in remote working and studying. Although the literature supports the idea of autonomy support in the classroom environment, all the cited studies discussed in my research involve autonomy support in a Western cultural context.

Furthermore, the studies I have discussed examine and explain autonomy in the classroom and the natural environments in which teachers guide students. However, these studies do not extensively address the role of parents in their children's lives. As indicated, most of them focus on the teacher's goals, particularly in terms of providing feedback. They will support the child's autonomy in order to increase educational outcomes. The foremost objective of education for children and teens should be the development of self-directed inquiry abilities rather than the installation of subject-matter material. The demonstration of students' mastery of autonomous skills can be used to assess pupils' preparedness to complete their formal schooling (Boud, 1989). To repeat what I mentioned previously, one of the most significant environmental factors is the autonomy support offered by teachers to students in the classroom. However, existing research lacks studies on the effect of parents as a part of the learning and technological environments.

2.9.2. COVID-19 Pandemic and Remote Learning Focus

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased emphasis on studying learning outcomes, measuring parental and teacher satisfaction and identifying the challenges faced during the sudden shift to distance education. However, there is a specific research gap in exploring how a PCA can empower parents to play a more active role in creating a supportive and autonomy-enhancing learning environment for their primary school children during remote learning, especially in the Saudi Arabian context.

2.9.3. Mothers' Perspective in Saudi Arabia

In Saudi Arabia, there is a dearth of studies investigating mothers' perspectives and experiences regarding their primary school children's autonomy and motivation during distance education. Understanding the challenges and opportunities from the mothers' point of view is crucial, as they often play a significant role in their children's education and emotional support.

2.10. Identifying the Research Contribution

By conducting research that focuses on integrating the PCA in the context of primary education, distance education and the role of mothers in Saudi Arabia, I hope to provide a novel and essential contribution to the field. I will explore how PCA principles can be effectively translated into actionable strategies for mothers to support their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning.

Additionally, I will examine the effectiveness of mothers-led interventions based on a PCA, specifically in the Saudi Arabian education system. By gaining insights into the experiences, challenges and successes of mothers in fostering their children's autonomy and motivation, my hope is that it can help pave the way for targeted interventions and

educational policies that strengthen parental involvement and contribute to children's academic and emotional well-being in distance learning contexts.

In conclusion, by addressing the research gap in utilising a PCA and SDT in primary education, particularly in distance learning scenarios, and focusing on the mothers' perspective in Saudi Arabia, my research can significantly contribute to enhancing parental involvement and creating more empowering and student-centred educational experiences for young learners. It aligns with the evolving educational landscape and the current need to optimise distance education with a focus on nurturing children's autonomy and motivation during challenging times.

2.11. Chapter Conclusion

This section is based on the information in the chapters in which a PCA, SDT, autonomy, motivation and parental facilitation of autonomous support and intrinsic motivation for learning were discussed and where a gap in the literature was identified. It consists of studies that focus on parents' involvement in their children's education, their relationship with the school and the learning outcome. However, all the studies discussed involve parental facilitation of autonomous support and intrinsic motivation for learning only in Western cultural contexts. Moreover, the studies examined parental involvement and facilitation of autonomous support and intrinsic motivation for learning in natural environments that teachers guide, not parents. Consequently, to address the literature gap, my study will focus on autonomy support in a remote learning environment that mothers guide in a Saudi Arabian context during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following chapter discusses my research methodology, highlighting the fundamental steps needed to carry out the research. I discuss the type of research, instruments for data collection, the participants, ethics and the effect of the pandemic on my study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter describes my selected research methodology, followed by an explanation of the ontological and epistemological stances I chose. I then describe the theoretical underpinnings of the methodology and my rationale for selecting it. Next, I explain in detail how I chose and recruited the participants and, following this, the actions I took to conduct an exhaustive data analysis. Then, I address the ethical considerations and validity issues and, finally, reflexivity. Table 2 summarises the research framework.

Table 2

Summary of Research Design

Ontological Position	Epistemological Position	Theoretical Perspectives	Methodology and Data Collection	Data Collection	Participants
Interpretivism	Interpretivism	Hermeneutics phenomenology	Qualitative: interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)	Semi-structured interviews	Saudi mothers of primary school children

3.2. Research Methodology

Qualitative research consolidates understanding of people's beliefs, experiences, cultures and values (Kalu, 2017). Furthermore, Finlay and Evans (2009) defined qualitative research as a journey of exploration in which the researcher accepts a neutral viewpoint towards the topic being investigated. Qualitative research is more of an umbrella phrase that encompasses a wide variety of diverse methodological methods, each of which has its own unique language and set of traditions. Phenomenology, autoethnography, ethnography, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, grounded theory and ideological research are some

examples of different qualitative methodologies (Sparkes & Smith, 2014; Nelson et al., 2014).

A non-positivist qualitative research paradigm is characterised by a diverse collection of characteristics and presumptions. One thing that is extremely basic about it is that it does not tend to presume that there is just one version of reality or information that is right. However, it originates from a point of view that contends that there are several realities, even for the same individual, and that each of them is intricately connected to the environment in which they take place (Craver, 2014). An inductive and emergent method characterises qualitative research. The process of data collection and analysis is the result of the researcher drawing on their previous experiences. Instead of relying only on theories or the researcher's own points of view, qualitative researchers follow a logic that is inductive rather than deductive (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research emphasises the examination of individuals' comprehension and interpretation of their experiences and the specific environment in which they belong (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). The aim of my research is to understand Saudi mothers' perspectives on autonomy and motivation and to investigate their remote learning experiences with their primary school children. Furthermore, I will explore the differences that influenced Saudi mothers' experiences in single and multicultural contexts. Since a better understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives would be beneficial, I used a qualitative research approach. As presented in Chapter 1, the following research questions are ones that my thesis aims to answer.

3.2.1. Research Questions

1. What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning?
2. What are the influential factors and strategies that Saudi mothers perceived and experienced when their children interacted with remote learning and multicultural contexts?

3.2.2. Research Philosophy

Every researcher has their own personal and professional experience, which shapes their philosophical point of view. Respondents are no different; they have different backgrounds, beliefs, experiences and viewpoints. This diversity affected my choice of research method. To obtain valid and concrete information to explore, it is necessary to understand their viewpoints and experiences. For this reason, I selected a sample of participants who shared the same background and experiences of particular phenomena to better understand how parents experience, facilitate and support their children's autonomy and motivation when engaged in remote learning. I used qualitative methods to explore and understand human behaviours, feelings and attitudes, thus achieving the aim of this study. The following sections explain the techniques I used for data collection and how to reveal the sampling strategies. These methods have an in-depth effect on educational research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The methodologies I used in data collection play an important role in choosing the features and comprehensiveness of the acquired data. My use of an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) facilitates a genuine examination of participants' experiences, emphasising the significance of careful execution in order to provide relevant research results.

3.2.3. Research Paradigm: *Ontology, Epistemology and Axiology*

This section explains the ontology, epistemology and axiology that support my study. More details on each are presented in the following subsections.

3.2.3.1. Ontology. Ontology is known as the study of being. It is about reality and how things work (Crotty, 1998). According to Willig (2013), “What is there to know?” is the driving force of ontology. It is fundamental for social researchers to determine their position regarding how reality is understood. Ontology is related to our understanding of the nature of our world, which is essential to deciding how a researcher understands it (Snape & Spencer, 2003). It is our assumption about nature, what exists and how we deal with phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

In this study, I took an ontological view whereby a social world of meanings exists independent of people’s knowledge of it. In the context of current research, I argue that the social world and reality are not fixed and that differences exist between how social actors view them. Therefore, my study takes up the position of interpretivism. The ontological standpoint of interpretivism, also known as relativism, views reality as subjective and differs between individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110). Indeed, interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and comparative (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988). Interpretive approaches include social theories and a point of view of reality, as well as the understanding and development of social actors. Applied to the topic of focus, my research is thus based on the belief that mothers’ perspectives of their children’s transition to remote learning are subjective and not founded on testable facts. I have assumed that each mother constructed her own reality based on her own perception of what that reality is.

3.2.3.2. Epistemology. Epistemology is interested in the nature of knowledge, learning about social reality and how to create knowledge and communicate (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108). There are different approaches to epistemology, such as positivism and

interpretivism. Positivism quantitatively looks at high levels of generalisability. It views knowledge and the world as scientific and data as a large number of participants. Positivist research moves on to a conclusion and hypothesis and looks at the data objectively (Brown, 2022). Interpretive epistemology is based on real-world phenomena and subjectivism (Grix, 2004). With interpretivism, the researcher is active in the research (Brown, 2022). Therefore, to understand the world, it is necessary to understand the viewpoints of participants as individuals (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 19).

3.2.3.3. Axiology. Axiology is the philosophical study of quality or value in the broadest sense (Drolet, 2013). Although all researchers bring their own set of values to the table, qualitative researchers are more likely to make those values apparent in their work. This axiological premise is what distinguishes qualitative research from other types of study (Creswell, 2013).

3.3. Interpretive Paradigm (Subjective Regulation)

Interpretivism is recognised as a “response to the over-dominance of positivism” (Grix, 2004, p. 82). In contrast, interpretivism challenges the notion of a singular reality and challenges the adoption of fixed and unchanging criteria that may universally establish truth (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivism is subjective and aims to explain people’s attitudes. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the interpretive paradigm is informed by an interest in the primary nature of the social world and understanding the world as it is. Hence, individuals interact with each other and society in terms of construction and production. Thus, when scrutinising a social phenomenon, it must be understood from the participant’s point of view instead of the researcher’s as in interpretive methodology (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 21).

My position as an insider in this research enables me to better understand the differences between people, and it proves that people's situations and experiences can influence their interests and ways of thinking. The selection of an IPA and semi-structured interviews facilitates participants' freedom to express their opinions and experiences; each participant's experience is unique.

3.3.1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

As I mentioned beforehand, my philosophical position is situated in interpretivism. It implies that I do not seek to claim to see reality as it is, i.e., the concrete absolute reality. Instead, the aim is to be close to the experience (Smith et al., 2009). Moreover, my aim is to understand Saudi mothers' perspectives on autonomy and motivation and to investigate their remote learning experiences with their primary school children. Furthermore, to explore the differences that influenced the Saudi mother's experiences in single and multicultural contexts, it is oriented towards a phenomenological approach. With this in mind, I will use an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to understand Saudi mothers' lived experiences by combining four phenomenological philosophers' views, namely, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. This technique, like person-centred psychology, focuses on the participant as the expert in their own life, with the interviewer inviting them to examine their personal perspectives of events.

An IPA was developed over a decade ago by Smith et al. (2009). This type of method is used in phenomenological research to help new researchers conduct qualitative research studies (Alase, 2017). In today's research world, an IPA interprets and investigates people's lived experiences in various qualitative research studies (Cresswell, 2013). It is a psychological approach to qualitative research that focuses on identity and aims to describe a specific person within a particular situation and the phenomenon related to that personal

experience. Moreover, an IPA is used to understand meaning from the perspective of participants and is committed to the inspection of how people understand their main experiences in life (Smith, 2007).

An IPA is different from other approaches because it combines psychological, interpretative and idiographic components (Gill, 2014). With an IPA, the role of the researcher is to understand a participant's experiences (Smith, 2004). It provides researchers and practitioners with the opportunity to bridge the gap between knowledge and understanding by integrating a more in-depth examination of the person with the process of developing theory (Smith et al. 2012). An IPA lets participants explain, in depth, themselves and their lived experiences (Smith & Osborn 2008) how they want and without distortion. If a researcher uses qualitative research, then they agree with the idea of multiple realities. Researchers can apply this idea when they use various forms of evidence and present different perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). An IPA is an idiographic technique for gaining a deep insight into an individual's personal reality through an interpretive process between the researcher and the participant. Both are engaged in joint reflexivity with regard to past events perceived in the present (Smith, 1996).

According to Husserl (2001), the aim is to understand and describe the phenomena by bringing the question "back to the 'things themselves'" (p. 168). Doing this will help define the experience's characteristics, as an IPA aims to examine ideas themselves by focusing on participants' experiences. From Heidegger's view, the nature of humans' actions can be considered by interpreting and exploring the participants' lived experiences. An IPA looks at and explains existence as a human experience. Merleau-Ponty, however, focused more on subjectivity and how we engage in the world. He regarded humans as being unique and different from everything else in the world. An IPA takes from Merleau-Ponty the description of the vital role of the human body in knowing about the world. According to Sartre's beliefs,

an IPA can be used to understand and see the meaning of the world by working to understand the human experience in the context of personal and social relationships (Tuffour, 2017).

3.3.1.1. Phenomenology. This subsection highlights some of the most significant developments in phenomenology and those that are likely to be of the most interest to IPA researchers by describing some of the ideas that were proposed by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, who were all prominent figures in phenomenological philosophy. This enables me to map some of the most important advancements in phenomenology and emphasises those likely to be of particular interest to IPA researchers.

Phenomenology is a branch of philosophy that focuses on the study of the human experience (Smith et al., 2009). It was conceived by Edmund Husserl, who conceptualised and defined the qualitative research approach as a method to know and understand the meaning's context by exploring people's real-life experiences. Martin Heidegger then developed this in order to study people's lived experiences and how they perceived and dealt with their experiences. Phenomenologists have a wide range of focuses and interests, but one aspect they have in common is an interest in considering what it is like to be human, in all of its facets, but especially in terms of the factors that matter to people and which define their lived reality. Phenomenologists have tended to be interested in considering what it is like to be human. They spend a lot of their time researching how to improve their understanding of the nature of the experiences that people have in this world (Koopman, 2015; Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenological philosophy provides psychologists with a multitude of ideas on how to research and comprehend lived experience, which is one of the primary advantages of this school of thought (Smith et al., 2013).

An inductive approach is described as qualitative research that can analyse the data to match the researcher's objectives. It is perhaps an example of a more flexible qualitative

approach. Still, the phenomenological research approach gives more in-depth details of the analysis processes and data collection than the inductive approach (Thomas, 2006).

Phenomenology focuses on personal experience as the primary expedient of knowledge (Dowling, 2007). Phenomenological qualitative research aims to interact with experiences and meanings and know how a phenomenon is experienced (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Van Manen (1990) and Moustakas (1994) expanded the theory to make it compatible with the methodology of today's qualitative research (Alase, 2017). Husserl's followers have created a diversified body of knowledge in 53 countries. It now consists of more than 40 subjects across art, literature, psychology and more (Wertz, 2015).

According to Husserl, phenomenology is the methodical exploration of people's experiences. He was especially interested in finding a method by which someone could get an accurate understanding of their own experience of a particular occurrence and pinpoint the most important aspects of that experience. He believed that such a method existed and that it could be discovered. Husserl reasoned that, if this were conceivable, the fundamental properties of an experience would transcend the specific conditions of its presentation and also give an explanation of others' experiences (Smith et al., 2013). Heidegger, on the other hand, questioned the feasibility of any knowledge apart from an interpretive position while simultaneously anchoring this stance in the reality of objects, people, relationships and language. Specifically, Heidegger questioned the feasibility of any knowledge that could exist apart from an interpretive position. According to phenomenologists, consciousness "makes possible the world as such". This does not mean that consciousness is responsible for the world's existence; rather, phenomenologists believe that consciousness is responsible for the world's ability to have meaning (Drummond, 2007)

Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty argues that empirical science has not sufficiently conceptualised the mechanics of vision and judgement. Consequently, a significant portion of

his research was dedicated to exploring the embodied aspect of individuals' connection to the world, namely as body subjects. In this regard, he posited that the body should not be seen as an object within the world but rather as the medium through which we engage and interact with it (Smith et al., 2009). Merleau-Ponty placed a higher value on the concrete and perceptual affordances of the body in the universe than he does on the more theoretical or logical acts and connections between things (Anderson, 2003).

Finally, Sartre placed a strong focus on the formative and processual aspects of human beings, emphasising what we could become rather than our current state. This preoccupation is closely connected to the concept of nothingness, a central theme in Sartre's work. The significance of what is not there holds equal weight to the things that exist. When it comes to determining our identity and worldview, Smith et al. (2009) emphasise the influence of Sartre's ideas.

3.3.1.2. Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics constitutes an IPA's second main theoretical foundation. Hermeneutics is the art of interpretation (Abulad, 2007). As a result, it is inherently problematic as it centres not only on the question of how meaning is constructed but also, and significantly more importantly, on the question of how we should endeavour to discern the correct meaning in any given circumstance (Davies, 2007). Heidegger, Gadamer and Schleiermacher are its most significant contributors.

Its chief concept is arguably the hermeneutic circle, which involves multiple levels of the dynamic connection between the element and the whole. It reflects a dynamic, circular mode of thought in which, to comprehend any given element, one must examine the whole, and to understand the whole, one must examine the parts (Smith et al., 2009).

3.3.1.3. Idiographic. An IPA is idiographic, which means it focuses on the experience of a specific person in a specific setting (Eatough & Smith, 2006; 2017). The idiographic aspect can be attained through the use of an IPA. Additionally, an IPA's idiographic nature can

provide researchers with a distinctive viewpoint, given that experience is inherently embodied and situated, as noted by Smith et al. (2009). This involves a comprehensive and systematic analysis of individuals' experiences to ensure that they are not ignored. Subsequently, similarities and differences across participants can be identified (Smith et al., 2009). It upholds a level of sensitivity towards the life stories of each participant by providing a summary of their primary thoughts and characteristics (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008; 2015).

3.3.2. Rationale for an IPA

The aim of my research is to understand Saudi mothers' perspectives on autonomy and motivation and to investigate their remote learning experiences with their primary school children. I also explore the differences that influenced Saudi mothers' experiences in single and multicultural contexts. Given the significance of the personal experiences of the participants, I deemed an IPA as a highly suitable method for my study. The possibility of moving findings from one group to another instead of generalisability is given more attention within an IPA and qualitative research generally. An IPA is a meticulous methodology that generates a profusion of comprehensive data, enabling researchers to have a greater understanding of their participants (Callary et al., 2015).

According to the assertion of Smith (2011), experiences cannot be easily extracted from participants' minds due to the potential ambiguity of the meaning conveyed through their descriptions. A comprehensive examination of individual cases is necessary to obtain a thorough understanding of the experiences of the participants. An IPA is consistent with the objectives of the study because it seeks to comprehend the unique experiences of each participant.

Additionally, I selected an IPA as a suitable method of data analysis for several reasons. First, it aligns with my research goals because it uses a method that involves a thorough investigation of participants; it assumes that data are used more for exploratory than for explanatory purposes (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Second, IPA functions best with experiences that are extremely important to the people who experience them. Third, using an IPA approach in research helps me acknowledge any shared experiences between participant accounts and be sensitive to each participant's unique culture and experiences (Smith et al., 2009).

According to Reid (2013), by focusing on a PCA, it is possible to reconnect with the subject being studied. People can be placed at the core of the research. Several essential features of person-centred philosophy and practice may be applied to all levels of research: relational orientation, reflective practice, accountability, capturing complexity, emergent process and, lastly, idiographic and nomothetic. These factors may improve the research process, from developing relevant questions to choosing person-centred measurements, procedures and data processing methods. This is known as the person-centred research framework. Each element was applied as follows.

First, throughout the data collection and analysis phases, I examined the intricate interactions and interrelationships between participants and the environment, as well as their interpersonal relationships and self-perceptions.

Second, reflective practice: I engaged in reflective practice during the IPA. This helped me examine my own biases, assumptions and preconceptions that could affect their interpretations. In addition, I documented my reflections and how they might influence my understanding of the participant narratives. Third, accountability: I maintained a strong sense of responsibility towards the interviewees. To respect their participation, I made the research objectives and methodology clear to them. Fourth, capturing complexity. Here, I embraced

the complexity of participant experiences in my research. As the shared stories were analysed, their complexity and the richness of the participants' life experiences became clear to me. Fifth is the emergent process. Through using an IPA, I became accepting of unanticipated findings and common themes that emerged from the data and allowed this to guide my analysis and interpretation, which allowed for the capture of the dynamic and evolving nature of participants' experiences.

The last element is idiographic and nomothetic. Here, a balanced incorporation of both idiographic and nomothetic techniques was ensured. While conducting a comprehensive examination of the distinctiveness of participants' experiences at an individual level (idiographic), I also considered the potential emergence of overarching themes and patterns within their narratives.

3.4. Overview of the Two Research Studies

There are two separate studies in this thesis. The first one (Chapter 4) is an IPA study that investigated Saudi mothers with single cultural exposure mothers' perspectives and experiences of children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning. The second (Chapter 5) is an IPA study that investigated multicultural mothers' perspectives and experiences of children's autonomy and relationships through remote learning. The selected sample comprised mothers who had been exposed to multicultural backgrounds (i.e., both the KSA and the UK). In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the methods applied to the adopted IPA.

3.4.1. Research Protocol

The following is a detailed plan of the objectives, methodology and procedures of this research project. Techniques of data production, sample techniques, data analysis preparation, ethics and reflexivity are now examined.

3.4.1.1. Techniques of Data Production. The IPA investigations that contributed to my research included interviews with 17 Saudi mothers. The subsections that follow provide information about participant selection, interview procedures, data analysis and the validity of the research.

3.4.1.2. Sampling Technique. According to Smith and Osborn (2008), a homogeneous group is the primary condition for ensuring that the research topic will be meaningful to the participants. This may be accomplished by selecting individuals from the same demographic. In a phenomenological framework, it is expected that the members of the group will have comparable characteristics (Creswell, 2009) and fully appreciate each participant's situation. Consequently, samples in IPA studies are typically small, allowing for detailed and time-intensive case-by-case analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2008; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). In addition, it is essential for phenomenological research to have all of the participants experience the same phenomena; it is also vital that the participants' experiences be meaningful and valuable for them (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

3.4.1.3. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria. To obtain a sample that was as homogeneous as feasible, I needed to consider certain practical restrictions. These were addressed by the inclusion and exclusion criteria listed below. During my investigation, a representative sample was chosen on purpose. In an ideal scenario:

First Study

- Saudi mothers only exposed to a single culture, who have primary school students (5–11 years old) from public or private schools.

- Mothers achieved at least a high school educational level. The other levels are bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees.
- The children's education has shifted to remote learning at home during the COVID-19 epidemic.

Second Study

- Saudi mothers are exposed to multiculturalism, particularly the KSA and the UK. All the mothers are pursuing or have achieved a PhD degree. This was the only way to benefit from a KSA scholarship in the UK. They have primary school children (5–11 years old) who have studied in the KSA and the UK and had to shift to remote learning at home during the COVID-19 epidemic.

3.4.2. Interviews Guide

Within the fields of social science and health care, conducting interviews is described as the communication between two or more individuals: “interviewers and interviewees” (Ruslin et al., 2022). It is undeniably one of the most typical ways that data are gathered (Briggs, 1986). It provides the opportunity to initiate a conversation using open-ended and closed questions and prompts (Adams, 2015).

According to Megaldi and Berler (2020), a semi-structured interview is an exploratory interview that enables a researcher to conduct an in-depth discovery process. Semi-structured interviews are common because they give respondents the freedom to respond to open-ended questions while allowing moderators to ensure that everyone is answering the questions posed (Creswell & Poth, 2016; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

During the interview, both the researcher and the participants have the opportunity to express their opinions (Ruslin et al., 2022; Adams, 2015). This is considered necessary for the objectives of social and educational research. It is also possible to introduce new questions

and topics that may arise during the interview, which is advantageous for the researcher since it allows them to reflect deeply during the interview. In the interview approach, the researcher prepares an interview guide in advance of the interview but does not strictly adhere to the guide during the interview itself, either in terms of the order in which questions are answered or the manner in which they are asked (Craver, 2014).

The aim of my research is to explore the perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers regarding their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning. The PhD students involved in Study 2 are mothers who brought their children with them to the UK. This enables acculturation challenges to impact both mothers and children. Among the most influential challenges is the constant cultural clash whenever the mother's introjected norms and values are inhibited when exercising her parenting approach in the new culture. Understanding their opinions and experiences is necessary, so semi-structured interviews were the main data-gathering method for this phenomenological study (Creswell, 2009). In order to collect relevant study data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the parents of primary school students from Saudi Arabia. Consent to participate in the study after receiving appropriate information was requested from the participants beforehand (See Appendices 1–4).

It is preferable to use semi-structured interviews because they are in line with the research aims and approach, according to an IPA. The latter views the researcher and participant as co-creators of interpretation (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). Hence, semi-structured interviews give informants the opportunity and freedom to express their views of their experiences. According to Burgess (1984), a semi-structured interview is a conversation with goals or purposes. The researcher can ask for more information during the conversation by encouraging the interviewee. Since the interviews I conducted were in Arabic, language did not prevent or hinder participants from expressing their opinions. Willig (2001; 2013)

suggests that the incorporation of participants who lack the ability to utilise language in an advanced way, as required by an IPA, could potentially restrict the outcomes.

3.4.3. Timing and Methods Used

The semi-structured interviews were undertaken in March, April and May 2021. I invited the participants to share their observations and experiences with their children while taking part in remote learning. In the initial phase, I started by sending messages with invitations through social media groups. Subsequently, mothers interested in participating contacted me. Upon receiving their responses, I categorised the participants based on the experiences of the mothers. For instance, “the mothers have multicultural experiences” or “the mothers only have experiences in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”. As a result of the lockdown and COVID-19, the interviews were conducted via Zoom, and I collected the data using audio recordings of the interviews. During the interview, I followed the core principles of the PCA developed by Rogers in the 1950s and emphasised the importance of empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness in building a therapeutic relationship. An environment that prioritised comfort and non-judgemental communication was established, fostering a sense of safety for the interviewee to freely express herself.

In addition, I asked the families various questions to understand them better; for example, “Do you have a child who is now enrolled in elementary school?”, “How many children are enrolled in primary school?”, “In what grades do your children currently participate?”, “What kind of educational background do you [the mother] have?”, “What type of work do you typically engage in?”, “Which grades are your children studying in at this point?” and “Who is responsible for seeing that the child receives an appropriate education?”. Additionally, I gave information sheets to every participant, which detailed the topic of the research, the aims and the reasons why they had been requested to take part. In my research, I

emphasised that participation is entirely optional, and that neither refusal to participate nor withdrawal would lead to any form of punishment or future consequences. Additionally, I explained the procedures for those who choose to participate. I informed them that they would be provided with a pseudonym that conceals their identity and that the entire recording would be transcribed, anonymized and kept in a secure location provided by the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom. They were also informed that any identifying data would be removed from the transcripts before they were distributed. It is possible that their own words will be utilised in the presentation of any results gained from the data collection; however, neither their name nor their identity will be disclosed at any point during the presentation.

All information will be stored in a digital archive that is only accessible with a password. This approach abides by the University of Nottingham's Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (Version 6.2019). It includes the rights of the participants in the transaction, which are as follows: they are not compelled to reply to any question, they have the option to participate or not in this study, they will be supplied with a pseudonym that secures their anonymity and they may seek additional details and information about the research. Before the data are analysed and incorporated into the final report, participants have the option to end their participation in the research at any time. In addition, my contact information is included in the submission.

3.4.4. Data Analysis Preparation

First, the interviews were transcribed word-for-word and organised based on the interpretative phenomenological analysis model (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The transcriptions were an exact representation of "all the words spoken by every person present at the interview" (Smith et al., 2009). Then, before commencing data analysis, I prepared the

data by transcribing and translating each interview verbatim from Arabic to English. The translation process involved several key steps to uphold the authority of the participants' voices and maintain the integrity of their intended meaning. This initial translation phase aimed to capture the nuances of the participants' expressions and cultural references. Subsequently, to ensure that the translation is more accurate and devoid of bias. After a period of time, a back-translation was implemented to enhance the translated text's accuracy: the English version was independently translated back into Arabic.

The importance of a back-translation procedure as a validation tool in international research settings is emphasised by Tyupa (2011). People commonly use it to ensure the quality of translated research instruments. The process includes translating the translated text back into its original language and comparing it with the original document to check for any inconsistencies. If no inconsistencies are found, the translation is deemed equivalent (Tyupa, 2011). This back-translation was then compared with the original Arabic transcript, allowing for a thorough examination of the correspondence between the two versions. However, the primary goal of any translation process is to generate the cultural and linguistic equivalent of the original. This is particularly important in the context of translation (Werner & Campbell, 1970). Given that I am a Saudi woman with a comprehensive understanding of the cultural background and language of the original text (i.e., Saudi Arabia), it was crucial for me to produce a translation that is consistent with the original text's intent, meaning and relevance to the cultural context. Throughout this translation process, emphasis was placed on maintaining the authenticity of the participants' voices. By employing these rigorous translation procedures, the study aimed to preserve the richness and authenticity of the participants' narratives, minimising the risk of misinterpretation and ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the participants' perspectives.

3.4.5. IPA Data Analysis

Some researchers contend that an IPA's focus on participant experiences necessitates a flexible approach to data analysis (Reid et al., 2005). Nevertheless, in order to conduct data analysis, successful IPA studies involve a set of common procedures and principles (Gowling, 2019). This study follows the stages illustrated by Smith et al. (2009) to analyse the interview transcripts. The process of data analysis involved first annotating and analysing individual transcripts, as well as developing the initial themes for each of them, before bringing all of these themes together and, in the process of cross-case comparison, developing the final thematic framework.

3.4.5.1. Reading Again and Again. In the first phase of the IPA analysis, I immerse myself in the data by actively reading and rereading each transcript. I was able to correct and refresh my recall of the interview and internalise the participant's voice by listening to the interview audio while reading the text for the first time. Then, I repeated the reading, which helped me become familiar with the data for the interview analysis.

3.4.5.2. Initial Notation. In the second step, I noted first impressions, ideas and possible links to psychological theories and concepts. Then, the first annotations, notes or reflective memoranda were produced. The excerpt's keywords, inconsistencies or insightful themes were underlined for a more thorough examination.

This step is time-consuming since it requires an in-depth examination of the meaning and use of the terms. I created a table for each participant's transcript at the outset. On the left-hand side of the transcript, I used three columns to input initial notes. These notes were further elaborated upon as the material was studied and as additional patterns became evident. This procedure enhanced my familiarity with and comprehension of the facts. According to Smith et al. (2009), these first comments should take three distinct forms, each with a different emphasis, as indicated below.

First, summarise the speaker's important points. Second, comment on language usage by highlighting instances of particular wording. Third, conceptual remarks, where attention moves to the participant's interpretation of the events being discussed. Coding tasks like these may encourage academics to reflect on and learn from their own unique perspectives and life histories.

For example, I summarised the speaker's important points when Participant 1 of Study 1 said, "Making no exceptions as long as I make the decision". Second, I commented on language usage, highlighting instances of particular wording such as "Impossible to make an exception". Third, I made conceptual remarks: the attention moved to the participant's interpretation of the events being discussed. Here, the mother explains her personality and self-perspective. The mother sees herself within the experience as having the power and being unwilling to change her decision, and "no exceptions" means that she is not listening to her child's perspective.

3.4.5.3. Creation of Emergent Themes. In the third step, I transformed my detailed notes and observations into more abstract, overarching ideas (themes) that represent the main messages in the data. These emergent themes then form the foundation for the next stages of analysis, where I will look for connections between themes or develop more refined, higher-order themes. The PCA and SDT literature were instrumental in helping me develop themes. For instance, in the above example and my notes, the mother explained herself and, according to Rogers, self-concept denotes the structured, consistent collection of beliefs and perceptions that an individual maintains regarding themselves. Rogers believed that behaviour is significantly influenced by one's self-concept and, according to Ismail and Tekke (2015), a person's self-concept is how they define and describe themselves. The person's perception and comprehension of themselves include their beliefs, values, abilities and traits.

3.4.5.4. Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes. In the fourth step, I arranged my emergent themes from the first transcript into a table and, subsequently, analysed them to identify connections that could potentially lead to the development of broader, more integrated themes. For example, in the first case relating to Participant 1, I collected the following emergent themes together: “mothers’ self-concept” and “mothers’ strategies to motivate her children to learn”. Both these emergent themes relate to the mother (Table 3).

Table 3

Sample from Participant 1 of Study 1: initial notation and creation of emergent themes

Speaker’s Important Points Summarised	Comments on Language Usage	Conceptual Remarks	Emerging Sub-Themes	Generation of Main Theme
The mother perceives herself as the only one with power over her child and rejects any involvement or expression of opinion from her child in decision-making.	“As long as I make the decision impossible to make an exception”	One definition of self-concept is a person’s perception and comprehension of themselves, including their beliefs, values, abilities and traits. It is how a person defines and describes themselves. Here, the mother explains her personality.	Mother’s self-concept Self-power	Themes related to the mother
The mother explained it as her usual method in relation to her daughter, which involves using something she	She will be deprived of the iPad.	She explained her strategy to motivate her daughter by using the iPad: “which is something that	Punishment Mothers’ strategies to motivate her child	Themes related to the mother

enjoys as a reward or punishment.		is enjoyable for the daughter”. Motivation strategies that address a PCA’s unconditional positive regard and external motivation based on SDT		
The mother was surprised when she saw her daughter when she could take full responsibility for herself from beginning to end.	Became responsible for herself.	During remote learning, the mother noticed that her daughter had become autonomous. In terms of a PCA and SDT, a change and improvement following an external evaluation, especially valued in Saudi culture mothers.	Benefits of remote learning and autonomy in children	Themes related to remote learning

3.4.5.5. Moving to the Next Case. I repeated steps 1 through 4 for all the transcripts, so that the themes are developed based on more than one analysed transcript.

3.4.5.6. Looking for Patterns Across Cases. For the final step, I looked for connections between themes and identified main themes (superordinate themes) that encompass several related subthemes. For example, if the mother explained or mentioned something about herself, this theme is related to the mother. If it is about the child, it will be under a theme related to the child, and so on. The superordinate themes included: “themes related to mothers”, “themes related to children from the mothers’ perspectives” and “themes related to remote learning”. For the second study, additional themes emerged from the mothers’ narratives, which are “themes related to the KSA scholarship programmes’ impact”

and “themes related to returning to Saudi Arabia”. Next, I created a list of subordinate themes and then grouped these subthemes and allocated significant time to reading and revisiting them; these were then summarised under the superordinate themes mentioned previously. The latter involved organising subthemes into clusters for the superordinate themes. For example, “mothers’ self-concept” is a subtheme under “themes related to mothers”, which is a superordinate theme.

3.5. Ethics

When it comes to dealing with the actions of individuals and the interactions they have with one another, academics often look to ethics as the guiding philosophical principle (Blumberg, 2005). Many educational institutions around the world have developed their own principles and protocols for conducting ethical research (Polonsky, 1998). The University of Nottingham’s Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics (version 7) served as the basis for how my research on this particular topic was conducted (University of Nottingham, 2020). I submitted an ethics form, along with a privacy notice, an information sheet, an invitation letter and a consent form. On June 18, 2020, I received the letter of authorisation (see Appendix 5). I provided each participant with an information sheet detailing the research project, including study objectives, methodology, data confidentiality, dissemination and participants’ rights. I prepared the ethics application diligently and it was accepted upon initial submission. While applying, I made enquiries about risk assessments.

In my study, no sensitive questions or obstacles to interviews were identified from my perspective, the participant’s perspective or the content of the questions. However, as the interviews took place during the initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants, being mothers, faced potential interruptions due to their children being at home. As a mother myself, I appreciated this and rescheduled interviews to suit the participants. I would like to

address the impact of speaking about the children when they are present at home. During the interviews, I took clear measures to prioritise the ethical considerations of the study. During the time the children were present at home, the focus was on the mothers' experiences and any discussions related to the children were approached with sensitivity. Moreover, interruptions by the children were managed appropriately, with interviews paused until the mothers could completely engage. The aim was to support ethical standards and respect the privacy of both the mothers and their children throughout the research process. Furthermore, I want to clarify that confidentiality was a top priority throughout the study. I purposely avoided including any personal identifiers such as names, schools or children's names in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. The use of numbers for each participant was a deliberate measure to ensure anonymity and adhere to ethical guidelines in research. The children were in the same home, but they were in a different room. There was a possibility that a child heard something about themselves while the mother was talking about their children. In some cases, the mothers shared children's experiences without mentioning names. As a result, if a child had heard the conversation, they would find it challenging to identify whether it was about them or their siblings.

3.6. Credibility and Validity Concerns

According to Smith et al. (2009), evaluating qualitative research using acknowledged criteria is crucial. Several guidelines have been developed to assess the quality and validity of qualitative research. The approaches recommended by Smith et al. (2009) draw from the works of Elliott et al. (1999) and Yardley (2000). These methods enable a comprehensive assessment of qualitative research in a way that is both simple to understand and sophisticated. Yardley (2000) developed criteria for evaluating the validity of research. Yardley's framework explains that the criteria typically used to evaluate quantitative studies,

such as objectivity, reliability and generalisability, are not well-suited for assessing qualitative research. According to Yardley (2000), validity refers to the suitability of the instruments, methodologies and information used in qualitative research. The validity of a research enquiry is contingent upon several factors, including the appropriateness of the chosen methodology for addressing the research question, the validity of the design in relation to the methodology, the suitability of the sampling and data analysis methods, and the validity of the results and conclusions in the context of the sample. My research follows the four quality concepts outlined by Yardley (2000). The four key principles that are integral to this study are sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. In the concluding chapter, I reflect on the active application of these principles throughout the research, their contribution to the validity and credibility of my findings, and the practical application of Yardley's principles at various stages of the research.

3.7. Reflexivity

Reflexivity refers to the researcher's consciousness of their role in the study practice and how it is impacted by the subject of the study. This awareness allows the researcher to recognise their influence on both the study procedures and results. The concept of reflexivity pertains to the recognition that the researcher and the subjects of the investigation (i.e., the participants) exert a reciprocal and ongoing influence on each other throughout the course of the research endeavour. To put it differently, the concept of researcher reflexivity relates to the examination of the origins of thought processes, the ongoing revision of pre-existing knowledge in light of new insights and the consequential impact on research endeavours (Haynes, 2012).

Positionality pertains to the perspective and disposition of an individual towards a research undertaking, including its societal and political milieu. The notion of an individual's worldview relates to their fundamental beliefs and assumptions, encompassing ontological assumptions concerning the nature of social reality and its knowability, epistemological assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge and assumptions regarding human nature and agency, or how individuals engage with and relate to their surroundings. Holmes (2020) stated that “insiders are the members of specified groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses; outsiders are non-members” (p. 6). An insider is someone who has a personal biography (i.e., gender, race, skin colour, class, sexual orientation and so on), which “gives them a ‘lived familiarity’ with and an a priori knowledge of the group being researched” (Holmes, 2020, p. 6).

In the reflection section, it becomes necessary to position the researcher to identify the effects on data collection, analysis and interpretation. According to Holmes (2020), acknowledging the researcher's position is imperative, as their decisions have the potential to impact all aspects of the research endeavour. In this research, I appreciated the fact that my position as an insider greatly influenced my understanding of the community under study. As a member of the community with experience in early childhood education and as a Saudi mother, my positionality played a significant role.

Reflection on my own positionality reveals that my responses to experiences with my own children, especially in the second study, and my status as a mother and doctoral student in the UK closely paralleled those of the participants. This intimate perspective facilitated the building of trust and rapport with participants. However, it also gave me potential hurdles in the form of biases and assumptions that I needed to acknowledge throughout the research process.

For example, my complete agreement with Participant 4 of Study 2 when she emphasised instilling the idea of self-reliance in children stemmed from my own parental values and experiences. Similarly, Participant 7's focus on healthy nutrition and watching eclectic videos resonated with my views on promoting a healthy lifestyle among children.

However, it is crucial that I acknowledge that I did not agree with the opinions of all the participants. For instance, in Study 1, Participant 6 shared her approach to supervising her daughter's homework, which contrasted with my own parenting style. These instances of contention underscore the diversity of viewpoints within the community.

Additionally, differences in opinions emerged among some participants. I respectfully disagreed with Participant 5 of Study 2 when she mentioned using threats and punishment as a parenting strategy. Here, I recognised the need to avoid making assumptions about the entire community's perspectives. To maintain objectivity and include diverse viewpoints, I maintained a reflective journal throughout the investigation, recording thoughts, feelings and preconceptions. I sought external perspectives through presentations at a university graduate conference and discussions with colleagues from outside the community.

In conclusion, my position as an insider has presented both advantages and challenges for this research. While it facilitated access and trust, it also carried the potential for bias. Through reflexivity, self-questioning and seeking external perspectives, I aimed to ensure my research's rigor, objectivity and contribution to a nuanced understanding of the community's experiences and realities.

3.8. Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I have expounded upon the genesis of my research. After careful consideration of the available qualitative research methods, I have demonstrated the rationale behind selecting the IPA as the appropriate methodology to comprehend the experiences of

mothers. I have explained the data collection and data analysis methodologies executed to meet the requirements of this thesis. Additionally, my work has provided insights to counteract certain criticisms that the IPA may encounter as a research approach. In summary, in this chapter, I have presented a number of measures implemented to ensure that the conducted research is both credible and of a high calibre.

Chapter 4: Study 1

4.1. Chapter Overview

The COVID-19 outbreak's public health restrictions forced primary school students to learn remotely (Abuhammad, 2020; Dong et al., 2020). Highlighting the fact that children spend most of their time with their parents and other relatives (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020; Rudiyanto, 2021), as in other nations, the COVID-19 pandemic presented the KSA with unprecedented challenges (Salam et al., 2022). The government embarked on a novel and quick step to address this challenge, deploying digital and distance education on a massive scale to mitigate the potentially catastrophic effects on education (Boni & Gregory, 2022). This pandemic highlights the importance of activating family involvement in children's education. It is crucial to prioritise home education as an alternative form of education (Al-Zahrani, 2023). Since primary school students were required to learn remotely, their families played an increasingly vital role in their academic lives (Alharthi, 2022; Al-Khattaf, 2020). However, not all parents are ready to adjust to the significant changes brought about by COVID-19. Some are workers and have a lack of knowledge in particular fields (Putri et al., 2020).

According to Garbe et al. (2020), however, some parents had difficulty with online learning because it increased their stress, particularly if they had primary school children (Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a shift from traditional face-to-face education to remote learning, presenting unique challenges for families, particularly mothers. Mothers, as primary facilitators of their children's education in Saudi society (Al-Ruwaitea, 2014), have been responsible for managing instructional components, selecting appropriate methods, managing time, and addressing psychological and social factors that influence their children's autonomy and motivation. This shift has placed unprecedented demands on mothers, who must navigate remote learning experiences

and adapt quickly. The responsibilities mothers have assumed are not easily transferable, as they require a deep understanding of their children's needs and the ability to implement effective learning strategies in a home environment. This study aims to explore mothers' perspectives and experiences of their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning.

This chapter intends to address the first research question: "What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning?". In this chapter, I present the results of the IPA involving eight Saudi mothers who experienced and interacted only with the Saudi Arabian educational system and their primary school children studied remotely. All the participants shared the same background and experiences with this particular phenomenon. The mothers and their children were only educated in Saudi Arabia but might have travelled elsewhere for leisure, etc. The participants were randomly selected.

The study's objective is as follows: to explore the perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers regarding their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning, and investigate the challenges and strategies experienced by mothers whose children engage in remote learning.

4.2. Conducting an IPA

My study involved direct interaction with human participants using an IPA. Given the significance of the participants' personal experiences, adopting an IPA was a suitable strategy to let participants explain themselves in depth along with their lived experiences (Smith & Osborn 2008). The IPA is congruent with my objectives because it seeks to comprehend the unique experiences of each participant. The IPA I adopted for this study comprises the following types: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiographics. First, the phenomenological

aspect is exhaustive, as I investigated a specific phenomenon in a specific context. It gathers information on how the recruited population sample interacts with the examined situation. Second, hermeneutics focuses on the quality of interviewing when conducting an IPA study. In this respect, I am a Saudi mother with children at the primary school level, and the participants know that I was able to relate to them during the interviews and understand the external factors that might affect the flow of the interview, such as having to deal with unexpected domestic emergencies. Lastly, the idiographic aspect of this study was achieved through my comprehensive and systematic engagement with individuals' experiences to identify similarities, differences and other key elements for a thorough analysis (Eatough & Smith, 2006; 2017).

4.2.1. Interview Protocol

I used semi-structured interviews, with the opening questions focused on the mothers' experiences with their children during remote learning. It gave the Saudi mothers the freedom to express their experiences with their children's remote learning, as well as the influence of their culture. This type of interview gives participants the opportunity to express their ideas in a structured but less formal manner (Ruslin et al., 2022). Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and one hour and were conducted in Arabic via Zoom. I documented the interviews on audio before transcribing them and translating them word-for-word into English.

This type of approach collects rich data on each case due to its in-depth nature, and the comprehensive analysis of individual transcripts necessitates a small sample size to fully appreciate each individual's account (Smith et al., 2009). If an excessive number of cases are included, the researcher risks being overwhelmed by the amount of data generated. Moreover, I chose this range of samples because it provides enough cases for developing themes and highlighting the significant similarities and differences between

participants. The IPA research typically uses a relatively homogeneous sample, categorising a group as comparable based on crucial variables (Smith et al., 2009). The purpose of homogeneity is to investigate individual experiences within a group and how different people can experience the same phenomenon differently. Smith and Osborn (2008) stated that having a similar group of people is the most important factor in making sure the study subject is appealing to them. Selecting participants from the same demographic may help achieve this goal.

4.2.2. Data Analysis

During data analysis, researchers attempt to understand the participant, who is making sense of their experience. This kind of interpretation involves a combination of empathy and questioning. Thus, the IPA researchers want, in part, to adopt an “insider’s perspective”, according to Smith et al. (2009), with the essence of an IPA being its analytic focus. This leads to a focus on the study participants’ attempts to understand their experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2015). The IPA literature does not prescribe a single, rigid method for data analysis but rather a variety of adaptable, flexible approaches that are available to researchers. Due to the clear and detailed explanation provided by Smith et al. (2009), I conducted the data analysis process by following the specific steps outlined in the methodology chapter. Below, I present the summary profiles of each participant to contextualise the findings and underscore the richness of the data collected.

4.2.3. Sampling

The participants of this study consist of eight Saudi mothers who have not mixed with other cultures, and they have children who are presently enrolled in primary schools and had

to study remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. I selected these participants based on the understanding that they have similar characteristics.

Table 4

Study 1 Participants' Profiles

Participant Number	Number of Children	Educational Level	Professional Experience	Child's Gender and Age
1	2	Master's degree	Employed university lecturer	1 girl: 9 years 1 boy: 1 year
2	3	Secondary education	Unemployed	1 girl: 8 years 2 boys: 7 years and 4 years
3	2	Master's degree	Employed teacher	1 boy: 8 years 1 girl: 4 years
4	1	Bachelor's degree	Employed	1 boy: 8 years
5	3	Bachelor's degree	Unemployed	3 girls: 9 years, 7 years and 1 year
6	3	Master's degree	Employed and has experience in children's education	2 girls: 7 years and 2 years 1 boy: 5 years
7	1	Bachelor's degree	Employed	1 boy: 7 years
8	1	Bachelor's degree	Employed and has education experience	1 boy: 8 years

Note. A key requirement is that all the Saudi participants in Study 1 have only been exposed to their native Saudi Arabian culture.

4.2.4. Participants' Profiles

The following subsection shares relevant contextual information about participants, such as their educational qualifications and life experiences. I also reveal participants' priorities and key aspects of their children's interactions, autonomy and remote learning. This information is summarised in Table 4.

4.2.4.1. Participant 1. The mother holds a master's degree in sociology and is currently employed. She has a newborn baby boy and a 9-year-old daughter. Due to a lack of time, she grants her daughter her entire independence to become self-reliant. The mother experienced no issues with her daughter's time management or follow-up because she provided her with a mobile phone to contact her teachers when necessary.

Interestingly, the mother realised that her daughter learns faster and has no trouble with, for example, the multiplication table because she has her tutor's support. The tutor explained to her that her daughter learns best through storytelling. Therefore, she has determined the most effective strategy for the child is to establish a good relationship with her. The mother asks for her daughter's linguistic support since she is more proficient in English. This situation excites her daughter. Moreover, by asking her daughter questions, she instils confidence in her.

4.2.4.2. Participant 2. The mother has a secondary education and is a housewife. She has three children, two of whom are in primary school. The children depend fully on their mother, who provides for their every need. Thus, she does not have the time to supervise both of their school work. So, her oldest daughter stays with her grandma while she tends to the other children.

Remote learning is challenging for her because she cannot control her children. They need her constant presence and support. Then, when she is absent, her 7-year-old son stops studying and goes off to play. Therefore, she is aware of the significance of her presence as

well as the fact that other children at school are bullying her son. They hurl insults at him and she keeps him from communicating with them or responding to them; preventing him from doing this may inhibit the other children from bullying him even more.

For her, results matter; her children must excel in school and earn high grades in order to be successful in life and surpass her. She also believes that her children should return to their school benches so they can hear the teacher in person; she believes that being present in school is more effective for imparting knowledge. The mother attends to her children's fundamental requirements and encourages them to study but places little value on their personalities. When I asked her a question about the changes in her children's personalities at the beginning of the study, she replied that their personalities had changed to become more self-reliant. Her daughter opened the computer by herself, entered the platform, became more careful about the time before the start of school and went to prepare herself for the study.

4.2.4.3. Participant 3. The mother has a master's degree. She has had a child in primary school for four years. For her, remote learning provided her child in school with the ability to respond to and interact with his classmates. At the same time, he had previously been bullied at school and lacked the guts to face it or respond. However, he became more courageous during virtual learning. During the remote learning sessions, the mother must always be present with him since he leaves the lesson when she is absent and uses YouTube or plays video games. He also tries to cheat during lessons. Furthermore, her child's grades are low when he works on his own; thus, her presence is required to increase his academic performance. The mother had the chance to interact with her son and understand more about him academically via virtual classrooms. She also recognised his strengths and limitations. On the other hand, she has always used rewards and punishments to discipline her child.

4.2.4.4. Participant 4. The mother has one child in primary school. Her work requires her to work long hours and she is often home late. Therefore, she hired a private tutor for her

son. Additionally, she lives with her family because she is divorced and tries to make her child as self-reliant as possible. Nonetheless, she receives criticism from her mother that she is neglectful and uninterested in her child. However, she believes that he should rely on himself because she will not always be there with him. When she left her child to his own devices, she was surprised by his level of engagement with schoolwork, as she believed he needed her continual support.

However, when she helped him rely on himself, his level improved and when he needed her assistance, he interacted with her during her work hours. Her method with her child was to control his activities as much as possible by establishing rules. Yet, she had problems executing them because her parents were around and assisted her in raising the child. Therefore, she attempted to employ multiple methods with her child, including rewards and punishments, but he responded best to dialogue and debate. She has reservations about her child's use of games that society considers exclusively for girls, such as colouring books with images of girls, and she does not allow him to purchase them and does not discuss them with him. The reason is that they live in a small village where everyone has similar characteristics in terms of dress or habits, which could affect her child's outlook if he were to visit other cities and see people with different characteristics.

4.2.4.5. Participant 5. The mother holds a bachelor's degree. She has three daughters, two of whom are in primary school. She makes every effort to make her children self-sufficient during study time. It is not necessary to be present with them. Nonetheless, during the exam period, she sits with her daughter until she feels comfortable. She attempted to make her children autonomous by setting up their rooms in a way that helped them take responsibility for their studies prior to online schooling. Her eldest daughter defers to her and is responsible; this fills her with pride. Additionally, the mother is more attentive to her eldest daughter, encourages her to study because she has examinations and requires her to exert

greater effort. She uses rewards and punishments to control her children and deprives them of their favourite items if they do not study.

She tries as much as possible to convince the oldest child of everything she does and ensure that their experience differs from her childhood experience. In that period, as a child, the mother was bullied when she wore the hijab. Nonetheless, with the desire and insistence of her family to wear it when she reached school or her friend's house, she took off the hijab without her parents being aware of it. On the other hand, she wants to help her children achieve excellent grades, excel in their studies, obtain high certificates and find good jobs.

4.2.4.6. Participant 6. The mother, who holds a master's degree in education and specialises in teaching young children, has three kids, one of whom is in early primary school. She is very focused on achievement. To ensure her daughter achieves perfect marks, she actively participates in her studies and tests, even guiding her remotely through a webcam when she's at work. The mother tries to satisfy her children's desires by refusing to deny them anything, so they do not scream if they do not get what they want. She uses the reward-and-punishment approach with her children. Because of work stress and pressure, she gives her daughter more freedom and independence.

4.2.4.7. Participant 7. The mother has a BA in psychology and has one child in primary school. She finds that remote learning has become challenging for her because her son is in first grade, and it has been challenging for him to begin his studies online. The child tries his best even when studying subjects he dislikes; he is self-reliant in his personal affairs, such as getting dressed. Regarding the subjects he enjoys, she has no issues using the incentive and punishment technique with her son; if he does not study, he is denied access to the PlayStation. When her child acknowledges his mistake, she agrees to waive his punishment and does not prevent him from playing.

4.2.4.8. Participant 8. The mother has a bachelor's degree in education. She is a working mother and has a primary school child. As a result of the type of her profession and her work shifts, which coincide with her child's remote study, she feels regret. She is concerned about her son's performance because she believes she should be with him at all times, assist him if required, read the questions to him and work with him to get the proper answer. She believes that instructors are accountable for how they impart knowledge. Her child is dependent on her and requests her presence throughout the lesson because he feels safe and at ease with her, and he is concerned that the teacher will ask him a question that he cannot respond to or that the internet will be interrupted. She uses the reward-and-punishment technique with her child; when he requests anything significant, he must first complete the tasks given to him and also attain great grades. In addition, when he completes his schoolwork and achieves great grades, he is permitted to play PlayStation; when he fails, he is prohibited from doing so.

4.3. Discussion of Key Emergent Themes and Subthemes

The above section shared participants' attributes that allowed for categorization and data extraction facilitation. As a result, the following section will highlight the dominant themes and subthemes related to Study 1.

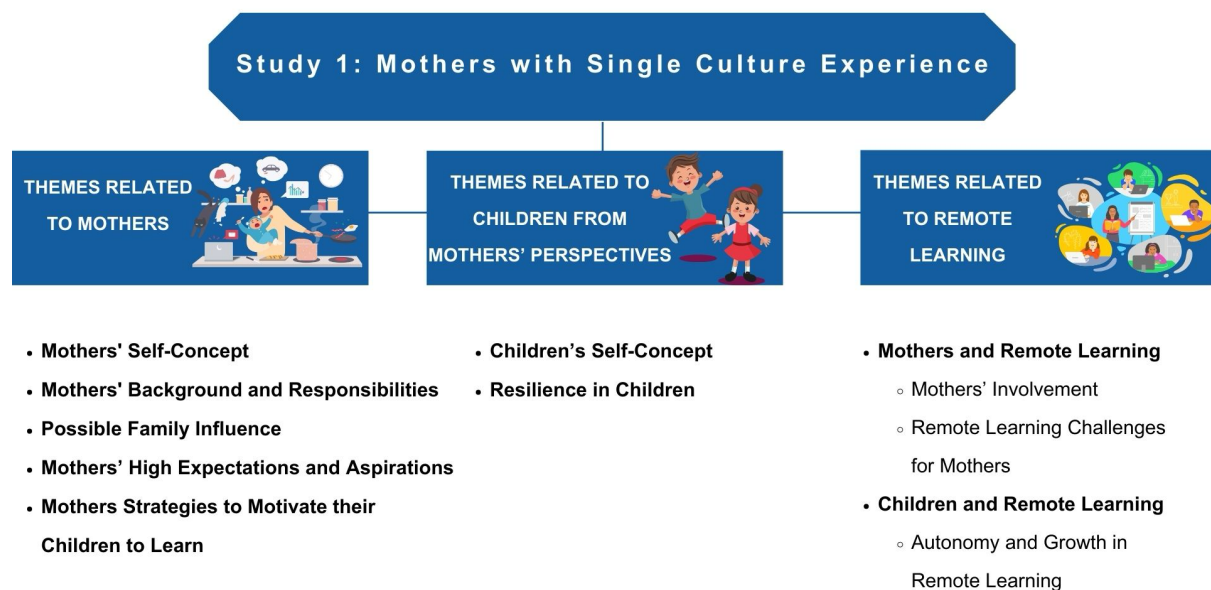
A review of childhood education literature (Chapter 2) highlighted a paucity of research to explore the perspectives and experiences of mothers regarding their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning in the Saudi Arabian context. This study was designed to assist in closing a gap in the understanding of the experiences of mothers and to provide them with an opportunity to have their views heard.

Themes and subthemes emerged from the use of an IPA when interviewing Saudi mothers. The analysis was conducted with reference-extracted themes and subthemes by

using the lenses of a PCA and SDT. The findings are divided into three categories: “themes related to mothers”, “themes related to children from mothers’ perspectives” and “themes related to remote learning”. These three superordinate themes describe the mothers’ perspectives and experiences about their children’s autonomy and interactions when exposed to a single culture (i.e., the KSA) and remote learning. The findings have contributed in several ways to a better understanding of Saudi culture. Figure 4 highlights the dominant themes and subthemes related to Study 1.

Figure 4

Study 1: Themes for Mothers with Single Culture Experience



4.3.1. Themes Related to Mothers

When striving to understand the perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers regarding their children’s autonomy and motivation during remote learning, the following subordinate themes emerged from the participants’ experiences: “mothers’ self-concept”, “mothers’ background and responsibilities”, “family influences”, “mothers’ high expectations

and aspirations” and “mothers’ strategies to motivate their children to learn”. Each subtheme will now be examined in detail.

4.3.1.1. Mothers’ Self-Concept. The earlier chapters have defined self-concept as a person’s perception and comprehension of themselves, including their beliefs, values, abilities and traits. It is how a person defines and describes themselves (Ismail & Tekke, 2015). A mother’s self-concept may reflect her ability to support autonomy or use “heteronomy”, which is described by Rogers as extrinsic control (Patterson & Joseph, 2007). Four out of eight participants mentioned their self-concept when describing themselves. As an example, while speaking, Participant 3 described herself and how her child perceives her: “I feel like he’s only listens to me because he’s scared”. Moreover, when she described herself as having “A great interest in education”.

Likewise, Participant 1 viewed herself and her decisions as “Making no exceptions as long as I make the decision impossible to make an exception. She indicated that [there was] no room for exceptions”. Similarly, Participant 4 talked about how she felt when she could not talk to her child about something sensitive: “I could not explain to him then, so I had to tell him no”. Additionally, Participant 6 shared her understanding of what it means to be a mother: “I feel that as a mother, I have to do for them what they want, and I know that this is wrong”. In light of this, a mother’s self-concept is reflected in her behaviour with her children.

Given this fact, a mother’s self-concept is reflected in her behaviour with her children. The mother, who perceives herself as strict, applies the same strictness to her children. On the other hand, the mother believes that she can express her love for her children by fulfilling all their requests, as she perceives herself as loving them in doing so. The participant expresses her belief that, in her capacity as a mother, she has a responsibility to satisfy her children’s desires, even though she is aware that this may not be the most effective strategy. Participants

1, 3 and 4's statements suggest that they perceived themselves as having a certain level of authority or control over their children. However, it was based on fear rather than respect or mutual understanding. Equally important, Saudi mothers' excerpts highlighted the use of 'personal power' with their children. For instance, Participant 3's excerpt is an excellent example of a mother's personal power and how it affects a child's autonomy and motivation. This statement reflects a self-concept that values decisiveness and consistency. For example, Participant 1 sees herself as someone who adheres strictly to her decisions, suggesting a self-image of being firm and resolute.

Consequently, the findings highlight the complex relationship between self-concept and personal power. This shows how mothers' perceptions of themselves shape their methods of influencing their children and the resulting dynamics in their relationships. This may be explained by the influence of culture. The cultural dimensions given by Hofstede (2011) classify the KSA as a collectivist culture. The family is the pillar of Saudi society. It cultivates reverence, compliance and dedication with its members. Hence, in this study, some mothers impose heteronomy and use personal power to help their children achieve their own parents' goals and perspectives. This maintained the relational hierarchy through power dynamics, which played a critical role in emphasising the importance of family cohesion (Al-Ruwaita, 2014; Alqahtani, 2021).

4.3.1.2. Mothers' Background and Responsibilities. This subordinate theme explores mothers' responsibilities during remote learning. Four out of eight participants discussed their responsibilities during remote learning. These responsibilities and associated tasks varied among the mothers. For example, some mothers worked while others did not. Another considerable factor was the number of children, which varied from one mother to another. For example, Participant 2 is unemployed but she has three children. She said, "I feel tired, and I tell them, and I try in various ways to deliver the information, but I cannot". Another example

was Participant 4, who was employed with a single child. She shared her experience as a single, employed mother: “Sometimes I don’t come home from work until ten at night. But I will be speaking with him on the phone while I am at work”. Similarly, Participant 8 expressed her experience:

My experience was very tiring because I am an employee and a mother at the same time. In the first semester of this year, I was a teacher in primary school with those in first grade, and the time that was given to me to teach on the online platform was during the same time as my son’s online classes.

Similarly, Participant 6 was employed and had more than one child. She elucidated her experience as follows:

I let her try in front of me once because I was obliged to go to work and leave her to open up and rely on herself. However, I speak to her and ask her if she is on the platform and to let me hear so I can hear if the class has started.

The mothers’ experiences in the excerpts above show that the personal situations and responsibilities of mothers differed. However, they all share that they have many commitments and remote learning for their children has added a new responsibility. Undoubtedly, mothers’ personal situations and responsibilities possibly play a role in their children’s education, especially in times of remote learning. The results align with and reinforce the conclusions of prior studies, which suggest that home-schooling children imposed additional demands on mothers, who assumed increased domestic responsibilities (Darmody et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2020; Burns et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2021; Parczewska, 2019; Said et al., 2021). This indicated that, for the majority of mothers, supervising their children’s educational experiences remotely at home during the pandemic was an additional responsibility.

4.3.1.3. Possible Family Influence. The family and society in which the mother grew up were mentioned by three out of eight participants, indicating that this background may possibly influence, whether negative or positive, her parenting methods and personality. For example, Participant 3 explained how growing up in a family that cares about studying has influenced her encouragement of her child's education:

I have a great interest in education, and I inherited this thing from my father and mother. We have a lot of education progress in the family, and I continue to do this. I like for the child to be educated, and I try to get him more involved in the field in terms of educational courses or in a club with a specific programme.

On the other hand, Participant 2 described how her mother's presence seems to have influenced her daughter's upbringing:

I always try to be gentle with her, but sometimes my mother spoils her too much, as she interferes with many things related to the girl because I named her after her. Especially since she visits her grandmother and stays there for weeks, she really enjoys [it] when she is there.

Furthermore, Participant 4 shared her experiences:

I do not have the ability to control my son and set laws for him. Why? Because I am divorced, I live with my family, and I have a mother and father who are so kind that you cannot imagine it.

Additionally, she shared:

Yes, it was his accomplishment with his abilities without my interference. I don't hide from you that I received comments like, 'You are careless'. But I didn't give them any importance because I knew what I wanted. And, of course, the comments were from my mother. But the truth is, I didn't care much because I knew what I wanted, and I wanted him to be self-reliant because it wouldn't work if I was present constantly.

These examples show how a mother's family is likely to influence her perspective and expectations regarding her children. The mother often faces interference from her family in raising her children, whether directly, as mentioned by Participants 2 and 4 or, indirectly, as in the case of Participant 3, who found herself applying what her parents raised her on to her children. The results of my research indicate that mothers may have a lack of autonomy in their parenting practices because they reside in the KSA. As mentioned above, the country is classified as a collectivist culture based on the cultural dimension model of Hofstede (2011). In the KSA, familial and societal expectations frequently prioritise conformity and respect for authority, which cannot allow mothers the opportunity to accept more autonomy for their children. Undoubtedly, these cultural perspectives continue to influence their self-conception and interactions with their children, underscoring the intricate relationship between parental styles and cultural norms (Al-Ruwaita, 2014).

4.3.1.4. Mothers' High Expectations and Aspirations. Every mother has expectations and aspirations for her children in terms of their personalities or academic achievements, but these goals can differ between mothers. Three out of eight participants mentioned their expectations. To illustrate the point, Participant 3 shared her view about her son: "He felt responsible, but his level did not reach the point I would love for him to achieve in education". Here, the mother explains how she has high expectations for her son and wants him to reach them, which she considers a goal for herself. We also notice that she gives priority to the academic aspect.

Moreover, Participant 5's narrative also shows how she linked her children's future to their academic success. They need to exert significant effort to achieve excellence. She shared: "I tell them they are studying because every person who works as hard as they do will reach something better". Additionally, she also shared:

My oldest daughter, in particular, because the youngest only has an assessment, so I sit with the oldest. I read the question, and we discussed the answer. I sit during test time only. They acquire skills and obtain high degrees to be employed in important positions and for a good future.

Likewise, Participant 6 made a connection between the academic performance of her children and their future. She reported:

I tell her, “You must study until you become excellent and outstanding, and when you move to the next grade, you will be able to take full marks and can move to the next level”. I tell her, “Mama, you took less; you should have gotten more. We must work harder to get a full mark next time”.

Moreover, she also discussed some circumstances with her daughter, such as she does not allow her to submit any work or assignment to the school before looking at it herself:

So far, I feel she needs me. I do not give her absolute freedom, especially in matters where there are marks. I let her answer it all on her own, but I don’t let her submit it until I see it. I said to her, “Why did you do this without telling me about it?”.

Consequently, according to the excerpts above, some mothers are concerned with their children’s grades and test scores and associate them with future success. Mothers focus on academic success and do not allow any possibility for their children to be autonomous in school-related matters. This is driven by the fact that the Saudi education system emphasizes school grades through examinations and assignments (Al-Ruwaitea, 2014). Similarly, some mothers used these educational outcomes to predict their children’s professional future. For example, Participant 4 discussed with her child the importance of positive academic performance in school and its association with having a successful future job. This could potentially be attributed to, in the KSA, the fact that parents are held accountable for their children’s behaviour and academic performance (Al Qahtani, 2021).

The perspectives of a PCA and SDT could shed light on this issue. However, these high expectations from mothers might cause a disconnect with a PCA. These high expectations create conditions of worth where the child feels valued only when they meet certain standards. This could undermine the child's intrinsic motivation and self-esteem, which a PCA aims to protect by fostering unconditional positive regard. Likewise, these high expectations do not align with SDT because they lead to controlling behaviours that undermine a child's autonomy. The child may perceive expectations as external pressures or demands, which can lead to a decrease in intrinsic motivation and stress, ultimately impeding their sense of competence and relatedness.

4.3.1.5. Mothers' Strategies to Motivate Their Children to Learn. Mothers demonstrate their affection and concern for their children in different ways, and they have a unique approach to modifying their children's behaviour and motivating them in remote learning. This study indicated that all the participants implemented rewards and punishments as motivational strategies for their children. For example, Participant 1 shared how she employs the iPad deprivation method, which is an item that her daughter enjoys. She indicated that: "I try with her different methods; for example, she is already obedient. If stubborn, she will be deprived of the iPad". Similarly, Participant 2 clarified that she connects each action her child takes with a reward. She shared, "You must learn to become at a certain level. I always tell him to do this so that I can give it to him. Read with me so that we do so". Likewise, Participant 3 elucidated and interpreted the concept of motivation from her perspective, arguing that it should be material and tangible, such as purchasing an item that her child loves:

I often encourage him to do something, or I forbid it. To motivate means to buy him something sweet or take him out on a joyful trip. To prevent him is not to let him play; these are most of my methods with him.

Participant 4 also approved of this approach when she shared some situations with her son:

It's necessary to provide him with motivational rewards, such as by saying to them, "I will bring you this, I will give it to you, and I will do this for you if you continue". To motivate him, I tell him, for example, that "I will take you out at the end of the week with your friend so-and-so", and he gets really excited about it.

On the other hand, she outlined issues in her own method: when she was unable to clearly express her perspective, she compelled him to select the option she considered suitable for him. For example,

Colouring books. Once, he insisted on buying him the spies book. When I saw the book, I didn't like it, frankly. He told me, "Mama, this is a normal thing; it can suit both girls and boys". And when I told him it was not suitable, he insisted on me that this was normal. I bought him something else, and we left the spies book there.

However, she also emphasised that the school itself may provide a form of encouragement and provided an example of stars that the children received for their good behaviour. She indicated that:

The school itself is also encouraging the kids; for example, the last semester they gave stars to the girls who were committed to studying online, who were disciplined and did not make chaos and did not write on the chat; this is also a matter of reinforcement.

They are used to getting anything they want.

Additionally, Participant 5 shared that she implements the reward and punishment approach with her daughter:

If she is bored and says to me, "No, why Mama, I don't have to learn, it's not important for me to study, the study is only from a distance, I can hear it normally and deal with it later". In these conditions, I may deprive her of something she likes, and if she does something good and gets excellent grades, I give her something she wants.

Participant 6 also indicated that she used the reward and punishment method with her daughter: “I have to reward her with prizes, of course, and for me, it’s going to the park”. I tell her that “If she does not sit to study, there will be no garden”. She also highlighted that the school uses the same methods with the students: “The school itself is encouraging the kids; for example, last semester, they gave stars to the girls who were committed to studying online”.

Similarly, Participant 7 described her son’s reaction when he did something she did not approve of; here, he is experiencing a conflict between honesty and fear of reprimand. She shared, “He was afraid and quiet, so he used to hide the matter from me and does not speak”. She also shared that when her son demonstrates awareness of having done something wrong, he is motivated to confess the action to his mother:

So sometimes, even if he has done something wrong behind my back, he comes to me and says, “I have done this”. So, he does the thing, but at the same time, he is afraid because he knew that he had made a mistake.

Correspondingly, Participant 8 endorsed the use of reward methods with her child since she stated:

If he wants something, he won’t get it until he does what he has to do. I always tell him after the exam, “When you get the score, we’ll talk about this thing, but you can get it sooner if I see you today fully disciplined in the virtual classroom”. It is possible that instead of getting the award at the end of the academic year, you could get it in the middle of the academic year. We use motivation a lot.

As a result, the mothers in this study are likely to use rewards and punishments to motivate their children. These findings are consistent with the reinforcement theory of Skinner (1938), which is referenced in the literature review chapter. It examines an individual’s motivational characteristics and the importance of an external motivational environment that should be

designed effectively and positively to motivate the individual in a specific direction (Gordon & Amutan, 2014). However, these findings contradict key aspects of a PCA and SDT, which emphasise the significance of intrinsic motivation and the potential harm of using rewards and punishments as primary motivational tools. Both a PCA and SDT promote environments that encourage unconditional positive regard, relatedness, competence and autonomy, thereby promoting genuine personal development and well-being.

The use of this strategy by mothers could be interpreted as the outcome of how Saudi institutions use grades and exams to evaluate students. This may concern mothers, who tend to emphasise this factor and use reward and punishment to encourage their children's learning to obtain high scores. The study of Daghestani (2017) revealed that female Saudi teachers moderately integrate reward and punishment into their teaching methods. Furthermore, they have positive perspectives on adopting such strategies. However, in remote learning, this method of parenting is shown to highlight the necessity for a comprehensive approach to parental participation and the detrimental psychological effects in collectivist cultures if parents regulate their children's behaviour rather than support their autonomy, as also suggested by the study of Zong et al. (2018). In collectivist cultures, such as the KSA, the controlling style of interpersonal interaction may appear to prevent people from being able to regulate their behaviour independently by pressuring others to think or act in a certain way or by influencing their decisions through social expectations and accepted behaviours from society.

Overall research on cross-cultural parenting practices generally classifies cultural groups as either "individualistic" or "collectivist". The former encourages children to be autonomous, assertive, self-reliant, achieve academic success, form relationships outside of the family and be financially self-sufficient. On the other hand, according to studies by Bernstein et al. (2005), Cote and Bornstein (2005) and Keller et al. (2005), collectivist

parenting involves raising children to be sensitive to others, obedient, dutiful, cooperative and honest.

These societal norms may also have a potential impact on parents and their approach to their children, and parents play a considerable role in shaping their children's personalities and confidence. For instance, when parents support their children's autonomy, these traits can have a ripple effect throughout the child's life (Langhinrichsen, 2017). Similarly, Zhang and Whitebread (2019) also found that children would have more opportunities to learn and internalise problem-solving strategies if parents encouraged them to explore their own ideas and supported their initiatives. As a result, these children would be more capable and confident when completing tasks independently compared with children whose ideas are restricted and undervalued. Children's drive to study is greatly aided by their parents. Children's desire to learn is impacted when parents' facilitation emphasises supporting their autonomy (Katz et al., 2011). Furthermore, SDT demonstrates that parental autonomy support occurs when parents start letting their kids make decisions for themselves instead of controlling their children's behaviour (Kocayörük et al., 2015).

Based on the above discussion, Saudi mothers share common parenting approaches with some Asian and collectivistic cultures, in which they likely lack the readiness to apply the PCA and SDT principles in their children's early lives. Nevertheless, as their children grow, they encourage them to be autonomous in basic tasks. However, when it comes to children's academic life, mothers feel the need to supervise and manipulate their autonomy to achieve their expectations.

4.3.2. Themes Related to Children from Mothers' Perspectives

In the second part of this analysis, the most important and prevalent subthemes related to children are "children's self-concept" and "resilience in children".

4.3.2.1. Children's Self-Concept. The term "self-concept" was previously introduced in the themes emerging from mothers' perspectives. Five out of eight participants mentioned the child's self-concept in their narratives, which is the focus of this subsection. To begin, Participant 2 shared how her daughter feels about herself and how she sees herself in her mother's love, and she thinks that her mother prefers her brother over her: "She always asks me why I love her brother more than her". Likewise, Participant 3 explained her son's feelings about being sensitive and crying because of bullying. "He was very sensitive. He used to come from school crying because of bullying".

In addition, Participant 4 pointed out how her son reacts when he does something wrong or unacceptable. It turns out that he notices it himself and sees himself as doing something wrong: "If he does something wrong, he comes to me and tries to please me when he made a mistake". Furthermore, Participant 6 explained her daughter's feelings and how she sees herself: "She said she doesn't know how to speak a lot, or she doesn't know terms like the other girls, so she feels like they are laughing at her or something like that". Likewise, Participant 7 shared how her son sees his capabilities and expresses his concern about making a mistake: "He was indeed a little afraid at first, and he started saying to me, 'Mama, come help me a little; see if this is something correct; does it happen like this'".

The findings from this study indicate that children's self-concept is possibly influenced by others around them. They care a lot about satisfying those around them, such as their parents or friends. Because it is expected, they are evaluated and judged. They feel that making a mistake could cause a potential deficiency in positive regard. The child's conduct indicates a desire for autonomy and competence. A possible satisfaction of these requirements would be creating an environment in which mistakes are perceived as learning opportunities rather than failures. The child may experience a greater sense of security and understanding in such an environment if the approach is more accepting and empathetic.

For example, Participant 6 explained that her daughter's emotions of being laughed at indicate a need for empathy and unconditional positive regard. Creating an environment that is both tolerant and supportive can enhance her self-esteem and sense of belonging. The daughter's experience suggests that her autonomy, competence and relatedness requirements have not been met. These requirements can be met by assisting her in developing her communication skills and promoting a more inclusive social environment, thereby improving her intrinsic motivation and overall well-being.

A PCA underlines the need to provide a supportive and non-judgmental environment that supports individuals' development and self-actualisation. Rogers (1977) stated that individuals prosper when exposed to unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. The mothers' adoption of more autonomy-supportive techniques coincides with the PCA principles, producing an environment where children feel valued and understood, supporting their emotional and cognitive growth. In addition, children may be influenced by their mothers' upbringing and adopt the same approach with their friends, allowing unconditional positive appreciation to spread among members of society.

4.3.2.2. Resilience in Children. According to a PCA, individuals are competent and autonomous, capable of overcoming obstacles, realising their potential and making positive life changes (Seligman, 2006). In this study, this was mentioned by four out of eight mothers. Participant 1, who has a newborn baby, indicated that, during her busy time, her daughter can be responsible for herself: "She is responsible for herself for her homework for everything". Additionally, Participant 3 elucidated her son's emotions and his sense of responsibility, while also highlighting his adaptation and development of social communication, a skill he initially lacked:

He felt responsible; he began to enter the lessons and felt the responsibility to be present in the classes. At first, he was attached to the school. He liked to go to it. I

found it difficult at first to figure out how to make him move and how to make him socialise. All these things were missing because it was in the atmosphere of the school; now he has flexibility and ease in getting to know others because I used to go to public places, and he has started socialising with others, breaking barriers and saying what he likes.

Furthermore, Participant 4 shared her reaction to her child's improvement: "He is very outstanding. I expected that his level would decrease". Participant 5 also mentioned that her daughter relies on herself when she has tasks to complete or needs to leave the house:

If I have something to do outside, she doesn't depend on me and knows how to write on her own, so I leave her to write on her own, and when she finishes, she comes to me and shows me what she wrote.

Based on these excerpts, it is evident that children can adapt and grow if they are given autonomy and the opportunity to make decisions for themselves. The study indicates that Saudi children seem to adapt and grow if they are given a chance to make their own decisions. These findings align with the PCA principles. Indeed, Rogers (1959) emphasised the inherited capacity for self-direction and growth. It is associated with autonomy and SDT through guiding the child and making them more engaged with the learning process. This is achieved by providing them the freedom to explore the natural world and learn from their mistakes. It is associated with the SDT of human motivation. It defines autonomy as people's natural inclination for integration and synthesis (Lee, 2017). Just like teachers, parents act as facilitators for their children's learning and self-actualisation: "It is believed that we cannot teach another person directly; we can only facilitate his learning" (Rogers, 1951). Likewise, if children are trusted, they will respond to that trust. If you can openly be your real self, they will respond to you as a person. If you allow them to explore, they will grow. If you feed their curiosity, they will learn. If you care for them as people, they will return that care. If you can

understand their feelings, they will expand, blossom and bloom, and then they will learn more during reading, maths and all the other subjects. They will learn to think for themselves, they will find ways of solving problems, they will speak for themselves as independent persons and they will respond with hard, disciplined work due to the climate you have created. They will begin to discover the enormous strength and potential that reside within each of themselves (Rogers et al., 2013, p. 188).

4.3.3. Themes Related to Remote Learning

Remote learning, as defined in the literature review, is “A method of instruction and learning that takes place where the students learn from their instructors and each other while being physically separated rather than learning in person” (Greener, 2021). The advantages and disadvantages of engagement with remote learning are experienced by mothers and their children. Hence, this subsection is introduced in two parts: the influence of remote learning on mothers and their children.

4.3.3.1. Mothers and Remote Learning. The remote learning experience during COVID-19 is the first in Saudi Arabia, particularly for mothers with children in the primary school stage. Therefore, there are numerous obstacles and challenges to face. On the other hand, there are advantages for both the child and mother. This subsection examines the remote learning experiences of mothers.

4.3.3.1.1. Mothers’ Involvement. Remote learning possibly plays a role in family relationships since it is conducted at home and the mother is normally responsible for the education of her children. Additionally, it has the possibility of increasing mothers’ involvement in their children’s education. Four out of eight participants mentioned this fact. For example, Participant 3 explained that, as a positive thing about remote learning, she knows more about her child’s teachers and friends: “I knew many positives about the

teachers. I knew almost all their methods. I got to know the students and my son's friends at school". Furthermore, she insisted that her relationship with her son had become stronger: "My relationship with him has grown stronger; he listens to me more than before". She also shared that "Sometimes I feel that through the educational changes, I discovered his abilities in the learning pyramid, and now I know where his strength lies. I started working on them and took an interest in them, whether it was in arithmetic or maths". Likewise, the narrative of Participant 6 indicated that, during remote learning, she became more aware of her daughter's level and which subjects she needed help with. She stated, "In some classes and others not. With some courses that she feels are difficult and needs someone to support her". Furthermore, she explained that she is with her daughter during remote learning from the beginning until the end of the school day: "I was tied to her from the first session to the last". Similarly, Participant 2 mentioned that it is important to be with her children during remote learning: "It is necessary to be with them". In addition, Participant 7 explained that she needed to be with her son during remote learning: "I honestly need to be with him".

Previous research has demonstrated that the majority of parents are more involved with their children when they are learning online than in traditionally taught classes (Hafidz et al., 2020; Novianti & Garzia, 2020; Alharthi, 2022; San Jose et al., 2022). This was also apparent in the current research; according to the mothers, remote learning enabled them to understand their child's level and abilities, which was a positive aspect of their involvement in their children's education.

4.3.3.1.2. Remote Learning Challenges for Mothers. When mothers first experience engagement with remote learning, they may face some challenges, as reported by three out of eight participants. Initially, communicating information or dealing with electronic devices is one of the challenges faced by some mothers. Participant 2 mentioned the difficulties in teaching and conveying information to her children, which may indicate the lack of a

teaching method. She shared, “I have struggled a lot, especially with the difficulty in teaching and communicating information to them”. Similarly, Participant 4 shared her method of following up with her son while she is at work: “Sometimes if I’m late because of work, he texts me on WhatsApp, takes a picture for me, and sends me, ‘Mama, what’s the answer?’”.

Likewise, Participant 8 shared her experiences of using the online platform and how they initially did not know how to deal with it. She said: “When studying stopped, we turned from studying in school to remote learning. We were a little lost about it”. She also expressed her worries and confusion: “There were no explanations. Honestly, it was almost a crisis. We were moving from the eye channel, a ‘channel that provided from the Saudi Ministry of Education to the books’. We didn’t know where to go”. Furthermore, she detailed their adoption process over time, noting that:

Things started to become clear during the first semester of last year. We had online profiles and an account on the platform. We now know how to use it, how to access it and how to get into the virtual classroom.

Additionally, she had issues with her job schedule and needed to be near her child:

I am an employee and a mother at the same time. In the first semester of this year, I was a first-grade teacher in elementary school. The time that was given to me to teach on the platform was the same time as my son’s online classes.

These types of initial experiences of mothers with remote learning presented some challenges in using and dealing with learning platforms. Some mothers, on the other hand, faced challenges in another mentioned aspect: the importance of their attendance during their children’s remote learning period.

In light of these comments, the supervision and involvement of mothers in their children’s education is likely required for remote learning, which causes a challenge for some mothers. In agreement with previous research, the literature review gives an account of some

studies associated with remote learning. These studies explain the challenges in detail. For example, a study conducted by Misirli and Ergulec (2021) stated that there are several challenges that home tutoring parents experience, such as not knowing the content, having trouble keeping the child motivated, not having enough time and not having access to the internet. Equally important, mothers' lack of knowledge of ICT might have pushed them to encourage their children's autonomy, especially if they did not have time or interest in improving their ICT skills for their own purposes.

It is worth mentioning that parental consideration of remote learning came about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. It became a key factor that reshaped the focus of this research. Burns et al. (2022) suggested that many children and mothers found it challenging to implement the online educational routine established after the outbreak of the pandemic. As explained by Darmody et al. (2020) and Moore et al. (2020), home-schooling children imposed additional demands on mothers, who assumed increased domestic responsibilities. Likewise, the study by Parczewska (2019) found that several Polish mothers characterised the pandemic as challenging and that the responsibilities associated with home education were beyond their ability. Moreover, O'Reilly (2021) discovered that since the pandemic cancelled the majority of outdoor activities for children, mothers had little time. However, the challenges that mothers and children encountered during the shift to remote learning stemmed from the absence of remote learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, particularly for primary school, prior to the pandemic (Saudi Ministry of Education, 2021). Additionally, learning from home is a novel experience for both mothers and children in the KSA (Nazar & Nasrallah, 2021).

Furthermore, a PCA and SDT play a significant role in explaining how children's experiences of remote learning challenges require them to seek support from their mothers. From an SDT perspective, children's autonomy is determined by their self-perception of their competence in engaging with remote learning and using assistive computer technology

(ACT). Children who struggle with ACT face a threat to their educational competence. Mothers can help support their children's need for competence by providing assistance and helping them improve the skills that they need. Moreover, mothers can support their children's need for relatedness by getting involved and being a source of support. This emotional connection can motivate children to continue learning and overcome challenges during remote learning. In the case of a PCA, mothers play the role of facilitators, which underscores the significance of a supportive and empathetic environment in the development of self-esteem and self-competence. Providing this nurturing environment is the critical responsibility of mothers. Children, by nature, seek assistance and direction from their mothers when they encounter challenges with ACT. The non-judgmental and empathetic support provided by mothers is crucial for the development of self-competence in children because it enables them to feel understood and accepted.

4.3.3.2. Children and Remote Learning. In recent years, children have been required to use ICT, such as an iPad or a desktop computer, at a young age as a result of the emergence of remote learning. Their use of devices, such as an iPad, may not be novel but their use of these devices is for learning and as an alternative to school. However, in this study, mothers noticed that remote learning has benefits for their children's autonomy and growth, as explained below.

4.3.3.2.1. Autonomy and Growth in Remote Learning. Three out of eight participants mentioned that their children now have the ability to use technology for learning. For instance, Participant 2 mentioned that her child has become more interactive with his teachers and is able to use the platform on his own: "He started interacting with the teacher, which was not the case initially. He could now enter the platform, a game or whatever it was, by himself".

Likewise, Participant 5 pointed out that her children have become more familiar with how to use electronic devices, including opening email and other things:

They understand technology better. They understand topics and open email because classes have become linked to email. Now, they can accept the classes. They see their absences and their grades. They know where they can find their homework and solve it. In the same way, Participant 6 observed how her daughter learnt from this experience and improved her use of technology: “It also taught her how to deal with new technologies like the iPad, how to move from class to class and how to use certain websites to prepare for exams and things like that”.

On the other hand, since learning has shifted remotely, children begin to take responsibility for their own learning, which could increase their autonomy. This is crucial to the development of a child’s personality (Grolnick & Lerner, 2023). A significant number of participants (seven out of eight) noticed that their children’s autonomy increased during remote learning. For instance, Participant 1 mentioned how her daughter had become autonomous: “She became responsible for herself from A to Z. I evaluate her only through what comes to me from the first quarter about her evaluation from her school”. Similarly, Participant 2 shared her observation of her son and how his personality developed while studying remotely:

My son became accustomed to discipline. He became accustomed to the atmosphere of the teacher on the platform. He became more daring and spoke more. In the beginning, he used to hesitate to answer because he did not understand the idea of studying remotely. Now I feel that there are many changes; for instance, he started to ask and discuss [things].

She also outlined how the time spent online became significant for her daughter:

My daughter started asking for more, and time became important too. For example, when it’s 3 p.m., she starts saying, ‘Mom, quickly, come on’. I feel that time has

become very important to her. I also feel like she's becoming more and more self-reliant and punctual.

In the same vein, Participant 3 noted an increase in her son's self-confidence:

Now, on the contrary, he has a lot of good self-confidence and he talks more fluently with students and his friends. Now, I can hear him when they talk and discuss; he opens the mic and responds to them by force. I don't know if it's online studying, his personality, or both.

Similarly, Participant 4 noted that her son had developed self-reliance. She said: "I was surprised that he got favourable results. I felt happy because I didn't expect my son to be superior to them. And I was also pleased because I knew that this was his level". In addition, Participant 5 noticed changes in her daughter, including how she became more comfortable with herself and the atmosphere of remote learning: "They have become self-reliant. Essentially, they become more dependent on themselves". Likewise, Participant 6 observed the increase in responsibility in her daughter:

It is good in terms of the fact that she has started to rely more on herself and be more careful about her classes. She became very aware of this matter. It was necessary to prepare her for this subject by saying that there would be online classes, no going to school, and that she must be committed.

Furthermore, Participant 7 noticed an improvement in her son's personality:

My son is much more developed than before. I felt he became better, maybe than the previous week. He became almost self-reliant because I told him that he should rely on himself because I had a job to do.

She also noticed how he improved over time: "At first, he did not know how to open the platform, but now he is entering it normally and knows how to open it, so he has become self-reliant". Lastly, Participant 8 described how her son has come to accept remote learning as a

routine by saying, “Now I do not need to direct him, we know what the daily routine will be”. This means that she does not need to repeat her words to him. These experiences can be perceived as enhancing autonomous learning skills. Consistent with previous research by Rudiyanto (2021), the use of information technology in remote education can increase autonomy and critical thinking skills.

The results demonstrate individuals’ ability to grow and develop, highlighting that children can adapt and learn in a distance learning environment despite the challenges they encounter. This experience provided an opportunity for them to foster autonomy. These findings align with the principles of a PCA and SDT, which suggest that individuals possess innate resources for psychological growth and development. According to SDT, people are inherently inclined towards learning, mastery and forming meaningful connections with others. However, as noted by Ryan et al. (2019), these proactive tendencies are not automatic but require supportive conditions to fully thrive. In this case, the distance learning environment, while challenging, may have provided such conditions, enabling children to develop resilience and autonomy.

4.4. Limitations

This study explored the perspectives and experiences of eight Saudi mothers. The limited sample size and research were conducted during a specific period of remote learning. The mothers were under stress and were very busy during the COVID-19 lockdown since their children were with them at home all day. The findings may not be applicable to the general population. Nonetheless, by investigating the insight and experience of these mothers in this manner, it was possible to provide a rich and exhaustive analysis of their lived experiences. Smith et al. (2009) asserted that, within psychology, phenomenologists find it vital to investigate experiences in this manner and comprehend phenomena by constructing a richer,

more significant picture through case-by-case analysis. According to Smith and Osborn (2008), homogeneity within a group is a crucial factor in ensuring the research topic's relevance to the participants in an IPA. This constraint is an additional and necessary consideration for the generalisability of the research findings. In the present study, the participants consisted of Saudi mothers whose primary school-aged children transitioned to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, all under the auspices of Saudi institutions. However, it is important to note that there were some differences within the sample. While the participants shared similar experiences with school children from various institutions and cities in Saudi Arabia, they also had diverse encounters with remote learning, including some mothers who were also employed and others who were unemployed. Furthermore, there were variations in the participants' levels of education, which may have influenced their experiences with remote learning alongside their children.

4.5. Potential Areas for Future Research

Given that my study has focused on mothers, future studies could also consider other directions, such as including fathers' perspectives. However, the IPA necessitates a homogenous population, so including the fathers in the same analysis would not have fit the approach. Nonetheless, it would be intriguing if future research included interviewing the children. More longitudinal studies are required to investigate mothers' perspectives on autonomy and motivation in Saudi society, as well as the teachers' perspectives. Future research could be particularly intriguing if it included mothers of adolescents, given the distinct characteristics of adolescence compared with childhood. When the children attend school in person, it would also be beneficial to conduct research on the same sample outside of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.6. Chapter Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers regarding their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning and to investigate the challenges and strategies experienced and adopted by mothers whose children engaged in remote learning. This chapter reviewed and discussed key emergent themes in relation to existing literature. It exposed research limitations and discussed potential suggestions for future research. The next chapter follows the same structure but examines multicultural mothers' experiences with their children's autonomy and motivation.

Chapter 5: Study 2

5.1. Chapter Overview

During the COVID-19 epidemic and the transition to remote learning, the Saudi government decided to organise evacuation flights to bring its residents back to the KSA (Saudi Press Agency, 2020). Hence, many students studying abroad returned home and many of them had children enrolled in schools in their country of study. For this chapter's research participants, with their children enrolled in British schools, some parents returned to the KSA and enrolled their children back in Saudi schools, while some were simultaneously still enrolled in their British schools. As a result, they all have a background in British and Saudi culture and education systems.

As stated by Saudi Arabia's MOE, many Saudi nationals are studying abroad, and that number is expected to continue to grow, especially considering Vision 2030. According to Waterbury (2019), Saudi Arabia is among the top ten countries in terms of the number of its students enrolled in prestigious international universities. Since many Saudi nationals have children, it is safe to assume that many of these children will experience a culture and country different from the one their parents experienced as children, i.e., the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, according to MOE statistics for 2022, the UK and the USA have the largest proportion of Saudi nationals. Many Saudi graduate students prefer these two countries, along with Canada (Ahmed, 2015).

5.2. Conducting an IPA

According to Smith (2011), the focus of an IPA is to explore people's experiences and how they understand them. The primary objective of an IPA is to value each participant's account. Consequently, samples in the IPA studies are typically small, allowing for detailed and time-intensive individual case analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). For several reasons,

an IPA was selected as the method for data analysis. For example, it aligns with the research aims that emphasise the experience of each participant, as each has unique circumstances that differ from those of other participants, and how the experience of remote learning transformation and study in other cultures influences the way in which they raise their children (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The IPA implies that data serves the purpose of discovery rather than explanation.

The IPA I adopted for this study combines the following types of IPAs: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiographic. Initially, the phenomenological aspect is comprehensive, as my research investigates a specific phenomenon in a specific context. It gathers information on how the recruited population sample interacts with it (Dowling, 2007). Moreover, hermeneutics focuses on the quality of interviewing when conducting an IPA study (Smith et al., 2009). As a Saudi mother with primary-level children, I was able to relate to my participants during the interviews and comprehend the external factors that could disrupt the interview flow, such as unexpected home emergencies. Lastly, the idiographic aspect of this study was achieved through comprehensively and systematically engaging with individuals' experiences to identify similarities, differences and any other key elements for a thorough analysis (Eatough & Smith, 2006; 2017).

5.2.1. Interview Protocol and Sampling

Semi-structured, in-depth or one-on-one interviews are by far the most common methods used to gather data in an IPA (Smith et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews permit a real-time dialogue between the researcher and the participant. In addition, they provide enough space and flexibility for original and unexpected issues to emerge, which the researcher may explore further with additional enquiries (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). Therefore, the research questions in IPA studies are typically formulated broadly and openly.

There is no attempt to test a predetermined hypothesis; rather, the objective is to thoroughly and flexibly explore a topic of concern (Smith & Osborn, 2008). For my study, I conducted one-on-one and semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, participants described their experience as international students in a different culture and their experience with their children during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The introduction included an explanation of the interview's purpose. I employed open-ended questions to encourage the interviewee to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words. I consciously avoided leading questions and making assumptions about the interviewee's thoughts or feelings. I also used active listening and reflection techniques to demonstrate engagement and understanding of the interviewee's viewpoint. The interview approach aimed to exhibit empathy and genuine interest in the interviewee, with an acknowledgement of their emotions and feelings, while refraining from offering advice or personal opinions. The primary focus of the interview remained on the interviewee and their experiences rather than on my perspective. Summarisation and clarification of key points from the interviewee's responses were conducted to ensure accurate understanding.

I took detailed notes during the interviews to capture essential information and insights and utilised the interpretative phenomenological analysis due to the study's focus on direct interaction with human participants. The data collected included recording the interviewees' responses, which were then analysed to identify patterns and themes. I followed the specific steps outlined in the methodology chapter to conduct the data analysis. The data collection and analysis processes are also discussed in greater detail in the methodology chapter.

The sample of Study 2 consists of nine Saudi mothers who have studied abroad (i.e., in the UK) and are actively involved in their children's primary education and remote learning. I carefully selected the participants for this study to ensure the homogeneity of the IPA.

5.2.2. Mothers' Profile: Multicultural Exposure

In this section, I present each participant's summary profile in order to provide context for the findings and highlight the depth of the collected data. Table 5 summarises the important characteristics of the second study's participants.

Table 5

Study 2 Participants' Profiles

Participant Number	Number of Children	Educational Level	Professional Experience
1	1 boy: 8 years	Master's degree	Student and employed as a university lecturer
2	1 girl: 9 years 1 boy: 7 years	PhD	Student and employed as a university lecturer
3	2 girls: 10 years and 5 years 1 boy: 5 years	PhD	Employed as a university lecturer
4	1 girl: 13 years, with ADHD. 1 boy: 10 years	PhD	Currently, a lecturer at a university PhD student and taught before at primary, middle and secondary school levels
5	1 boy: 9 years 1 girl: 7 years	PhD	Has a short period of experience of 6 months in kindergarten Currently, a student in the UK and employed as a university lecturer
6	3 children in primary school 1 girl: 6 years 2 boys: 2 years and 4 years	PhD	Student in the UK and employed as a university lecturer

7	One child in primary school Girl in year 1	PhD	Both parents are academics in higher education as students in the UK The mother has a year of teaching experience in middle and secondary education
8	1 girl: 11 years 3 boys: 10 years, 8 years and 6 years	PhD	Student in the UK and employed as a university lecturer
9	2 girls: 11 years and 7 years 1 boy: 10 years	Master's degree	Student

Note. A key requirement is that all the Saudi participants in Study 2 have been exposed to their native Saudi Arabian and the British culture.

5.2.2.1. Participant 1. The mother earned her master's degree in the UK. She has an eight-year-old child in primary school. Her husband travelled with her overseas. She lacks expertise in instructing primary-aged youngsters. The British educational system utilises distance education and uses it to deliver assignments and homework to parents. She is always busy; the child has attended daycare since birth. When she lived in the KSA, she used to provide for and do everything for her children, fearing that they might have to do a job that she did not like or that did not suit her. However, during her studies abroad, she had no choice but to give her children responsibilities and tasks, so the transition to remote learning was smooth. Her youngster was used to looking for knowledge from the beginning of his academic career since it was a school requirement. Moreover, the child has confidence in himself and his talents since he submits his homework to the instructor without checking with his mother first. When the mother sees the instructor, she informs her that the child's tasks have been delivered properly. However, the mother employs the reward and punishment technique. When he accomplishes

his chores and completes tasks, he receives what he desires; when he does not, he is not given time to play or use the iPad.

5.2.2.2. Participant 2. The mother has two children, a daughter aged nine and a boy aged seven with special needs. Both she and her husband possess advanced degrees from an accredited institution. During the conversation, she indicated that her daughter had some trouble fitting into Saudi society. Most of these issues arise from the child's use of Arabic at school and over the summer vacation. Due to the heat, many families in the KSA schedule evening gatherings and visits after 7 p.m., which this participant found problematic because she is accustomed to a regular schedule and getting to bed early.

It was possible to determine from the mother's responses that she has a strong personality and sticks to her decisions. For example, when her mother prevents her from playing online, she does her homework with the help of her friends and searches for answers on Google; in this way, she is able to find a way to get what she wants.

5.2.2.3. Participant 3. The mother is a parent of three: a 10-year-old girl and twins (a boy and a girl) who are aged five. All of them have remained in the UK school system by using remote learning. She will shortly begin her PhD studies with her children, but they have since returned to Saudi Arabia due to the pandemic. Due to the nature of her job, she and her husband have raised their children to be self-reliant. However, her son is completely dependent on his twin sister; when she asks him to do anything, he asks her to do it and he copies her. In addition, she has a stronger and more outspoken personality than her brother.

5.2.2.4. Participant 4. The mother is a divorced mother with a young teenager and a younger child. Having already earned a master's degree, she is currently pursuing a PhD in the UK. She and her family have always lived abroad, even when she was a young child. In the KSA, communication between parents and children is highly valued. However, like any parent, balancing schoolwork, extracurricular activities and childcare can be difficult. Her

decision to instil self-assurance in her older child and have him take on responsibility at a young age has paid dividends since he is nearly a young adult who can set priorities and manage his time well.

Her duty, on the other hand, required her to constantly encourage her children in whatever they chose to do. She spoke to her daughter, who has ADHD, about some of her own experiences to get her more interested in school. She also took a novel approach by arranging private lessons for her son in Japanese, which catered to his individual learning style and sparked interest in a language he had previously shown little interest in. She helped her daughter learn without forcing her to rely on just one method by insisting that she do her schoolwork in whichever way worked best for her, even if it meant writing it all out on paper. Yet, she was concerned about her daughter's growth in more than just academic areas.

5.2.2.5. Participant 5. The mother is a PhD student in the UK; her husband has remained back in the KSA. She returned to the KSA during the pandemic and enrolled her children in Saudi public schools. The boy relies on himself a lot for everything and the girl relies on herself for some things, especially the Holy Qur'an and the Arabic language. They are facing a problem with Arabic because they were in the UK. The aim of her time with them is to translate and explain Arabic because they are suffering on the language side. Now, her understanding of the importance of the children's self-confidence and self-reliance has increased. The pandemic made her think about the importance of self-reliance. She did not face much difficulty because she had previously lived in Canada and Britain, so her children were already self-reliant.

5.2.2.6. Participant 6. The mother has no experience in formally educating children. Her experience as a single mother and a fourth-year PhD student was that, a year before the pandemic, she was in the stage of data collection in Saudi Arabia for her studies, so she took advantage of this period (6 months) to send her children to schools in the KSA so that they

could practice the language and learn about Saudi culture. After her trip to collect data, her children returned with her to the UK, where she enrolled them in British schools again. When the pandemic occurred, the children moved to remote learning in British schools until the end of the academic year.

5.2.2.7. Participant 7. The mother and her husband are PhD students in the UK and have one girl in Year 2; she was born in the UK. During the pandemic, the mother was unable to study because of time constraints. Her studies required her to attend university every day while their child was not at school but had to learn online, so she was constantly under pressure. During this period, the child learned by watching YouTube channels and answering questions. The mother used YouTube to teach her child. Upon her return to the KSA on an evacuation flight due to the pandemic, her daughter had several challenges and huge difficulties because it was the first time she had been to the KSA. She was stuck in the house for three months, a long time. The girl's greatest obstacle was the language, as well as her grandmother's disapproval of certain practices. When they returned to the UK, the mother faced the issue of transferring her daughter's school to a remote learning institution, which negatively impacted her as a PhD student since she had no time to devote to the process.

5.2.2.8. Participant 8. The mother has four children, three of whom are in primary school. She is a doctoral student and her husband is a primary school teacher who accompanies her to study in Britain. Her children study in British schools. The children's schools have been helpful; all four children are studying online, but the mother's experience is poor with regards to helping them with remote learning. The older girl is in middle school and the son is in the sixth grade. These two older children can work on their own a lot of the time, but the younger two in Year 1 and Year 3 (ages 5 and 7) need their father or one of their older brothers to help them. As the mother is too busy with her PhD, she and her husband divide the parenting task between them. The mother wants her children to benefit from the

experience of living and studying in the UK so they can acquire the language and different skills and appreciate different cultures. As a result, she is eager for them to return to school instead of learning online.

5.2.2.9. Participant 9. The mother and her husband are studying for PhDs. They have three children. She has had teaching experience for a short period of time – i.e., six months. Her children are students in British schools and she, her husband and her children have been abroad for 11 years. Her children in the sixth and seventh grades can educate themselves, but the child in the second grade requires her assistance and her presence by her side. She uses methods and games to increase her children's motivation to learn. Because of the circumstances of her alienation and her preoccupation with her own studies, she distributed some tasks to her children. The mother herself was spoiled by her own family; she did not bear any responsibility growing up. This impacted her when she travelled for the first time, so she wanted to make sure the children were not spoiled like she was – they were given tasks to do.

This subsection described the participants' characteristics that permitted their categorisation and facilitated data extraction. The following section explores the primary themes and subthemes associated with Study 2.

5.3. Discussion of Key Emergent Themes and Subthemes

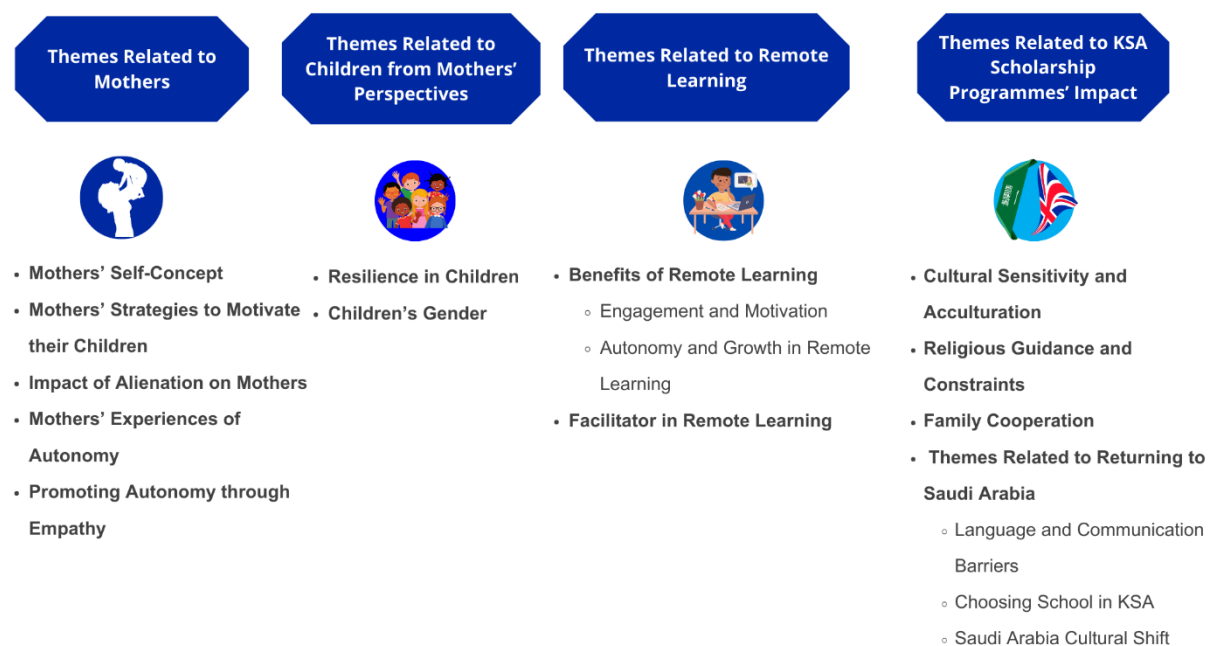
The main goal of my second study is to investigate the perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers exposed to more than one country's culture with their children, with respect to their children's autonomy and motivation in the context of remote learning. The selected sample consisted of mothers exposed to the KSA and UK cultures.

The themes and subthemes are developed from the usage of an IPA when interviewing Saudi mothers. This section concerns the most prevalent topics discussed by the interviewed

mothers. The four main themes are “themes related to mothers”, “themes related to children”, “themes related to remote learning” and “themes related to the KSA scholarship programs’ impact”. The four main themes and their subthemes are illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Study 2: Themes for Mothers with Experience of Multiple Cultures



5.3.1. Themes Related to Mothers

This theme involves the characteristics associated with the mother and the factors that influence her methods with her children during remote learning. These factors may be related to the mother’s personality or external factors. The following main themes emerged: “mothers’ self-concept”, “mothers’ strategies to motivate their children to learn”, “alienation influence”, “autonomy and mothers’ experiences” and “promoting autonomy through empathy”.

5.3.1.1. Mother's Self-Concept. A mother's self-concept possibly plays a role in influencing how she exercises personal power in parenting, as explained in the literature review. Personal power, according to Rogers (1977), is an individual's ability to have a positive effect on their own life and surroundings. However, mothers should foster a positive use of personal power. It is essential to support the child's autonomy, provide unconditional positive regard and encourage their personal growth. On the other hand, if the mother's use of personal power involves controlling, undermining or overprotecting the child, it could potentially have negative effects. From an interpersonal standpoint, power arises from the stratification of social groups and is a structural characteristic of society. Power holders feel that their capabilities are greater than those of others and that they oversee the latter's successes because they are able to effectively influence others (Wojciszke & Struzyna-Kujalowicz, 2007). In this study, one out of nine participants mentioned that she appeared to use this authority in a controlling manner, which seemed to undermine the child's autonomy. She shared her strategies for exerting influence over her children's thinking.

Participant 6 described her approach and the pressures she faces: "By nature, I have a strong desire for excellence, and I am continually seeking it. I want them to be outstanding". Moreover, she demonstrated a profound sense of responsibility and authority in her children, as she mentioned:

I attempt to take responsibility for everything associated with them. I'm a cautious person, cautious about my children and their education. I am not satisfied with little things... I love them too much; I want them to be excellent and special. This has put me under pressure. I like that they want to be successful and benefit from this educational phase, especially when they are studying Arabic. I want to strengthen their scaffolding, such as the Arabic language and the Holy Qur'an. Such factors have caused pressure for us mothers.

Consequently, from this mother's excerpt, it is clearly possible that mothers remain highly influenced by Saudi culture, which places a strong emphasis on children's success (a mother's responsibility), indicating a notable power distance, as mentioned by Alqahtani (2021). The cultural context contributes to the increased pressure that mothers experience in order to guarantee their children's academic achievements. They impose on their children and use personal power to achieve their own goals. Furthermore, a mother's self-concept seems to play a role in shaping how she interacts with her children. The above quote from Participant 6 shows how a mother's self-concept, which includes her beliefs and values, often drives her parenting methods. Mothers with a strong sense of authority or particular values may unconsciously or deliberately strive to mould their children to reflect similar traits or goals. This desire to 'mirror' herself in her child can lead to a parenting approach where she not only directs her child's behaviour but also seeks to shape their attitudes, aspirations and self-image to align with her own. As a result, the child's development may be influenced by the mother's wish for the child to adopt similar beliefs and characteristics, potentially limiting the child's autonomy or ability to form an independent sense of self.

Conversely, three mothers have been able to create a home environment that supports their children's autonomy and promotes the acquisition of supplemental skills. Illustrating this point, Participant 2 shared her method of supporting autonomy in her daughter; according to her perspective, her daughter's performance depends entirely on the girl herself, without any interference from her. She said:

My presence with her is only about support, but I withdraw myself little by little. I mean, I don't give her the answer and I don't answer the question; even during the time of the exam, I try to not be there. I mean, I am by her side as if I am not. I began to tell her to answer by herself and that she must bear the result, whether she is right or wrong.

Similarly, Participant 4 commented on how she supported her child's interest in learning new things:

I would like to suggest that he attend online classes. As he learns that online learning is not only for lessons for school but also for learning useful things online, he does not take a negative stand against online classes.

Likewise, Participant 5 described her parenting approach, which seems to support their autonomy: "To be honest, I try as much as I can to make them autonomous. At the same time, I supervise them from a distance. If they need me, they will find me".

The examples above demonstrate that mothers who possess autonomy with regard to their parenting practices may have personal influence over their children's lives without being significantly influenced by Saudi societal norms. This argument illustrates the dynamic interplay between cultural context and maternal personal power. This fact is supported by Participant 5's narrative when she shared her experience of studying abroad from a social perspective: "In the KSA, parents participate in the upbringing of my children, as we do, especially since I live with my husband's parents; but in Canada and Britain, I feel that I am more independent in raising my children".

In the KSA, the common involvement of the extended family is a prevalent cultural norm, which serves as a supportive network for parenthood. This collective approach has an opportunity to reduce the burden of parental responsibilities (Al-Ruwaitea, 2014). However, it may also restrict the autonomy of mothers in making decisions, as the first study found. Conversely, the more individualistic nature of British culture provides a greater degree of autonomy in child-rearing, but it may not provide the communal support that Saudi women are accustomed to. The transition from a collectivist to an individualist cultural context necessitates substantial adaptation and may result in acculturative stress. The transition to a more autonomous parental role in Britain may provide the participants with a sense of autonomy.

This autonomy enables mothers to foster parenting strategies that are more intuitive and supportive in accordance with their values and the specific needs of their children.

According to Rogers (1959), individuals grow in environments where they feel appreciated and comprehended. Children develop more emotionally and cognitively when mothers exercise their personal power and establish a nurturing environment that is defined by unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. In this study, mothers' autonomy seems to enable them to more effectively promote a healthier parent-child relationship by implementing these PCA principles (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). SDT further expounds on the advantages of autonomy-supportive parenting. It argues that meeting the fundamental psychological requirements of autonomy, competence and relatedness is necessary to achieve optimal well-being and functioning.

5.3.1.2. Mother's Strategies to Motivate Their Children. Parents employ different techniques to help their children concentrate on a particular task or activity. These techniques can be used to boost a child's focus and lengthen their attention span. In this study, all the participants reported using the rewards and punishments method as part of their approach to managing their children's behaviour. For instance, Participant 1 lists various ways to motivate her child:

We tell him that if he does not do his work, at the end of the day, he will not play and he won't be able to go out to the park or take the iPad. However, if he finishes his work, he will be able to take the iPad for the rest of the day.

Similarly, Participant 2 described how she motivated her daughter to do her homework and connected it with something that she liked: "I tell her it is forbidden for her to turn on the Sony and play if she has not finished her homework. I will take the device from her for some time if she didn't do what I asked her".

Likewise, Participant 3 used the same method with her daughter: “If you get higher grades and good feedback, I’ll reward you with something you want”. However, she also made the following statement about her twins:

They are the type where one follows what the second one is doing. Therefore, if I control the first one, it makes the second one follow the same process. With the eldest one, I use the reward method. If you do something positive, you’ll be rewarded. The reward is not necessarily materialistic; it can be a social reward. For instance, they like going to their grandmother’s house.

Furthermore, Participant 4 expressed her viewpoint on the method of reward and punishment. She underlines the importance of a balanced approach to discipline and reward. She emphasises the need for punishment and reward in certain situations, such as when a child exceeds their assigned tasks or surpasses the allowed time for electronic use:

It is a necessity. I need the reward and punishment [approach]. Your reward needs to be present. There should be punishment, in case ... there should be discipline. For instance, if he doesn’t complete the tasks he was assigned to, or I asked him to do things, or anything ... for instance, he may exceed the allowed time to use electronics. For instance, for behaviour in general, in my house, if they surpass the boundaries, there should be punishment. So, this is my approach and they are aware of this.

Additionally, Participant 5 described her approach to teaching her children, particularly her youngest child. She uses a combination of subjective and material rewards to help her children learn. She rewards her child with rewards like playing with the PlayStation or going on a night stroll and material rewards such as receiving monetary recompenses for being selected as ‘student of the week’:

Preventing them, punishing them. Punishments can be things like preventing them from doing things they are attached to, such as devices like Sony [presumably PlayStation],

friends, etc. If they apologise, I forgive them and I step back. Even though I know that if I set a punishment, I should commit to it, sometimes I do not.

Moreover, Participant 6 shared her experience by saying, “Every morning, we state the routine, I explain and I teach the children, especially my boy, the youngest in primary school. I faced extreme challenges when dealing with my youngest child (year 2 in school)”. This mother’s approach included subjective rewards: “If you join the class and don’t leave it until the end, you will get to play with the PlayStation... or we go on a night stroll”. Likewise, material rewards were identified: “If you are selected ‘student of the week’ by your teacher, you will receive a monetary recompense”. The mother also gives her child the opportunity to work in the home office, while she works in the living room, aiming to increase their confidence and autonomy: “I give him a chance to work in the office [in our house], and I work from the living room. I try to give him more confidence”. Moreover, Participant 7 had her own unique way of motivating her daughter:

Since the online classes consisted of YouTube channels, I bought her a smart TV and put it in her room for her classes. I woke her up and made her psychologically ready. I help her get her breakfast and dressed and access the class for her.

Interestingly, there were agreements between a mother and a daughter with respect to rewards (relating to likes) and punishments: “For example, if she tidies her room, I allow her extra time to watch something she likes or we do something she likes... she really likes it; for example, going for a ride on a bicycle”. As another form of reward, she even allowed her daughter “to go shopping with her and select the vegetables and fruits she would like to have”. Regarding her daughter’s negative behaviour, Participant 7 reported that her child:

Has a red circle in her room. It’s an idea from maths; it’s a thinking spot. For example, when she asks for more and I could end up spoiling her and letting her get away with

things, I ask her to go to the thinking spot and think about what she was doing. She stays for 3 minutes until she finishes. It allows her to recover her energy.

Furthermore, Participant 8 shared that she frequently used rewards and punishments as a method for managing her children's behaviour, noting that this approach was particularly effective with her older children. She stated, "I used rewards and punishments; it's an effective method to help them focus on remote learning, especially the older ones".

Additionally, Participant 9 also provides a monetary reward of 10 pounds for her children if they get high scores. She said, "If they achieve high scores, I offer them 10 pounds to spend on Amazon or to play for a longer time and the punishment is a reduced time for the iPad and TV". Consequently, this research found that the mothers used material and subjective rewards and electronic device restrictions as punishment. In addition, they used many other methods, including setting routines, emphasising education and giving positive feedback. Parents showed awareness that they must balance discipline and empathy to help their children learn and grow. This is similar to the findings of the first study, which found that most Saudi mothers at all educational levels seem to use reward and punishment techniques with their children. This finding agrees with Yahya and Raudhah (2014), who discovered that emigrating mothers bring cultural capital in the form of play and learning experiences.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) convention does not specify parental discipline. However, it states that physical punishment is unacceptable. Disciplining youngsters helps them understand family and societal rules. These approaches are non-violent, customised to the child's growth and emphasise their wellbeing. Most countries have legal systems that define excessive or unreasonable parental punishment of children. Each government must assess this legislation against the convention (UNICEF, 2022). Parents' use of reward and punishment varies depending on the context and other internal and external influences. A previous study (Gershoff et al., 2012) supports this by

shedding light on how cultural factors can inform disciplinary practices. Following this fact, motivational personal experiences and educational and cultural influences play a role in the strategies mothers adopt to motivate and guide their children's behaviour in the context of this study. Deci et al. (2001) provide valuable insights into the effects of various types of rewards on intrinsic motivation, highlighting the generally detrimental impact of physical, anticipated, engagement-based, completion-based and performance-based rewards.

Furthermore, according to Rogers (1957), unconditional positive regard (UPR) goes beyond specific behaviours and involves an attitude of complete acceptance, respect, and value of the individual. Since UPR emphasises that the individual is worthy, respected, and accepted for who they are, it is general and all-encompassing, focusing on the individual's overall worth. In addition, UPR is often seen as having a profound and lasting effect on an individual's self-concept and psychological well-being. Detrimental impact, such as tangible extrinsic reward, can inhibit intrinsic motivation and personal growth (Vinarski Peretz, 2023).

5.3.1.3. Impact of Alienation on Mothers. According to the participants in this study, mothers pursuing PhD studies abroad face unique challenges that require significant adjustments to their parenting practices. Feelings of alienation and the need to balance academic responsibilities with familial obligations often intensify these challenges. Notably, four out of nine participants shared their experiences, highlighting the diverse strategies mothers adopted to manage these demands effectively. For example, Participant 1 shared how alienation has fundamentally altered her approach to parenting. Initially, she enjoyed doing everything for her children. However, living abroad has required her to become more self-reliant, prompting her to encourage her children to take on more personal responsibilities. She stated:

I loved to do everything for them when they were younger. But now, especially with alienation, I am responsible for everything, so I try to get everyone to do their personal

things themselves, for example, make their bed, take off their clothes – the simple things they can do.

This shift reflects a broader trend among mothers studying abroad, who must balance increased responsibilities by fostering greater autonomy in their children. Participant 6 shared her experience of academic pressure and the lack of support she received from both her university and her children's school:

The external factors create pressure and impact me. For instance, I am writing my thesis, and I have been affected by the different transitions we experienced. I could not fulfil my children's educational needs or finish my tasks. This affected me and my mental well-being. My children always complain, saying, 'Mom, why are you always nervous and stressed?' I explain to them how busy I am and why I lack patience because of external pressure.

On the other hand, Participant 7 highlighted another aspect of adaptation, particularly regarding the use of technology: "As a mother, I allow my daughter to use the iPad only when necessary, such as during a flight or a long road trip. To be honest, she never uses the iPad in the house". This selective use of technology illustrates how mothers adjust their rules and routines to accommodate the unique circumstances of studying abroad, ensuring that technology serves as a tool to manage specific situations rather than becoming a pervasive part of daily life. Participant 8 provided insight into the complex balance between professional, academic and familial roles:

I am busy. If I am accompanied by my husband or a helper, I can use different techniques with them, but my work will be shared. We are engaged in a psychological conflict. I am a university lecturer and a PhD candidate, and so the strain on me may be excessive.

This testimony underscores the psychological and logistical challenges mothers may face while pursuing higher education abroad.

The dual demands of being a university professor and a PhD candidate can be overwhelming, necessitating shared responsibilities and innovative parenting techniques to manage stress and maintain family cohesion. The academic enquiry into the intersection of familial caregiving and higher education reveals that universities are often perceived as unsupportive of child-rearing responsibilities. Rhoden and Kinchington (2021) highlighted this issue, noting that many academic institutions fail to provide adequate support for parents. This adds to the strain on mothers, who are already balancing demanding roles.

However, the result of this study highlighted how mothers are capable of adapting and changing in order to achieve their internal motivations and objectives, which include pursuing higher degrees and continuing their education despite the pressures they encounter. Mothers are extraordinary in their capacity to adapt to change. These results are consistent with the principles of a PCA, which state that individuals have a natural drive towards self-actualisation, which is the process of realising and achieving their potential. This involves the ability to make changes and adapt to the challenges of life in a way that encourages personal growth and well-being.

5.3.1.4. Mothers' Experiences of Autonomy. Consistent with the accounts of participants in this study and my own experiences, pursuing a PhD possibly plays a role in improving the autonomy of individuals by promoting independent research, personal growth and effective time management. The impacts on parenthood and children include instance-setting autonomy, understanding different responsibilities and moving through cultural norms and expectations. According to Al-Ruwaitea (2014), social standards predominantly influence behaviour in collectivistic cultures such as the KSA. Having various experiences throughout a PhD journey may promote a parental mindset that is more supportive of children's

autonomy; consequently, it is possible to positively influence their own development of autonomy.

In this study, the narratives of three participants suggest that they agree on the importance of fostering autonomy in their children. For instance, it was important for Participant 1, as she shared that her children learn from their experiences because she allows them to give wrong answers and rely on themselves. She stated:

In terms of motivation, there are times when he asks me about something, and I become human. I tell him, “I don’t know! You use Google. Do a search on Google, and you will find anything you want”. I taught them to know that this is right and that is wrong. And that wrong is not a bad thing; we need to learn from it.

Participant 4 suggested attending online classes for self-reliance and learning useful information. She emphasises the importance of searching for solutions or information independently rather than seeking help: “I would like to suggest that he attend online classes. As he learns that online learning is not only for lessons for school but also for learning useful things online”. She also indicated that:

I incorporated into them the notion that self-reliance is a fundamental skill. I always remind them that they must search for solutions or information themselves. If you don’t know, don’t come to me immediately; check Google and check YouTube links. Search for yourself and try to do your own research before asking for help. It’s alright if he seeks help. But I prefer that he rely on himself first. Now he is used to this approach.

On the other hand, Participant 8 included in her opinions an evaluation of the parenting behaviour of some of her relatives and how she emphasised the importance of a child’s own understanding and efforts in achieving high grades:

I discovered that my sisters and cousins had solved the tests for their own children, but what is important to me is that my child gets what they deserve through their own

understanding and efforts... I wish my children would get high grades, but I want them to get what they deserve through their own efforts.

However, with remote learning from home, mothers likely have the opportunity to use techniques to support their children's autonomy, which may be limited by the educational system and national curriculum in primary and secondary schools due to their commitment to standardised national assessment examinations. This limitation impedes learners' autonomy in making learning decisions (Boyadzhieva, 2016). According to Rogers (1959), mothers' inherent autonomy in supporting their child's learning contributes to meaningful learning, surpassing the mere accumulation of factual knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge and skills is a crucial factor that impacts an individual's conduct, decision-making, outlook and character. According to Rogers, the acquisition of knowledge is not the only aspect of pervasive learning; it permeates every aspect of an individual's existence, which some mothers have shared in the second study. For example, one stated that "I do not deceive myself or others". The participants' comments reflect a proactive approach to fostering their child's self-reliance and adaptability, particularly within the context of remote learning. This emphasis on adaptability, resourcefulness and self-reliance highlights the essential skills needed to navigate the challenges of online education and to prepare children for success in an increasingly globalised world. Research confirms the importance of these skills. Benson (2003) emphasises that the most critical abilities for learners are those that enable them to plan their own learning activities, monitor their progress and evaluate their outcomes. These capabilities are vital for effective problem-solving and independent study. Furthermore, Lüftenegger et al. (2012) argue that autonomous students, who take responsibility for their learning, tend to be lifelong learners, continually engaging in self-directed education. Overall, the proactive strategies highlighted by the participants align with a broader educational consensus based on the values

of self-reliance and adaptability. These skills are not only crucial for succeeding in remote learning environments but also for fostering a lifelong commitment to learning.

5.3.1.5. Promoting Autonomy through Empathy. The participants in this study are PhD students who are also mothers. Their experiences can foster autonomy through empathy, both in their academic pursuits and in their interactions with their children. In the academic realm, the student can foster autonomy by recognising and understanding the unique challenges and aspirations of fellow researchers or collaborators. According to my own experiences as a PhD student, approaching academic work with empathy entails acknowledging diverse perspectives, supporting individual growth and creating an inclusive environment that values autonomy in intellectual pursuits. In relation to her children, the mother can cultivate autonomy through empathetic parenting. This involves actively listening to her children's thoughts and feelings, valuing their opinions and providing a supportive space for them to express themselves.

Empathy enables the mother to understand her children's perspectives, allowing for more effective guidance without imposing rigid expectations. In the context of promoting autonomy through empathy (Borges & Castro, 2022), in this study, one participant indicated that her empathy was primarily directed towards her children, while another participant demonstrated empathy more towards herself. For instance, Participant 4 demonstrated empathy for her children since she shared her daughter's experience with remote learning:

My daughter had a difficult time regulating her behaviour and staying on task. She has a condition like ADHD. Her focus is really lost in just a short time, and she loses focus. Therefore, online learning is not effective for her. As soon as she logs in to [Microsoft] Teams, she feels lost. She does not know what to do. In my daughter's case, regarding online learning, she became tired of doing her homework. I asked her to solve them on paper because she no longer liked joining online classes.

Moreover, she compared her experiences with her daughter with her son's experience:

I subscribed to his Japanese classes; he told me he wanted to learn Japanese. He also asked me to sign him up for a children's geometry class. So, he joined them. Many people tell me that this creates pressure and so on. I said, "No, it's the opposite". When he started, his timetable was organised. He knows that this morning, he has this lesson. He got used to studying online.

Consideration of her children's individual learning needs, particularly in the case of ADHD, demonstrates a deep sense of empathy. The decision to provide private lessons in Japanese tailored to her son's learning style is a manifestation of understanding and valuing individual differences. Likewise, the mother's flexibility in facilitating her daughter's choice as the most effective method for completing schoolwork exemplifies an empathetic approach to nurturing autonomy. This aligns with the theory that a PCA creates an encouraging educational environment and promotes positive autonomy. It emphasises the value and capacity of each student by putting them at the centre of education (Motschnig, 2012). Since it empowers learners, this method aligns with Rogers' emphasis on autonomy. Rogers' ideas and a PCA emphasise the learner and recognising and meeting individual needs. Empathy promotes autonomy by recognising and appreciating each student's unique experiences and talents, encouraging their voices and providing individualised assistance.

On the other hand, Participant 6's narrative may reflect her self-concept of a mother who strives to be ideal – assertive, kind and patient – but recognises the impact of external pressures on her ability to meet those standards. The mother's self-concept is shaped by her desire to balance her personal aspirations, such as completing her thesis, with her responsibilities to her children. However, the challenges and transitions she faces create a sense of failure and stress, affecting both her mental well-being and her relationship with her children:

I try to be the ideal mother: assertive, kind, patient. I could not fulfil my children's educational needs or finish my tasks. This affected me and my mental well-being. Additionally, she addressed her children's complaints about her stress, highlighting the tension between her ideal self and the reality of her situation and illustrating the internal conflict she experiences as she navigates these demands. Her narrative underscores how external pressures can disrupt one's self-concept, leading to feelings of inadequacy and frustration despite one's best efforts. She stated: "My children always complain, saying, 'Mom, why are you always nervous and stressed?' I explain to them how busy I am and why I lack patience because of external pressure".

Her parenting approach is influenced by her empathy for her children and her awareness of her own circumstances. She communicated to her children the obstacles she encounters and her sentiments of neglect, which emphasises the influence of empathy on her parenting. This communication seems to be the result of her profound empathy, which is indicative of her comprehension of the emotional and practical challenges that are associated with her parental responsibilities. Her readiness to share her personal challenges with her children indicates that her empathy not only affects her interactions with them but also influences her approach to managing her own feelings of inadequacy. She recognises her own vulnerabilities and tries to create a supportive environment for her children by clearly discussing her challenges. This method builds respect and empathy between parents and children and addresses any feelings of neglect these children may be experiencing. Additionally, the participant's empathy for her children, demonstrated by her awareness of her own situations and her willingness to share them, illustrates this process. Through her daily interactions that show empathy, she probably supports her children in creating and applying their own empathy abilities.

This highlights the significant influence that parents' emotional behaviours have in developing their children's emotional abilities. Parents who are supportive and exhibit strong empathy in their relationship with their children may positively impact their children's ability to develop empathy. According to Chase-Lansdale et al. (1995), when parents consistently show empathy, they create a nurturing and understanding environment while also offering their children a strong model for relating to others empathetically. This modelling can play an important role in developing the child's capacity to comprehend and respond to the emotions of others, thus enriching their social and emotional growth.

5.3.2. Themes Related to Children from Mother's Perspectives

The subsequent subthemes discuss children's experiences in multicultural settings and remote learning from the mothers' perspectives. Their narration highlights the following topics: "resilience in children" and "children's gender".

5.3.2.1. Resilience in Children. Resilience in children, as defined in the literature review, refers to their capacity to adapt to and cope with stress, adversity, trauma or other challenging conditions (Owen, 2023).

Three of the nine participants' experiences provide insights into how their children demonstrate resilience in various situations. Participant 1 reflected on how her son adapted to her busy schedule: "Last year, I was with him one by one, but this year, frankly, I was busy, so I didn't [help him]". She also shared her son's reaction when he told her what he had done, understanding that she was busy: "And he was telling me that he did this thing and sent the homework over. I didn't see it". However, the feedback from the teacher was positive regarding her child's own work: "I would see the teacher there, and she would tell me, for example, that he did a good job". Furthermore, Participant 2 discussed how her daughter adapted to self-reliance: "I originally left her to depend on herself, but when she needed me,

for example, if the internet did not work, or especially if there was an exam, I helped, but only from the technical side”. Additionally, Participant 3 observed how remote learning improved her child’s self-confidence and responsibility:

Because of the conditions we are living in now, his self-reliance increased because he has to log in to the platform to study. His self-confidence is boosted by his searching for information by himself; he is responsible. Leaving the house and going for work, in these moments at home, they started relying on themselves more. Their self-confidence, to be honest, increased.

These narratives highlight the resilience of children who manage to adapt and thrive despite challenging circumstances. Their capacity to cope with stress and adversity is crucial for their development and well-being. Studies have shown that children seem to have the ability to adapt and develop when provided with opportunities for autonomy and decision-making. According to Rogers (1977), promoting autonomy, i.e., a crucial aspect of human development, can develop resilience in children. Encouraging individuals to assess their own abilities enhances their autonomy and self-direction, which in turn fosters their overall resilience. This principle holds significant importance in educational settings, where the division of control between teachers and pupils plays a crucial role in shaping resilience. In this study, the educational setting is at home, where mothers play the role of facilitators and the participants emphasise fostering autonomy in their children, aligning with Rogers’ perspective. By allowing children to make decisions, take responsibility and learn from their experiences, parents contribute to building their children’s resilience. This approach equips children with the internal resources needed to adapt and thrive, even in challenging situations like remote learning.

Rogers (1977) further emphasises that self-directed learning flourishes in environments where teachers share power and trust their students rather than maintaining strict control.

Such environments empower children to take ownership of their learning, fostering resilience as they learn to navigate challenges and develop problem-solving skills. In contrast, a teacher-controlled environment may stifle autonomy and, consequently, the development of resilience. In this research, resilience can be conceptualised as a self-regulatory mechanism that helps children effectively navigate adversities and fosters the development of their sense of autonomy. According to SDT, individuals acquire autonomy by integrating their beliefs into their actions and self-regulating (Ryan & Deci, 2000; 2006). In the context of autonomy and SDT, fostering resilience in children helps them adapt, incorporate and sustain their learning by allowing them to explore and learn from their experiences.

Overall, children's resilience played a role in shaping their approaches to remote learning and alienation. In line with the PCA and SDT theory, it is important to support all aspects of a child's growth and readiness in relation to their environment by facilitating the learning process and teaching them how to learn rather than merely providing information. This approach helps children become more adaptable and self-reliant, ultimately fostering a sustainable and resilient approach to learning and personal development.

5.3.2.2. Children's Gender. The data analysis highlighted that three out of nine participants expressed a belief that the gender of the child may influence both the child and the mother. The issue of autonomy and self-reliance necessitated discussion. For instance, Participant 3 shared her opinion about her twins (a boy and a girl):

He feels safer when his sister is around. He was relying on her completely. And I trust her in doing some things more than her brother, who needed to feel that this thing that he was about to do was safe so that he then does it by himself.

She added, "I think I was stricter with the boy. As you know, we think that when there is a boy with two girls, he might begin behaving as a girl as well because of female dominance/influence in the house". Additionally, Participant 6 stated that her "children are

more self-reliant now in doing daily tasks such as tidying up the room and preparing breakfast, but they still need time. My daughter is the one who achieved a higher level of autonomy”. Likewise, Participant 9 pointed out, “Girls have a greater sense of responsibility than boys”. In short, some Saudi mothers believe that girls have a greater sense of responsibility than boys; therefore, they should be stricter with boys.

These perspectives illuminate the potential gender biases of parents, which may affect their parenting practices. This may be due to gender-based differences in expectations and socialisation, which may result in unequal treatment and opportunities for boys and girls. Overall, based on the findings, it might appear from girls’ perspectives that their mothers trust them, whereas boys will feel they are more controlling. The results differ from Zuo et al. (2021), who found that students’ gender does not significantly affect student behaviour, motivation and achievement due to gender socialisation, which encourages females to be more nurturing and compassionate. On the other hand, a prior meta-analysis study (Endendijk et al., 2016) found that parents demonstrated more autonomy-supportive techniques with boys than with girls prior to 1990. However, in more recent times, this finding has been reversed: parents demonstrated more autonomy-supportive techniques with girls than with boys.

5.3.3. Themes Related to Remote Learning

As stated in the previous chapter, remote learning is “A method of instruction and learning that takes place where the students learn from their instructors and each other while being physically separated rather than learning in person”. In this study, the subthemes for mothers’ and children’s benefits and challenges in relation to remote learning are as follows: “engagement and motivation”, “autonomy and growth in remote learning” and “facilitator in remote learning”.

5.3.3.1. Engagement and Motivation. Remote learning may lead to decreased engagement and motivation for children in primary school. Students may feel less interested and struggle to stay focused over time due to the child's developmental needs for play and interactions, as described by the participants. One mother commented that the amount of online study time may be too much for some children and may lead to burnout. For instance, Participant 4 mentioned this issue: "I feel the amount of online study time is heavy for children". On the other hand, three participants noted that distractions at home led to decreased engagement and motivation for their children. Many factors in the home environment can interrupt children's learning. For example, Participant 1 explained:

He works well at home, I mean, but of course, for example, he finishes his work in an hour, whereas at school he used to study for six hours. And of course, he wants to finish his work so that he can take the iPad and play with it or so he can do such things. There was no quality in his work.

Participant 3 also mentioned that her daughter's friends were distracting her: "Her friends text her on the mobile during study time". However, Participant 2 offered a different viewpoint that relates to routine and electronic devices as distractions for her child: "There is no control over the system, and there are no rules, for example, in terms of attendance". Subsequently, the amount of online study time, use of electronic devices and the absence of a routine and system can prevent children from engaging in remote learning.

These results are similar to those of Dong et al. (2020). The amount of time spent learning online and the number of assignments were related to parental satisfaction with their children. The reason could be that children, particularly in primary school, experience a lack of activity and play when transitioning to remote learning, as previously discussed in an earlier chapter on the significance of play in childhood. At this stage, children's needs and early childhood characteristics include their need for play and activity, as well as the need for

parental supervision. This increases the challenges of remote learning in primary school and is consistent with the study. Transitioning to remote learning was challenging for educators, parents and students because of the multifaceted character of early primary education (Timmons et al., 2020; Yamamura & Tsustsui, 2021). However, this demands greater effort from both teachers and mothers to capture children's attention by incorporating physical and mental activities, as well as using diverse methods and programs that help children stay more engaged and focused during remote learning. As mentioned in the literature review, active participation is fundamental to motivating individuals to engage in self-discovery and personal growth, which is in line with McCombs' learner-centred online instruction. Autonomy and empowerment are central values that underpin student-centred approaches, which are especially important in online learning environments. According to McCombs (2015), learners in online settings tend to show intrinsic motivation and value the autonomy afforded by flexible learning resources. In this context, the role of teachers and parents becomes crucial in promoting engagement and ensuring that children remain focused despite the distractions and challenges of remote learning. By promoting autonomy and incorporating engaging activities, both teachers and parents can create a learning environment that aligns with a PCA and SDT and encourages motivation, personal growth and resilience.

5.3.3.2. Autonomy and Growth in Remote Learning. A significant portion of the participants (six out of nine) remarked that their children's personalities changed during remote learning from the perspective of development and self-reliance. For instance, Participant 1 shared how her child's dependence on himself had increased compared with the onset of the pandemic last year: "The child relied on himself more this year than last year at the beginning of the pandemic. He does everything by himself". Participant 2 similarly outlined the advantages of remote learning and how her children understood it better: "They started in earnest; they understood that this is as if they were in school". Additionally,

Participant 3 clarified another advantage regarding using platforms and electronic devices:

“There is an improvement in her utilisation of electronic devices”. Participant 5 also shared her daughter’s improvement during the remote learning experience:

In the early weeks of remote learning, I was supporting her 100%. I access the platform, and I join the meeting. I taught her how to log in and off. I had to guide her in many aspects. Right now, as a mother, I feel there is an easing in those obligations as a supervisor and guide for remote learning.

In addition, Participant 6 had her own opinion regarding the impact of remote learning on her child’s personality and improving skills: “I feel they acquired new skills, such as autonomy in education. Children take the courage to use the microphone and ask the teacher, knowing there are others listening to them, including mothers or fathers”. Additionally, she highlighted this point: “I feel it reinforced social communication”. Lastly, Participant 9 noticed, when her children went back to school in person, that “I discovered that my child had become more responsible; even the teacher recognised that”.

Given the aforementioned comments, there are potential benefits of remote learning for children’s autonomy and personalities. It indirectly suggests that children may experience a greater degree of autonomy in a remote learning environment. Children often assume a greater degree of responsibility for their own education through remote learning, which includes time management, organisation and assignment completion without the direct supervision of a traditional classroom. This has the potential to cultivate a sense of autonomy and self-determination, which are essential elements of personal growth. Additionally, the transition to remote learning may foster the development of resilience and problem-solving skills in children as they adapt to new technologies and learning methods. These experiences have the potential to enhance their personality by fostering a greater sense of adaptability and self-reliance. Previous research by Rudiyanto (2021) also supports this fact, revealing a

positive influence of remote learning on a child's autonomy and critical thinking skills. Remote learning enhances students' autonomy and control by offering flexibility in deadlines, allowing them to choose topics or assignments and incorporating student-led discussions, thereby increasing their self-confidence and abilities.

A PCA recommends that the support and resources in their environment foster children's autonomy and personal development. As mentioned in the literature review, six methods make instruction student-centric in online learning by incorporating the strategies of Saxena (2013) into remote learning activities. Remote learning can more effectively support personal development and autonomy by promoting reflection and ownership, providing explicit instruction in essential skills and encouraging students to take command of their learning. Furthermore, the integration of authentic, real-world assessments, the promotion of social interaction through collaborative opportunities and the empowerment of students to take charge of their learning can all enhance motivation and engagement. Aligning remote learning with these student-centric strategies can optimise the educational experience for students and mitigate the challenges they face. The subsequent subtheme includes certain elements and concepts that can facilitate remote learning, as suggested by the mothers.

5.3.3.3. Facilitator in Remote Learning. Two out of nine participants highlighted the teacher's role as a facilitator in remote learning. This includes utilising visual and interactive tools during remote learning to motivate primary school students. Some children may need a little more help from their teachers to enable them to catch up with the rest of the class. For example, Participant 3 emphasised that her daughter's teacher is using tools that help attract students' attention during remote learning: "Her teacher is excellent in her work and in using interactive smart boards". Participant 6 offered her perspective on remote learning by saying, "But I would suggest that the teacher's presence on screen be clear and emphasised. The child will interact better". Overall, the results underscore the role of teachers in facilitating

and supporting successful remote learning experiences, as well as the role of evaluating various elements that could impact the effectiveness and draw students' attention to remote learning.

Applying a PCA to remote learning involves several strategies based on the findings relating to the educational environment and the key challenges and difficulties faced by students and their parents during remote learning. First, the relationship between teachers and students in terms of communication seems to be important for remote learning. The results are also consistent with the study of Zheng et al. (2022), who found that communication between students and teachers is significant for assessing the efficacy of online learning. Rogers confirms this, as discussed in the literature review chapter. Likewise, Aspy and Roebuck (1978) argued that "Kids don't learn from people they don't like". Educators need to believe in their students and communicate with them on a human level. Second, create a safe and supportive remote learning environment. This can be achieved by establishing clear expectations and guidelines for online behaviour, allowing students to ask questions and seek help, and fostering a sense of community through virtual icebreakers and collaborative activities. This relieves parents of the pressures and difficulties they face in educating their children. Moreover, it encourages self-reflection and self-directed learning.

Virtual classes can provide plenty of opportunities for students to reflect on their learning and capture their progress. This can be facilitated through online journals, self-assessments and goal-setting activities. This helps to increase learning motivation and provides students with the opportunity to participate in the learning process. My research has also identified that considerable adaptation to diverse learning needs occurs in remote learning environments. The latter is designed to accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences. This can be achieved through a variety of educational methods, such as videos, interactive presentations, virtual

simulations and small group discussions. Considering this diversity (and the individual differences among children) enhances the learning process.

5.3.4. Themes Related to the KSA Scholarship Programmes' Impact

This subsection presents the primary subthemes associated with the influence of the KSA scholarship on mothers and their children. The literature review emphasises the substantial number of Saudi Arabia's students studying abroad. This subsection explores mothers' and their children's experiences with cultural sensitivity and acculturation, as well as religious guidance and constraints.

5.3.4.1. Cultural Sensitivity and Acculturation. Since my research sample is composed of mothers who studied abroad and could have felt alienated when they arrived in their new cultural environment, this subtheme explores this aspect as well as feelings of being estranged from their cultural heritage or community. It also considers the difficulties associated with adapting to a new cultural setting and investigates the impact of cultural values, beliefs and behaviours on the alienation or integration of individuals. These themes are discussed in association with the implications of acculturation in the UK. Berry (1997) highlights the significant impact of acculturation on reducing mothers' resistance to change. Two participants in this study shared how they adapted to different parenting practices and societal expectations in diverse cultural settings. For example, Participant 2 puts forward the following: "When we see something not accepted in our family culture, we should not make something big of it; we must accept that we see it (in wider society)". This highlights the mother's slight resistance to change and her acceptance of differing views in wider society, even when they contradict her beliefs. Similarly, Kim (2018) highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity and acculturation in understanding how challenging the interdependent self-concept to become an independent self-concept affects parenting practices. This

participant illustrates the significance of cultural acceptance, proposing that encountering practices that are not culturally accepted should not be excessively emphasised but rather embraced as a natural part of a diverse environment. Evidence for this can also be seen in relation to Participant 3, who shared:

If I see what they are doing is extremely deviant from our traditions and education, then

I talk to them. I explain to them why they should not do or dress in a particular way.

Also, if I ask her to wear abaya, she refuses it. I'm okay with it. Instead, she wears long outfits until she gets enough motivation to wear Abaya.

She addresses cultural and alienation concerns by elucidating her strategy for managing cultural differences. The mother actively participates in conversations with her children, providing explanations for cultural norms and guiding them on when certain behaviours or attire, like wearing an abaya, are considered appropriate. When her child refuses to adhere to traditional dress codes strictly, she expresses a flexible stance, showing understanding and acceptance.

These observations emphasise the intricate methods by which parents manage cultural integration and uphold cultural identity in inclusive and diverse environments. And this could be one of their challenges. As reflected in earlier research, international students, including those from Saudi Arabia, face difficulties adapting to life in foreign countries. These challenges include language barriers, cultural disparities and adjustments to unfamiliar educational systems (Brown & Holloway, 2008; David et al., 2009; Junzi, 2009; Misra & Castilla, 2004; Sovic, 2007; Sherry et al., 2010; Rabia & Karkuti, 2017).

A recent study by Jamil et al. (2022) further explored the diverse obstacles perceived by international students studying abroad, identifying psychological, social, cultural and academic dimensions that require mental acclimatisation to the new environment. By recognising and respecting cultural differences, individuals can better integrate into new

cultural environments while maintaining their cultural identity and values. Fundamental to this approach, empathy defies individual experiences and includes a comprehensive comprehension and respect for a large diversity of cultural perspectives. Unconditional positive regard promotes the development of a non-evaluative mindset, inspiring people to acknowledge and appreciate the cultural distinctiveness of others. This approach fosters an atmosphere that values and respects diverse backgrounds by encouraging individuals to openly express their cultural identities, thereby cultivating an environment of authenticity.

The PCA, which is founded upon a profound regard for unique individual distinctions, inherently corresponds with the acknowledgment and appreciation of cultural diversity. The approach's direction recognises and respects the autonomy of individuals as they navigate their cultural voyages, encouraging modesty and receptiveness to diverse cultural resolutions. By cultivating mutual comprehension, effective communication, which is a pillar of the approach, enables individuals to engage in substantive dialogue regarding cultural differences. The PCA, at its core, fosters an environment that promotes cultural sensitivity, enabling an examination and appreciation of the diverse array of human cultural experiences.

5.3.4.2. Religious Guidance and Constraints. In the lives of Saudi international students, religious guidance and constraints are particularly significant. They are raised in a conservative society in which the Islamic is connected with every aspect of social and cultural life. As described in the literature review chapter, religion influences the culture, social life, and laws of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These norms, beliefs and practices guide and govern behaviour within a religious community and can include rules about food, standards for attire and prohibitions on specific behaviours. Three participants in this study shared their concerns regarding religion with their children. Participant 4 shared, “I emphasise again the fact that we are Muslims; therefore, we need to imbibe certain things in them”. The mother here seems afraid for her children and always reminds them that they are

Muslims. She also discussed societal and religious expectations regarding travel and independence with her daughter. Participant 8, on the other hand, indicated that: “With my older children, I use other methods with them, focussing on and cultivating religion through prayer, customs, traditions and religious values”. She focused on promoting Islam among her children, particularly through prayer, customs, traditions and religious values. Likewise, Participant 9 discussed the aspect of clothing, supporting her daughter’s choices while encouraging modesty by suggesting wearing leggings under a short skirt: “For example, wearing a short skirt or wearing what you want, but wearing leggings under the skirt! On the contrary, I support her choices and want her to choose what she wants”.

Since the participants originated from a conservative Islamic society, they may encounter challenges when balancing their cultural norms and preserving their cultural and religious identity in a new environment. In line with the literature, which indicates balancing cultural identity with new cultural norms, this presents a significant challenge (Lefdahl-Davis & Perrone-McGovern, 2015; Arafah, 2017; 2020).

However, this study found that participants often struggled to maintain their cultural identity while adapting to their new environment. Specifically, they expressed apprehensions regarding their children’s religious and cultural identity, particularly with their daughters, concerning clothing and ways of thinking. Mothers want their daughters to adhere to religious regulations and not deviate from Saudi culture upon their return. This is especially challenging in countries where the prevailing religion and cultural norms differ from their own.

5.3.4.3. Family Cooperation. Given that remote learning occurs at home and the mothers in this study are PhD students, the family works together for their education, which has an impact on the family relationship. My findings revealed the benefits that remote learning can contribute to family cooperation in educating children. Four out of nine mothers noticed

the advantages, which allowed them to have more time for their children's academic and family life. Due to the fact that remote learning occurs at home and is the responsibility of the family, some participants described how remote learning impacted them by introducing them to the educational level of their children and enabling them to provide the necessary support. For example, Participant 5 clarified, "As a mother, you can measure your child's skills at home and improve them for the future". Furthermore, Participant 6 shared, "We started knowing their assets and shortcomings". Whereas, Participant 9 also shared, "During remote learning, I was aware of my son's level and his needs, and I attempted to assist him by purchasing games and providing explanations". Accordingly, remote learning introduced the mothers to the educational level of their children, enabling them to provide the necessary support.

The findings are consistent with those of San Jose et al. (2022), who showed that mothers are grateful for the opportunity to devote time to their children's education. The pandemic facilitated this bonding. For example, Participant 8 stated, "My husband and I worked together to educate our children. My husband's responsibilities include teaching mathematics and science. Regarding language and stories, I am accountable for educating them". In addition, Participant 8 indicated, "I make the older children follow up with their brothers, and after that, it is the father's turn and then my turn because I am a PhD student and I have work". Accordingly, remote learning can contribute to family cooperation in educating children. The increase in family cooperation is an important factor in children's education. Parents and older siblings play a crucial role in supporting younger children's learning, especially in subjects that children may find challenging.

Dividing responsibilities among family members can also help ensure that children receive a well-rounded education. This highlights the importance of involving the family in education and encouraging collaboration among family members. Moore et al. (2020) discovered that parental involvement in remote learning surpasses that in traditionally taught

classes, as small children require more assistance with online activities. This is in line with SDT and the concepts of competence and relatedness. It can increase the child's sense of relatedness to their family and, on the other hand, constantly distributing tasks among siblings increases their sense of competence when tasks are assigned to them.

5.3.5. Themes Related to Returning to Saudi Arabia

Parents' perspectives and fears when returning to Saudi Arabia include concerns about their children's problems, such as language, adaptation, the educational system, communication barriers and choosing a school in the KSA.

5.3.5.1. Language and Communication Barriers. As Saudi citizens are well aware, Arabic is the main language tool for communication between individuals in the country. However, as part of scholarships and studying abroad in English-speaking countries, the English language must be acquired and used since it is the primary language in the host country. Moreover, since the children spend most of their time in the host country's schools while their parents, whose native language is Arabic, remain at home, there can be difficulties in communication, especially when the children return to the KSA and mingle with their relatives. Four out of nine participants expressed their concerns. Participant 4 was one of them, expressing her concern over this issue:

I will hire home tutors, especially because they have a linguistic problem with the Arabic language. I must speak Arabic at home; I don't speak to them in English at home, especially my son, who is in primary school. The reason is that when I came to the UK, the child were two years and ten months old. So, he was young; he grows up here. Therefore, his Arabic is bad. Even though he tries to speak Arabic, he will make mistakes using pronouns and vocabulary inaccuracies... His Arabic is broken. He tries with me. ... since I speak Arabic with him, he tries. Therefore, I am worried for him that he might

be bullied upon returning if people hear him speaking Arabic in this way. This might affect his psychology.

In addition, Participant 4 had more to share on this issue. She mentioned that she was concerned about her children's language development and may contemplate hiring private teachers and enrolling them in an international school because she is aware of their lack of proficiency in the Arabic language. In contrast, Participant 5 shared her experience of returning to the KSA with her children, which involved enrolling them in a public school, where they had to rely entirely on the Arabic language. Her children faced "incredible difficulties" in adjusting to the reality of the local Arabic dialect: "My children have a problem, and they face difficulty with the Arabic language and the Holy Qur'an, and the purpose of my presence near them during remote learning is for translation and clarification only". She also shared that one of her children cries when she is asked to memorise the Qur'an because she is having difficulty: "She cries when I ask her to learn the Holy Qur'an".

To be honest, the only challenges my children faced were linguistic ones. Regarding the ministry's educational curriculum, I am genuinely impressed. They are really at a high level. Therefore, I feel my children require little support from me to explain things to them.

Similarly, Participant 6 mentioned how enrolling her daughter in an international school that uses the English language upon returning to the KSA made it easier for her daughter to adapt to school in the KSA. However, she shared her children's experience with the Arabic language: "Because the girl is in an international school, I do not have to confront her in Arabic, but the young child has problems with the Arabic language". On the other hand, Participant 7 expressed concern about returning to the KSA due to cultural and religious restrictions, especially for their children who grew up in a different country. She mentioned that she faced some challenges since there was no time to teach her daughter due to family meetings, a key

aspect of culture in the KSA, and the language barrier for her daughter when she communicates with others: “Upon returning to the KSA, as you know, we are always in contact and interacting with our big families. Hence, I had no time to give her any classes [in Arabic]”. Language barriers and cultural interests are among the challenges experienced. Consequently, children face a language barrier upon their return, which causes concern among mothers and their children.

As a result, according to the mother’s narratives, children who arrive in the UK at school age without prior experience in Saudi schools tend to assimilate better into the host country. In line with the study of Alqahtani (2021), Saudi children who were born in the KSA and spent their formative years there, along with those who had already acquired fluency in Arabic before they arrived in the UK, faced comparatively fewer difficulties upon re-entering the KSA. Additionally, the mothers of these children exhibited a reduced tendency to voice grievances regarding their children’s identity.

However, teachers and parents who provide supportive environments can assist children in overcoming these challenges, thereby reducing the emotional impact these barriers may have on them. They can employ the PCA principles such as empathy and unconditional positive regard. Language barriers can lead to frustration and feelings of inadequacy for children, but if educators and parents approach the situation with empathy and unconditional positive regard, children are more likely to feel understood and supported. This emotional support helps them navigate difficulties and promotes self-confidence; it facilitates growth through a non-directive approach. A PCA emphasises creating an environment where children feel safe to express themselves, even if they are struggling with the language. Children who are trusted are more likely to engage in learning and develop their communication skills over time.

Furthermore, SDT emphasises the importance of autonomy. By providing choices and encouraging small steps towards language proficiency, educators and parents can restore their

sense of autonomy and reduce frustration. Supportive feedback and challenging tasks can help to develop competence. Understanding that children can overcome their language challenges with effort can motivate them to improve. Relatedness is crucial since children with language barriers may feel isolated. Fostering strong, positive relationships with peers can make them feel more connected, leading to increased engagement with learning despite language challenges.

5.3.5.2. Choosing a School in the KSA. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, Saudi schools adopt Arabic as the primary language of instruction. In this study, two mothers were concerned about selecting a school upon their return to Saudi Arabia. Many searched for an international school that uses the English language when teaching to make it easier for their children to study, as well as any other interests that the mother may have. For example, Participant 4 expressed her concern about the importance of choosing schools that are closest to the study system in Britain:

Which school should I register them for? If we return to normal life, should I sign him up for an international school? Should I sign him up for a private school? Just for himself? Do I sign him up for public school? Hence, these are my three choices. Every choice needs to be studied. Every choice might have an impact on him as a child. We have an awareness of how public schools work and how strict they are.

She also shared her thoughts on the challenges students may encounter upon their return and the potential ease of re-enrolment in public schools over time. However, initially, she believes that international schools are a viable option for them:

Children lived abroad; as soon as they return, I don't see signing them up for public schools immediately as being effective. It's not until they adapt and get used to the situation. They will recover the language later. It's possible to transfer them from private to public.

Likewise, Participant 9 shared the same opinion about enrolling her children in international schools: “I am considering enrolling my children in international schools, and I hope they offer qualified instructors and child-friendly facilities”. This reflects that some mothers are concerned about choosing a school for their children when they return to the KSA because they are familiar with the Saudi system in both private and public schools. As a result, they are searching for private international schools that offer instruction in English to help their children adapt. The study of Al-Qahtani and Al Zumor (2016) supports this finding. Upon returning to the KSA, parents (as highlighted in the given article) prefer enrolling their children in private international primary schools. This preference is driven by the recognition of the importance of English as a global language, seen as a factor that can enhance their children’s future prospects.

5.3.5.3. Saudi Arabia Cultural Shift. The literature review chapter addressed the economic changes occurring in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with a specific focus on the advancements related to women. In their narratives, five out of nine mothers in the study discussed how the changes and developments in their home country and Vision 2030 influenced the preparation of their children for their return to the KSA. For example, Participant 5 shared her opinion regarding Vision 2030: “I think these changes will affect my daughter with time. I feel like educating her now will not be the same as it was previously”. This also prompts her to instil self-control and self-reliance in her daughter, as she mentioned:

I try as much as I can to reinforce her self-control and self-observation in future study and employment opportunities, contact and integration with society. I need to reinforce to both my son and daughter that their behaviour should not need anyone to supervise it. What I mean is that I explain to them that they are the only ones responsible for evaluating their behaviour.

Additionally, this mother shared her own first experiences when studying abroad and how the Saudi cultural shift started when she obtained her scholarship in 2009. She was newly married and received much criticism. Some people in Saudi Arabia thought it was strange that she achieved a scholarship to study abroad. However, the situation is now different because, if a woman received a scholarship today, such criticism is unlikely to arise. She indicated that:

When I decided to go to Canada to get my master's degree, some of my relatives had some things to say. Why do you travel alone without your husband? But with the passage of time, when I decided to travel to obtain a doctorate degree, I no longer received any comments.

Furthermore, Participant 6 had her own opinions with regard to the impact of Vision 2030:

Saudi Arabia has seen many developments. I will discuss both positive and negative perspectives. Positive: the status of women changed. I tell my daughter you can do anything, such as driving. Hence, she always asks me when she will start to drive! ... I explain to them that from now on, they can think and plan their future ... I encourage them to select a specific orientation at an early stage (such as field of study). What's your plan? What are the things you like? How do you want to develop? How will you discover and make yourself special? Currently, job opportunities are competitive. It's no longer the case that all students going to university are recruited; the teaching approach has changed, and specialised fields are changing. For instance, my daughter is interested in design ... so I asked her to start learning and developing in this field from now on. Vision 2030 has influenced us; we are starting to orient our children's education from an early stage.

Her conversation with her daughter demonstrates a greater degree of freedom and transparency. She explained to her that restrictions are decreasing and distinctions between boys and girls are lessening. She also explained to her daughter that she has equal opportunities in education, leisure and occupations.

Participant 7 also explained that Vision 2030 will help facilitate her adaptation because there are no restrictions that impede her system and manner with her daughter, namely, what she has become accustomed to when living in the United Kingdom:

To be honest, I'm not concerned much about her returning to the KSA. As you said, there is now more openness, options and rights. Our children are used to questioning everything. They want a reason for everything, and they need to be convinced. For instance, when my daughter sees women drive here in the UK, they ask why it is not the case in the KSA. Thank God such restrictions have been lifted; hence, my daughter will feel more comfortable.

Moreover, Participant 8 shared her perspective on Vision 2030 and how women have been freed and now have rights and freedoms. This has affected her parenting strategy as follows:

The change that has occurred in Saudi Arabia and the new fashions is that women now have unlimited independence, although this depends on the individual. Women in Saudi Arabia are now liberated. There were few alternatives in our day, and I wish to utilise these now with my child.

Participant 9 also shared her story regarding equality in employment opportunities and academic majors:

I specialise in managing food production. When a Saudi Arabian employee contacted me, he said, "How could a Saudi woman study this subject? It's for males". I explained to him what the issue would be if the girl worked in a factory, as well as how it works for both men and women.

The government of Saudi Arabia has implemented several legal and policy changes aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women professionally (Parveen, 2021). Al-Qahtani et al. (2020) shared a similar standpoint regarding the implications of Vision 2030. They suggest that regulations and laws exert a significant influence on the promotion of women's empowerment across all domains of the economy and society. As for the mothers' perspectives on the changes and developments since the implementation of Vision 2030, they concluded that they are now more at ease because, upon their return to the KSA, they will face fewer obstacles or difficulties in their field of work or in achieving their goals.

Moreover, the mother's experiences abroad likely changed her personal values and attitudes. This aligns with the research of Alkubaidi and Alzahrani (2020), who revealed that Saudi returnees feel they must adapt to their environments. They use their experiences and interactions abroad to change and form new, adaptable identities, which could lead to disagreements with some family members and colleagues. This finding also aligns with the work of Le and Lacost (2017), who identified that extended exposure of Vietnamese international graduate students to American culture resulted in modifications of personalities and ideals that led to conflicts with family and professional connections despite being well-received. Finally, this study suggests the need for supportive programs, especially for the children, to facilitate returnees' integration into the country. This aligns with the research findings of Alkubaidi and Alzahrani (2020), who also indicated the necessity of supportive programs to aid returnees' integration into the country. Overall, upon returning to the KSA, the introduction of Vision 2030 resulted in significant changes in societal roles and increased opportunities for women to achieve gender balance.

5.4. Limitations

The requirement for a homogeneous sample is one of the inherent limitations of the interpretative phenomenological analysis. This focus on a specific group – i.e., Saudi mothers with primary school children who are also postgraduate students in the UK – limits the generalisability of the research findings. The study did not include women on scholarships studying in other countries, which could have offered a broader perspective. Additionally, although most participants shared a Saudi and British background, there were some variations, such as one participant having an additional Canadian background, which introduces a slight heterogeneity.

The study was conducted exclusively during a specific period of the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly influenced the participants' experiences. At the time, Saudi Arabia was organising evacuation flights for its citizens and some mothers had returned to the country, facing new challenges related to their children's education. This unique context may not reflect the experiences of mothers outside this period or under different circumstances.

The mothers were under considerable stress and occupied with numerous tasks relating to their own and their children's studies. Although they shared comparable experiences, their individual circumstances varied. Some mothers had more children, which affected their experiences. These variations highlight the challenges in maintaining homogeneity in the sample, a key requirement for research that uses an IPA.

5.5. Potential Areas for Future Research

My research provides a foundation for further studies into the experiences of multicultural mothers and their children. It opens the way for future research on groups of multicultural mothers and children, where the mothers face difficulties and challenges as

graduate students with responsibility for children at the primary stage of school. One challenge the mothers in this study faced was their expectations and fears for their children's future upon their return to their home country. Future research could examine these scenarios and determine if it is appropriate for mothers to be so fearful.

Such studies might also benefit children when they return to their home country. Research questions that could be asked include: Are they different from others in their age group? Do they have unique advantages or has their experience of living and learning in another country had a negative impact on their personality and educational progress? Did multicultural mothers keep raising their children in the same way after returning home or did they employ a new approach? From the perspective of educators, is there a substantial difference between children from diverse cultural contexts and children from the same culture? These aspects were not given attention in my study, so the relevant data is lacking.

5.6. Chapter Conclusion

Nine Saudi mothers, who are international students in the UK, participated in my IPA study. I aimed to explore the perspectives and experiences of mothers regarding their children's autonomy and motivation during remote learning. This was achieved by investigating the factors that influence a mother's approach to promoting autonomy in her children during remote learning, such as the impact of multicultural exposure and remote learning on children's autonomy and motivation. Similar to Study 1, the PCA and SDT frameworks have been used as lenses for the analysis. The next chapter collects data from both studies and discusses key concepts in association with the emergent data and the existing literature.

Chapter 6: General Discussion

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented the second study of this research. In this final study, in which the participants were mothers with multicultural experiences, it was suggested that acculturation to both the host country (the UK) and their home country (the KSA) may have influenced the key findings. This chapter discusses selected results from both the first and second studies, analysing them through the lenses of the person-centred approach (PCA) and self-determination theory (SDT), which underpin this research. These findings have been chosen due to their strong connection to the theoretical frameworks, research questions and overall focus of the study.

The purpose of this chapter is to review and compare the findings from both studies, highlighting similarities and differences while exploring the contextual factors that may have shaped the results. Additionally, it provides an interpretation of these findings.

6.2. Studies Overview

This section offers a concise summary of my research studies, which were given in detail in previous chapters.

6.2.1. Study 1

The initial study answered the first research question: “What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning?”. This study followed the IPA guidelines by conducting semi-structured interviews with Saudi mothers who had only interacted with Saudi Arabian culture. Given the significance of their personal experiences and perspectives, the use of an IPA was adequate and congruent with the study objectives. For instance, to comprehend

the unique experiences of each participant, it was fundamental to capture the quality, texture and significance of their narratives instead of the event itself while being present in their native cultural setting.

The main findings in this study show the complex relationship between self-concept and personal power, showing how mothers' perceptions of themselves seem to shape their methods of influencing their children and the resulting dynamics in their relationships. Second, the mothers' personal situations and responsibilities have a possible influence on their children's education, especially during remote learning. Third, the findings also show how a mother's family likely influences her perspective and expectations regarding her children. Fourth, the results of this study indicate that some mothers lack autonomy in their parenting practices. Fifth, the mothers in this study focus primarily on academic success and do not allow their children to be autonomous in school-related matters. Sixth, the mothers employ rewards and punishments to motivate their children. The seventh finding of this study indicates that children's self-concept is probably influenced by those around them. According to the mothers' narratives, their children seem to demonstrate the ability to adapt and grow when given the opportunity to self-determine. Ninth, remote learning is a possible contribution to increasing mothers' involvement in their children's education, which causes a challenge for some mothers. Tenth, remote learning can also contribute to improving children's autonomy and learning skills.

6.2.2. Study 2

The subsequent study answered the second research question: "What are the influential factors and strategies that Saudi mothers perceived and experienced when their children interacted with remote learning and multicultural contexts?". Similar to Study 1, the IPA and semi-structured interviews were used to capture the essence of a group of participants. To

increase the transferability and comparability of the findings, it was required that the mothers have multicultural experiences in Study 2. All the mothers in this study experienced the Saudi and British cultures. Only one participant had an extra multicultural experience: the KSA, the UK and Canada. The findings from this study demonstrate that a mother's experience abroad may influence her personal values and attitudes. Moving away may have disrupted the influence of others, allowing mothers more freedom to develop their own parenting style. Some mothers have been able to create a home environment that supports their children's autonomy and promotes the acquisition of supplemental skills. The mothers used material and subjective rewards and electronic device restrictions as punishment. Mothers who pursue their PhD studies abroad often face unique challenges that necessitate adjustments in their parenting practices. Participants' experiences in this study highlight the diverse strategies mothers adopt to manage these demands effectively, which may contribute to improving the autonomy of themselves and their children. The study has also shown that children can adapt and develop when provided with opportunities for autonomy and decision-making. In this study, a child's resilience seemingly shapes their approaches to alienation and remote learning. The latter can contribute to family cooperation in educating children, as well as have a possible influence on their personalities and autonomy.

On the other hand, individuals acculturating to different expectations and practices within a collectivist Saudi family are seen to face obstacles related to cultural values, beliefs, religion and behaviours in alienation. However, Saudi mothers studying abroad have shown the capacity to maintain their primary culture while adapting and accepting cultural differences. Nonetheless, their return to Saudi Arabia is likely to present challenges and concerns. Here, the participants expressed their opinions and were supportive of the development of the new cultural shift in the KSA. The second study permitted an exploration of the implications of Berry's acculturation strategies on mothers' perspectives and experiences (Berry, 1997), as well

as an examination of the children's acculturation problems from their mothers' perspectives. This general discussion now turns to the interpretations of the key findings using the lenses of a PCA and SDT.

6.3. Interpreting the Findings in Association with the Theoretical Frameworks

This section explains and discusses the findings in relation to the existing theoretical frameworks. Namely, the study links its findings to the principles of the PCA and SDT. The PCA is a fundamental concept in numerous global research studies pertaining to both education and mental health. The theory focuses on the impact of the social environment on an individual's psychological growth. As a result, the practical implications of the theory extend beyond psychotherapy and clinical psychology, encompassing domains such as education, parenting, and public policy, focusing on preventive measures (Joseph, 2021). On the other hand, SDT is a macro-theory of human motivation that emphasises the correlation between fundamental psychological needs and human personality (Adams et al., 2017). In line with the literature review, specific emergent themes from both studies resonate with the theoretical frameworks. To deepen this connection. The subsequent sections will provide a more comprehensive discussion of the results that evolved and related to the theories.

6.3.1. Self-Concept and Personal Power

The findings in both studies illustrated a complex interplay between a mother's self-concept (how she perceives herself) and her personal power (her ability to impact her children). The study suggests that mothers' self-concept likely influences their parenting methods, thereby influencing the dynamics of their relationships with their children. However, cultural norms likely influence mothers' self-concept. For example, in Saudi society, which is a collectivist culture according to Hofstede's dimensions, the underlying power dynamics

reinforce mothers' influence. The role of mothers in education is crucial and shaped by familial and societal expectations. The family plays a vital role in fostering respect, obedience and commitment among its members, with parents assuming responsibilities such as providing financial support and assisting in raising grandchildren (Al-Ruwaita, 2014). This entity's characteristics include formality and strictness, which establishes a hierarchical relationship that fosters sentiments of reverence, loyalty and compliance towards parental figures; these characteristics contribute to the importance of family unity (Alqahtani, 2021). This cultural norm could influence a mother's self-concept and her personal power in her children's lives.

However, the level of external support that mothers living in Saudi Arabia receive through their social networks changes once they venture out of their homelands. In the first study, familial and societal expectations played a crucial role in shaping power dynamics within families. In a collectivist culture where mothers have a significant influence, understanding these dynamics is critical. It seems that, for some mothers in the second study, moving abroad has disrupted the influence of others and allowed the mothers to have more freedom to develop their own parenting style that is more intuitive for them. Additionally, in the second study, experienced circumstances allowed for the adaptation of mothers' proxy agency through a more guiding approach. This echoes parental autonomy in guiding the environments of children's behaviours, highlighting the interconnectedness of a PCA and SDT. In the second study's findings, Rogers' concept of "personal power" becomes particularly relevant, illuminating how mothers' self-concept significantly shapes their parenting styles and influences attitudes and behaviours towards their children. The personal power of a mother facilitates nurturing her child's growth while maintaining her own autonomy and authenticity. Trust, empathy, understanding, and setting boundaries are the attributes that should be utilised when enacting personal power. A mother's personal power lies in fostering a loving

environment that promotes emotional, social and cognitive development while honouring her own needs and values (Rogers, 1977).

Mothers from the second study displayed a greater use of autonomy. This may be due to their distance from Saudi social expectations and exposure to opportunities that allow them to experience autonomy in an individualistic culture. Several mothers in the second study employed diverse activities that impacted their children's social and emotional development and overall welfare in distinct ways. Various types of activities can be offered to individuals, such as engaging in athletic pursuits, participating in musical instruction, attending artistic seminars and contributing to social welfare programs. Engagement with these activities was innately based on children's interests and can be viewed in the context of fostering an environment for self-determination. This finding can be understood within the context of the employed theories, particularly concerning the need for autonomy in a PCA and SDT. If a mother's self-concept and sense of personal power led her to support or stifle her child's autonomy, it directly ties into a PCA and SDT's emphasis on the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being in children. The relationship between a mother's self-concept and her use of personal power can influence her child's sense of autonomy. The child's intrinsic motivation and educational outcomes can be greatly improved by creating a supportive environment that values their autonomy and offers appropriate guidance. This also fosters personal growth.

In Saudi culture, the proper application of a PCA and SDT may be challenging. The cultural milieu in Saudi Arabia places great importance on mothers in relation to children's success, which is indicative of a significant power difference (Alqahtani, 2021). For example, in the second study, Participant 8's observation about the behaviour of her relatives highlights the contrast between different parenting approaches within the same family or social circle. Likewise, some mothers may prioritise academic achievement and resort to actions such as

solving tests for their children, while others promote autonomy. This dynamic illustrates the control some mothers may exert over their children's lives, potentially hindering the development of personal power in children.

The diverse viewpoints among mothers, as seen in this research, emphasise the necessity for an advanced understanding of parental involvement. It is important to evaluate how various methodologies adhere to or contradict accepted beliefs about child development. In light of this fact, future research should investigate the long-term effects of various parental styles on the development of children. The mothers in the second study exhibited a higher level of autonomy, possibly facing difficulties as a result of exercising autonomy beyond their cultural norms. Is this greater autonomy because they experienced challenges while studying abroad in a nation that supports autonomy and, hence, did not have the opportunity to be less autonomous? Alternatively, they may want to exhibit autonomy, as expressed by Participant 5 in Study 2. She explained her experience of raising her children in a foreign country, which involves instilling a sense of familiarity and control over their upbringing. She is able to establish her own family's rules and determine their path, asserting her power.

Given that cultural norms and values seem to influence self-concept and personal power, it would be beneficial for future studies to investigate how these dynamics manifest in different cultural settings. Longitudinal studies could enhance future studies by monitoring changes in mothers' self-concept and their influence on parenting practices over an extended period, particularly as children grow and their requirements change.

6.3.2. Mother Involvements

The two studies demonstrated enhanced collaboration between mothers and their children to facilitate their educational experience. In contrast to the first study, the second one

found that families with a multicultural background demonstrate increased levels of collaboration, with each family member taking responsibility for different tasks. In the first study, mothers assumed full responsibility, possibly due to societal conventions that assign the entire burden of child-rearing to them. The study of Wang (2023) also examines the pivotal role of parenting behaviours in shaping children's development and creativity: autonomy and decision-making emerge as key components. Moreover, Wang's work also highlights the positive influence of emotional warmth on general creativity and underscores the significance of fostering autonomy-supportive parenting, aligning with Rogers' PCA and emphasising holistic support for a child's growth.

According to SDT, individuals have an inherent need to feel competent and effective in their actions. For example, in the second study, the elder children who assumed responsibilities were likely to experience a sense of mastery and accomplishment. In addition, the practice of sharing responsibilities within a family unit promotes a feeling of interconnectedness and cooperation. Every family member is responsible for providing care and support to one another. Moreover, it could improve family relatedness. According to SDT, relatedness is defined as a sense of connection and worth in interpersonal relationships. Could it be that the need for a sense of relatedness, in relation to the second study, is due to being located away from the extended family and home? Or does PhD students' well-being depend on meeting their autonomy, competence and relatedness needs? As shown in the study of Kusurkar et al. (2022), fulfilling the needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are important for the well-being of PhD students, which is in alignment with SDT.

Mothers from both studies acknowledged that remote learning enabled them to understand their children's levels and abilities. This finding constitutes a positive aspect of mothers' involvement in their children's education. The unexpected outbreak of COVID-19 indirectly enriched this experience. The findings from San Jose et al. (2022) align with my

own studies. In their study, the mothers acknowledged the value of specific opportunities created by the COVID-19 pandemic, which allowed them to devote more time to their children's education. However, this experience would have been more meaningful if the mothers were aware of the importance of applying a PCA, which underscores the significance of providing a supportive and non-judgmental environment that promotes personal development and self-actualisation.

Rogers (1977) suggested that individuals thrive when they encounter unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence. Overall, the mothers' experiences in Study 1 triggered further responsibilities for them. In Study 2, mothers' experiences foster family cooperation, enabling them to experience their own autonomy. Future research should explore how cultural shifts and changes in familial dynamics influence parenting practices and how they either promote or hinder children's development. Likewise, collectivistic social expectations hinder the application of a PCA and SDT and manipulate individuals' self-direction. The experience of a foreign culture in Study 2 contributes to an improved understanding of how one's own culture could impede the application of the PCA and SDT principles. The unexpected occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic gave the mothers the opportunity to assess their children's academic and personal progress. This may be due to the curfew, which kept the entire family in the same place all day. Moreover, the second study shows the extent to which all family members cooperate in teaching the younger children. This may be due to the mother's preoccupation with her studies and the extensive distance from their home country. This perspective also aligns with the SDT theory; namely, assigning tasks to children can enhance their sense of competence and boost their feelings of status and importance.

6.3.3. Reverse Cultural Transition and Acculturation

The topics discussed by the participants in the second study demonstrate the influence of acculturation on a mother's style and experience. It also shows the participants' capacity to adapt and harmonise in a country whose culture is different from their primary culture while keeping their own culture, as well as their acceptance and respect for other cultures. However, their views and interests concerning their children differ from those in the first study. For instance, mothers were more concerned with their children's academic advancement and talents in the first study. However, in Saudi Arabia, societal expectations hold parents accountable for their children's behaviour and academic performance, reinforcing their commitment to ensuring their children meet certain educational standards. Conversely, in the second study, certain mothers addressed additional subjects that they desired to cultivate in their children. Is this the result of their experience with other cultures, which has influenced their perception of success? Or is it because they believed these abilities were crucial for the development of their children's personalities? Or because they recognised the significance and impact of fostering their children's talents and proclivities in shaping their personalities?

Additionally, Study 2 shows how the mother's experience abroad likely influenced her personal values and attitudes. In line with previous studies, the research of Alkubaidi and Alzahrani (2020) revealed that Saudi returnees feel they must adapt to their environments. They use their experiences and interactions abroad to change and form new, adaptable identities. This change may clash with some family members and colleagues. This finding aligns with Le and Lacost (2017), who identified that extended exposure of Vietnamese graduate international students to American culture resulted in modifications of personalities and ideals that led to conflicts with family and professional connections despite being well-received. Other research findings highlighted the need for supportive programs to facilitate returnees' integration into the country (Alkubaidi & Alzahrani, 2020).

However, the findings from Study 2 revealed cultural differences in parental involvement in education and reflected the challenges of acculturation when navigating the differing expectations and practices of a collectivist Saudi family. These insights from participants underscore the complexities of cultural sensitivity and acculturation and the impact of challenging the interdependent self-concept to become an independent self-concept in parenting practices (Kim, 2018). This emphasises the need for understanding and adaptation when navigating diverse cultural contexts. By recognising and respecting cultural differences, individuals can better integrate into new cultural environments while maintaining their cultural identity and values. Fundamental to this approach, empathy defies individual experiences and includes a comprehensive comprehension and respect for a large diversity of cultural perspectives. Furthermore, unconditional positive regard promotes the development of a non-evaluative mindset, inspiring people to acknowledge and appreciate the cultural distinctiveness of others.

In general, the implementation of Vision 2030 has resulted in substantial changes in societal roles and increased opportunities for women to achieve gender balance upon their return to Saudi Arabia. Vision 2030 inspires Saudi mothers to encourage their children and themselves to accept social equality (Al-Qahtani, 2020). This may facilitate the application of these new skills and concepts in a promising society that is poised for growth as a result of Vision 2030, which has already led to the expansion of projects in Saudi Arabia and the rise in opportunities for global investment and tourism. A consequence of the latter is the presence of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds in Saudi Arabia, requiring that citizens acknowledge and respect cultural differences.

6.3.4. Mother's Motivational Strategy

The research data revealed that all the mothers in both studies employed rewards and punishments as strategies to align their children's behaviour and academic performance with their personal expectations. The mother's narratives in both studies reflect a common theme among the mothers with single and multicultural experiences: they emphasise the value they place on education and the proactive measures they take to ensure their children's academic success. In essence, even when mothers have multicultural experiences, their cultural background continues to shape their perspectives on education, discipline and the pursuit of excellence.

In both studies, mothers used rewards and punishment as the main method to motivate their children, even if variations were seen in the type of reward or punishment. The use of reward and punishment techniques in both datasets not only underscored the prevalence of this phenomenon but also highlighted its profound cultural impact. This impact can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the concept of cultural universality, which posits that certain elements of human culture are shared and inherent across societies worldwide. All the participants in my study are from Saudi Arabia, a collectivistic society. Within such collective societies, individuals consistently strive for personal excellence and development, with a distinct motivation rooted in the pursuit of approval and praise from their community (Al Ruwaita, 2014).

Mothers use rewards and punishments to align their expectations with their children's behaviour. They use educational goals as benchmarks for behaviour alignment, such as achieving a certain level of education or excelling in studies. They establish a direct connection between rewards and academic performance, communicating that rewards are contingent upon meeting certain expectations. Mothers with multicultural experiences integrate cultural values into their expectations, believing that investing more effort in their

children's education at home is crucial for better academic performance. They express a strong desire for excellence, driving the use of rewards and punishments. The mother's life experiences, the child's response to the punishment, the mother's available options or the child's strong desire for something positive and beneficial could all contribute to the use of this method. The reward satisfies the child's internal desire and, thus, motivates them to comply with their mother's instructions. In turn, since the mother seemingly achieves the desired results by presenting them with a prize, it encourages the mother to persist with this approach.

In the context of which motivational strategy to adopt, taking into account what informs it (personal experience or educational system), Deci et al. (2001) conducted a study on the effects of rewards on intrinsic motivation using a meta-analysis. Extensive documentation has recognized the detrimental impact of various incentive categories, including physical rewards, anticipated rewards, engagement-based rewards, completion-based rewards and performance-based rewards, on intrinsic motivation. However, well-being is more closely associated with intrinsic values than with extrinsic objectives (Curren et al., 2024).

Furthermore, according to Rogers (1957), unconditional positive regard goes beyond specific behaviours and involves an attitude of complete acceptance, respect and valuing of the individual as a whole. It is more general and all-encompassing, focussing on the individual's overall worth. While both outlooks can positively influence self-esteem, experts often perceive UPR to have a more profound and enduring impact on an individual's self-concept and psychological well-being. A detrimental impact, such as tangible extrinsic reward, can inhibit intrinsic motivation and personal growth (Vinarski Peretz, 2023).

This also undermines the enjoyment of completing the task. Mothers can circumvent this detrimental impact by focusing on their acknowledgement of the child's feelings and

experiences without offering evaluative feedback to foster a sense of competence and autonomy.

6.3.5. Child's Autonomy and Growth in Remote Learning

The lack of autonomy in education is evident in the rigid national assessments that govern the educational system, particularly in primary and secondary schools. This restricts the freedom of both teachers and students. The assessments primarily emphasise grammar and vocabulary, with limited opportunity for personal choice, which opposes the idea of autonomy in learning (Boyadzhieva, 2016). However, remote learning could provide mothers with the autonomy to let their children experience a sense of autonomy and self-determination. In both studies, mothers acknowledged that their children had the ability to adapt to difficulties experienced in learning in remote contexts and remote learning contributes to increasing children's autonomy.

This finding, i.e., the children's ability to adapt to remote learning difficulties, reflects their natural tendency towards growth and self-actualization. According to a PCA, every individual has an inherent potential for growth and self-actualization. According to this approach, people possess the capacity to overcome challenges and develop their abilities when provided with a supportive environment that includes empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness. The transition to remote learning might be seen as a catalyst that necessitated children to use their problem-solving abilities, adaptability and resilience. The children successfully managed and adjusted to the challenges they faced, thanks to the appropriate assistance from their parents and educational institutions. This exemplifies the concept of a PCA, which states that persons may grow and develop when they are supplied with favourable circumstances.

From the perspective of a PCA, the fact that children were able to cope with the challenges of distant learning may be seen as evidence of their innate ability to develop and ‘bounce back’. Given a supportive and understanding environment that values autonomy, children are more likely to effectively handle difficulties. This highlights the need for the importance of applying a PCA in both parental and educational environments to cultivate the circumstances that facilitate children’s growth even when confronted with challenges. Educators have a responsibility to safeguard the welfare and promote student development by recognising that students differ in their inclinations, culture, tastes, circumstances and talents. Educational environments must provide diverse opportunities that allow each student to fulfil their potential in ways that are personally meaningful and rewarding (Curren et al., 2024). Exceptionally, Study 2 revealed that circumstantial aspects played a significant role in fostering Saudi children’s autonomy since the mothers had to face multiple individual tasks, such as navigating cultural adaptation and their PhD engagements. For example, the second study’s findings focused on the mothers’ responsibilities and busy schedules during their PhD study. It is indicated that allowing her child to take on some household responsibilities can enhance the child’s sense of autonomy and family unity. The mother’s sense of responsibility for everything aligns with the concept of competence in SDT. Taking charge of personal tasks and ensuring that everyone successfully handles their responsibilities reflects a desire for competence and effectiveness in managing various aspects of life. According to Curren et al. (2024), the achievement of valued objectives through autonomy, competence and positive relationships results in a more profound sense of purpose in life.

Nevertheless, circumstantial events, rather than a genuine personal motive to increase children’s autonomy without ulterior motives, triggered this finding, which aligns with the PCA and SDT principles and could explain how circumstantial events serve as the precursor for intrinsically motivated autonomy in this case. As Rogers proposed, in order for individuals

to experience personal development, they require an environment that offers authenticity, which is characterised by transparency, self-discovery and acceptance. This environment should also provide unconditional and positive regard for them, as well as empathy, allowing them to be listened to and understood (McLeod, 2014). The mothers' motivation to pursue their PhD studies in the UK did not prevent them from fulfilling their duties as mothers, which explains why they moved to the UK with their children. This created an opportunity to allow a genuine first experience of a different context alongside their children. This is reflected by their efforts to share tasks with everyone, signalling a sense of relatedness within the family. This also underscores the influence of acculturation in minimising mothers' resistance to change since they adapt to different parenting practices and societal expectations in varying cultural contexts (Berry, 1997).

Moreover, unlike Study 1, Study 2 shared nuances culturally. The mothers encourage their children to develop a sense of competency in their ability to follow up with one another and encourage them to take responsibility. Allowing the elder children the responsibility of supervising their younger siblings fostered an environment that demands both accountability and skill. The circumstantial displaced context allowed some mothers from Study 2 to explore strategies that, in their native culture, would be inapplicable due to power dynamics and the support system Saudi mothers receive from their parents, husbands and housemaids to accomplish certain tasks (Al-Ruwaita, 2014).

However, the advancements of Vision 2030, along with the opportunity for women to work across various fields, could potentially impact a mother's availability to assist her children. Therefore, it is crucial for families to recognise the significance of fostering their children's autonomy. This is because any situation could impact the family, be it a global disaster, internal challenges or the mother's focus on work or other responsibilities. Both studies show that the mother bears responsibilities, whether they stem from her studies, work

or the presence of other children in the household. This requires the mother to assign certain tasks to her child, which in turn helps the child feel more autonomy, competence and relatedness. Moreover, this may also have an impact on the mother's psychological well-being because she may feel less responsible and more comfortable.

6.4. Resilience Through Change: Empowering Mothers and Children with the PCA and SDT

The results of this research demonstrate the importance of the environment for individuals, whether they are children or mothers. When the environment fosters mothers' autonomy and enables them to practice their beliefs free from social pressures and evaluations, it plays a crucial role in providing them with the opportunity to raise their children independently. Furthermore, the results show the ability of individuals to grow and develop in their beliefs and be more accepting of change and development. The outcomes of the first and second studies also showed that children are able to adapt and learn in a distance learning environment despite the circumstances and challenges they face. This opportunity allowed them to develop their autonomy and learn from their experience. The second study, in particular, shows how mothers who were exposed to different cultures were able to accept beliefs different from their own beliefs and engaged and adapted to the different cultures of the United Kingdom and developed themselves, especially in terms of accepting differences and changing their points of view and not adhering to the social beliefs they were raised on; namely, they allowed themselves to change and develop. This is also consistent with a PCA: if a climate of facilitative psychological attitudes develops in their environment, people have abundant internal resources for self-understanding and changing their self-concept and behaviours. As people become more accepting of who they are, they feel a growing sense of personal power. This self-awareness and acceptance lead to greater freedom for growth and

change, allowing them to live more authentically and with autonomy (Rogers, 1977).

Likewise, SDT presupposes that individuals are inherently inclined towards psychological growth and integration, which in turn leads to learning, mastery and connection with others.

However, these proactive human tendencies are not perceived as automatic; they necessitate supportive conditions to be robust (Ryan et al., 2019), which calls for educational environments to employ both the PCA and SDT. This emphasises the importance of using both the PCA and SDT in educational settings. The PCA presents a compelling alternative approach to education, emphasising personal growth and self-actualisation. This method seems particularly fitting in today's ever-changing world (Murphy, 2020). Furthermore, SDT in education primarily aims to facilitate the satisfaction of both the students' and instructors' fundamental psychological needs. Extensive research conducted in various educational environments, from elementary to advanced college levels and across different cultural backgrounds, has validated the stance of SDT that providing support for fundamental psychological needs promotes students' inherent motivation and well-integrated motivation, hence improving their overall well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2020).

The fundamental understandings collected from this research shed light on a trajectory towards individual and communal improvement. Understanding that the knowledge achieved can be employed to improve one's own parenting methods while also providing support and motivation to other mothers encountering comparable obstacles is a source of great autonomy. A discernible emphasis on the crucial role of autonomy for both the mother and the child is central to the findings. This understanding carries significant implications, indicating that developing a sense of autonomy is important for the whole development of both individuals. Furthermore, the research illuminates the essential roles performed by educational and home environments in either facilitating or impeding the development of autonomy in individuals. Recognising these dynamics empowers me to promote and

implement improvements not only within my immediate family but also in the more extensive community. As the country moves closer to Vision 2030, putting these findings into practice becomes even more crucial. Therefore, families need to recognise the significance of fostering their children's independence. Furthermore, it cannot be underestimated how important it is to support autonomy as a key part of creating strong individuals who make important contributions to the goals of a progressive and united society.

This chapter compares and contrasts the key emergent findings from the first and second studies, which explored Saudi mothers' personal narratives using an IPA guided by PCA and SDT as lenses for the interpretations. The final chapter summarises the key aspects of this research. It more deeply explores the research's implications and recommendations and, importantly, reflects on the commitment and rigour, the validation of the findings and the sensitivity to the context.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

My PhD dissertation investigated the perspectives and experiences of Saudi mothers regarding their children's autonomy, motivation and interactions through remote learning. The recruited sample represented two distinctive categories. Each category provided useful insights, contributing to answering the research questions. For the first research question, "What experiences, challenges and strategies are encountered by Saudi mothers, with exposure to only a single culture, when their children interacted with remote learning?" I selected mothers who had been exposed to a single culture (the KSA). To answer the second research question, "What are the influential factors and strategies that Saudi mothers perceived and experienced when their children interacted with remote learning and multicultural contexts?" I recruited mothers with a multicultural background (the KSA and the UK) for Study 2.

7.1. Reviewing the Findings

The findings demonstrated a complex interplay of culture and mothers' experiences, which seem to shape their self-concept. Furthermore, remote learning plays a role in collaboration between mothers and their children, allowing them to experience autonomy and self-determination. Mothers acknowledge their children's ability to adapt to challenges in remote learning contexts, which seems to contribute to increasing child autonomy. Simultaneously, the narratives revealed that children's autonomy may be promoted through mothers' responsibilities and engagements with PhD studies or full-time employment in different settings. Similarly, mothers abroad placed considerable value on their children's autonomy to lessen their own responsibilities when navigating their PhDs and acculturation. In both studies, mothers used rewards and punishment as motivational methods. The second study reveals how the mother's experience abroad may influence her personal values and

attitudes. Moving away from their homelands may have disrupted the influence of others, allowing mothers more freedom to develop their parenting style. As a result of her children's upbringing in a society that is distinct from her own, her children's future seems to be of concern given that the distinctions in language, school and culture require adaptation on the part of the child.

Furthermore, the second study exposed cultural sensitivity as a key factor with likely significant implications on mothers' approaches to addressing acculturation and children's engagement with remote learning in the UK. The findings aligned with the principles of the PCA, reinforced by their individualistic settings, which emphasises the importance of fostering an environment of understanding and acceptance (Rogers, 1977). This approach encouraged children's self-determination and autonomy while engaging with remote learning in the UK. To conclude, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak triggered unexpected global engagement with remote learning. The findings of this work are discussed in relation to previous research and relevant theories. The study also considers the implications of the findings for Saudi society and families, including Saudi mothers who study abroad, remote learning and childhood education.

7.2. Validating the Findings

As referred to in the methodology chapter, this research adheres to four principles of Yardley (2000) for evaluating qualitative research, which defines validity in qualitative research as the suitability of instruments, methodologies and information used. In the following subsections, the active application of the four principles for evaluating qualitative research is examined. These principles are described as follows: sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. Throughout this research, these principles have contributed to the validity and credibility of my findings. I

have applied Yardley's principles practically at various stages of the research, as detailed below.

7.2.1. Sensitivity to Context

According to Yardley (2000), a good study demonstrates an understanding of the surrounding context. There are various methods to establish sensitivity. The significance of the interactions between the researcher and the participants during the interview process can be demonstrated through a thorough understanding. The participant and the interviewer can establish a strong relationship by demonstrating empathy, creating a comfortable environment and being aware of the power behaviour. In my research, I observed these principles by demonstrating sensitivity to the perspectives and requirements of the participants involved. As a parent of elementary school-aged children, I shared similar experiences to those of the participants. I conducted the study with consideration for the participants' needs, as evidenced by my use of open-ended questions that facilitated the expression of their thoughts. Additionally, I analysed the data with a high degree of sensitivity and took alternative interpretations into account. Furthermore, the interviews occurred during the quarantine. In this respect, I, as a Saudi mother with children, could relate to my participants during the interviews and understand the external factors that might affect the flow of the interviews, such as being interrupted by children and having to deal with unexpected home emergencies. Lastly, the idiographic aspect of this study was achieved by comprehensively and systematically engaging with individuals' experiences to identify similarities, differences and any other key elements for a thorough analysis.

7.2.2. Commitment and Rigour

Commitment and rigour are indispensable for qualitative research of quality, as indicated by Yardley (2000). The researcher's ongoing skill development, sustained involvement in data acquisition and profound engagement with the topic are all components of commitment. Rigour is the systematic and transparent approach to data collection and analysis that guarantees credible and comprehensive research. Together, they guarantee that the research is both methodologically sound and carefully connected to the subject matter. This denotes the level of devotion and meticulousness involved in performing qualitative research. Commitment and rigour underscore the significance of upholding a strong level of dedication and implementing meticulous techniques throughout the entirety of the research undertaking. My project delineated unambiguous research objectives and questions with precision and clarity. Each research endeavour centres on a distinct facet, namely, the encounter and outlook of mothers of primary school students concerning autonomy and motivation in the context of remote learning. Each research endeavour provides a unique and distinct encounter for its participants. For my initial investigation, I focused on mothers from Saudi Arabia who have been exposed to a single cultural background. The second study centred on mothers from Saudi Arabia who have been exposed to multiculturalism, specifically those exposed to both the KSA and UK cultures. This strategy helped me remain focused on the subject and steadfast in investigating and tackling precise research objectives. Additionally, the IPA procedure, as delineated by Smith et al. (2009), was meticulously implemented. It is imperative that research involves the meticulous recording and transcription of each interview. The transcripts were verified for veracity by listening to the interviews multiple times while perusing the transcript.

7.2.3. Transparency and Coherence

Yardley emphasises the need for transparency and coherence as the third guideline for ensuring the validity of an IPA investigation. Transparency pertains to the level of clarity with which each phase of the research process is delineated in the written account of a study (Yardley, 2000). To enhance transparency, an IPA researcher should provide a meticulous description of the participant selection process, a clear explanation of the interview methodology and a detailed account of the data analysis procedures.

I demonstrated this through the formulation and implementation of data acquisition. I adopted a comprehensive approach to data collection that incorporated complex procedures and techniques. This includes the aforementioned concerns regarding ethical considerations, participant recruitment strategies, data collection methodologies and measures to ensure data validity. Additionally, I included transcript excerpts in the findings section to enable readers to assess the sufficiency of the interpretations presented (see Appendix 6). The study also utilised reflexivity to address the potential issue of researcher bias. I achieved this by maintaining a research diary throughout the participant interviews and data analysis. Since I recorded individual reflections, it enabled reflexivity, which stimulated analytical reflection on my connection with the participants and the probable impact exerted on them, as well as my reaction to the data.

7.2.4. Impact and Importance

Yardley (2000) considers impact and significance to be the ultimate principles. She asserts that the actual measure of the credibility of a research study is in its ability to provide the reader with information that is both intriguing and beneficial. Ideally, it should exert a tangible impact, either in practice or in theory. In the introduction and literature review chapters, I demonstrated the significance of this research to Saudi society. Moreover, in the

contributions section, I explained the importance of my studies. Furthermore, it is hoped that this research will have a significant impact on Saudi society. This work provides an idea of the situation, perspectives and experiences of mothers with their children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, to disseminate my research findings, I chose to present a poster at the university's School of Education PGR Conference in 2023. This poster presentation provided me with a unique opportunity to concisely and visually communicate the research in an engaging manner. The poster also enabled the effective presentation of some of the findings, methodology and implications, attracting the attention of conference attendants and facilitating the dissemination of the research to a diverse audience. During the poster presentation, there were insightful conversations with field experts and colleagues. Numerous attendees demonstrated genuine interest in my research by posing thought-provoking questions and offering insightful commentary. These discussions allowed me to delve deeper into the findings, consider alternative points of view and receive feedback that further validated and boosted the credibility of the research.

7.3. Contributions and Implications

This work is a reference resource that helps mothers who may face some obstacles with alienation, motherhood and fears connected to adapting to a society with a different culture and fear reintegrating into the culture of their home country. Since the KSA continues to send students to study abroad, this category of students must be given special attention, particularly mothers, because of the many obligations and responsibilities that fall on them, especially if she is a single mother because “her husband remains back in the KSA”. The study helped me express my own feelings of fear and anxiety experienced at the beginning of my time studying abroad in the UK.

My findings contribute to the analysis of qualitative studies of Saudi mothers' experiences in educating their children and nurturing a variety of forms of autonomy. The results of these studies contribute to the literature on early childhood education by clarifying the importance of autonomy for children, identifying the factors that may affect their autonomy and emphasising the importance of mothers, teachers and the environment in understanding and appreciating the possible differences between children. The development of an autonomous, competent personality that can adapt to life's circumstances and challenges is more important since it is part of cognitive development. Additionally, recognising that the home environment and the origins of mothers influence their perspectives, the use of an IPA allows mothers to express their opinions regarding their children's experiences in education. The findings could help enhance the educational experiences of their children in multiple ways. In general, it highlights the important implications of parenting treatments since they attempt to help mothers create a positive self-concept. Ultimately, these interventions might improve parenting practices and the parent-child relationship. To help mothers make better use of their power, there should be programs that teach them to be more self-aware and confident. Furthermore, educational programs for parents could emphasise the benefits of autonomy-supportive engagement and offer strategies for transitioning from punitive practices. This change has the potential to cultivate environments that are conducive to children's development in a way that is consistent with their intrinsic requirements and promotes long-term well-being. Educators and counsellors might use this knowledge to better assist mothers in directing their children's education, especially in the setting of online learning where parental participation is essential.

Furthermore, the study adds to the theoretical developments by applying a PCA and SDT to remote learning. Parents and teachers can help ensure the development of children who are better able to adapt, integrate and continue learning by emphasising the importance

of supporting all aspects of a child's development and preparing the surrounding environment by facilitating the learning process and teaching children how to learn, rather than just providing them with information and a method for learning. Remote learning is a realistic example of what the children in the study unexpectedly experienced; such children may be exposed to additional experiences throughout their educational journey. Using a PCA and SDT as a way of life, not simply a process or a method of education, can provide children with greater autonomy and support them in all aspects of their development and interests. During the remote learning period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, children faced significant challenges that offered them an opportunity to strengthen their innate creative abilities and learn from life experiences. In some contexts, this challenging period promoted the integration and inclusion of individual children. It did so by placing a strong emphasis on their personal development and by focusing on the process of facilitating education. This approach aligns with Rogers' concept of the teacher as a facilitator in the context of remote learning.

According to Rogers (1967), the fundamental purpose of education must be to facilitate learning. He argued that educated people are those who have learned how to learn. This implies that individuals should rely on the process of learning rather than static knowledge in order to become educated. As a result, he highlighted that the facilitation of learning, rather than the traditional transmission of knowledge, should be the focus of education in order to encourage learners to keep seeking knowledge, adapt to a changing environment and develop into creative and competent members of the community who can contribute effectively to their community. The PCA and SDT frameworks involve an interest in enhancing and developing the potential of individuals and organisations through personal relationships that are characterised by respect, trust, emotional understanding and authenticity. It holds people accountable for what they do rather than encouraging dependency. A perfect education does

not exist since each era is governed by its own unique set of conditions; supporting children to be free and autonomous helps them adapt to any new situations they may face in the future.

My findings contribute to Saudi Arabia's educational system by conveying mothers' voices regarding the pressures they place on the child and family as a result of homework and tests. With the advent of Vision 2030, many Saudi mothers have jobs that are different from the ones women typically had in the past. The study concludes that the number of working mothers or students is high, so homework and tests place additional pressure on children and the family as a whole. In addition, other studies have called for a reduction in assignments and assessments in Saudi education. Moreover, the educational system in the KSA should pay special attention to the childhood stage to prepare children and support various aspects related to their personality and life skills so that they are able to integrate and develop throughout life. Additionally, my research contributes to educating postgraduate students abroad about the challenges they and their children may face and the necessity of providing counselling programmes for this group of children and their parents.

The use of an IPA and PCA has implications for qualitative research. Reid (2013) suggested that using a PCA could assist researchers in re-establishing connections between the researched topic and the individuals involved in the study. The PCA places individuals at the centre of the study. It allows the researcher to consider and reflect on relational orientation, reflective practice, accountability and the capture of complexity and emergent processes. These elements improve the qualitative research process by examining the intricate interaction between participants, their environment, their self-perceptions and their interpersonal relationships.

The reflective practice supported the researcher in examining biases that could have potentially affected the interpretation of key findings. Likewise, embracing the complexity of participants' experiences and analysing their richness guided data analysis and interpretation.

Similarly, the use of an IPA aligned with the research aims and the suitability for exploratory investigation founded on the PCA. Its effectiveness was reflected in shared significant experiences and the acknowledgement of cultural sensitivity while engaging with each personal narrative in relation to both investigated settings, which discusses highly substantial personal experiences (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2008).

7.4. Limitations

This study presented the experiences and perspectives of Saudi mothers in interaction with their primary school children's autonomy and motivation within a specific period of the COVID-19 lockdown. This research relates to the learning context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the participants were extremely busy and under stress as they navigated the unexpected conditions of the virus outbreak. During lockdown, their children were with them at home all day. The focus on a specific time and a small sample size means that the findings may not be generalisable to the broader population. However, exploring the views of these mothers during this significant and sensitive period allowed for a rich and detailed analysis of their lived experiences.

Additionally, in the first study, a key limitation was the diverse educational level of the mothers. This limitation was addressed in the second study by focusing on a more homogeneous group of participants, specifically mothers with similar educational experiences and levels. Namely, all the mothers in the second study were postgraduate students in the UK. Despite this study investigating mothers' perspectives and experiences of primary school children's autonomy, motivation and interactions with single or multicultural exposure during remote learning, the ways in which their backgrounds and education could have impacted their perspectives were not explored in this work. For instance, the questions asked mostly related to their experiences with their children.

The primary aim of an IPA is to obtain a deeper understanding of individuals' subjective experiences, which is inherently linked to their personal involvement in the phenomenon being studied and the linguistic expressions they use. The determination of an IPA is partly contingent upon a subjective evaluation and good communication of the findings. The potential influence of my subjective assessment and writing proficiency on the outcomes should be acknowledged. It is noteworthy that various interpretations may arise when two analysts examine the same dataset (Smith et al., 2009). The feasibility of conducting comparative analyses would be enhanced by an increase in the number of studies using an IPA undertaken by diverse researchers and including a wider range of participant demographics.

In general, a limitation of the studies was that they were undertaken during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to recognise that the intricacies of the pandemic, involving societal reactions, educational policies and public health interventions, could have experienced changes following the data collection period. Therefore, subsequent developments might not be comprehensively reflected in the findings and in the conclusions of this study, which are framed in relation to the early phases of the pandemic.

7.5. Future Research

This study opens the way for many studies in the future, the most important of which is the first study: How does the style of parenting in Saudi culture affect their children in adolescence and also when they physically return to their school? Did parents' participation in educating their children during the remote learning period continue, and did their view of the importance of autonomy change and continue to support it? As for the second study regarding the children of multicultural mothers upon their return to the KSA, were the mothers' expectations and fears regarding their children's future appropriate? Do these children have

advantages over their peers of the same age in Saudi schools? My research may provide many new avenues for future studies, the first of which is the intensification of studies relating to mothers' perspectives and allowing them the freedom to express their views on their children's education. On the other hand, concentrating research efforts on student-centred education studies in regional contexts such as the Middle East and, more specifically, the Arabian Gulf countries would be beneficial.

This work emphasizes research projects that investigate issues concerning the child's motivation and autonomy and foster an environment that encourages the development of the child's sense of autonomy. It helps recognise that these issues are significant and serve as a foundation for future research projects investigating educational and cognitive issues. In addition, it creates the foundation for further research that could focus on children from diverse backgrounds relating to differences in culture, language, personal capabilities, attitudes and life circumstances. It would also be advantageous to improve educational opportunities for the children of international students studying in the United States, Canada and Australia; these countries are among the most popular destinations for Saudi students pursuing higher education. Overall, one of the most important reasons for understanding this topic is that it benefits the children when they return to their home country. Other research questions that could be answered include the following. Are they different from others in their age group, do they have unique advantages or has their experience of living and learning in another country had a negative impact on their personality and educational progress? Did multicultural mothers keep raising their children in the same way after returning home or did they employ a new approach? From the perspective of female educators, is there a substantial difference between children from diverse cultural contexts and children from the same culture?

7.6. Recommendations

In this section, I provide an overview of the key recommendations I have provided regarding my collected data. Initially, schools and instructors must take into consideration the circumstances and diversity of children and their families; they could introduce strategies to mothers on how to handle remote learning lessons with their children. To provide children with the appropriate support and guidance, parents and educators must take into account their age-specific characteristics. This highlights the importance of considering individual differences and experiences when understanding children's behaviours and responses. Additionally, mothers and teachers should be educated and informed about the importance of autonomy for their children.

Furthermore, the teacher's role is crucial and their impact on the students' learning experience cannot be overstated in remote learning. Teachers may improve the success and satisfaction of remote learning by providing students with clear instructions, advice and support. Consequently, it is necessary to enact legislation and policies that support inclusion and encourage the participation of all children and families in early childhood education.

7.7. Reflections on the Research Process

My research journey has been filled with a range of challenges yet deeply satisfying experiences, especially when I balanced being a mother and a researcher. A mix of exhilaration and exhaustion often defined the process as I managed the challenges of academic work with the responsibilities of family life. There were times when I felt overwhelmed, particularly during COVID-19 and lockdown in another country. I felt I had to return home as soon as possible. I questioned my capacity to successfully balance both jobs at that point. However, selecting to concentrate on the perspectives of mothers such as myself added a special personal dimension to the research. This emotional connection with the

subject matter provided both a motivator and a source of emotional strain at times. I frequently found myself empathising with the participants' stories, which mirrored my own experiences in many ways.

The process proved to be very gratifying given the challenges, which included scheduling interviews around family schedules, handling children's unexpected requests and handling the unavoidable interruptions. I had a strong sense of purpose in providing mothers' experiences at this important time with a voice. I found that the study really came to life during the analysis stage. I was able to obtain meaningful and individualised insights from the careful analysis of the data, which revealed the depth of the participant narratives. In hindsight, the difficulties of pursuing research while balancing parental responsibilities were significant, but they also highlighted the determination and flexibility necessary in both positions. The journey has not only added to my academic knowledge but has also enhanced my awareness of the range of challenges that mothers experience in similar situations.

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Appendix 1: Participants' Invitation Letter

Dear all,

I am Mrs. Dheya Mohammed Boudy, a first-year Ph.D. researcher. My research investigates parents' facilitation of remote learning at home and support for the autonomy and motivation of primary school students in Saudi Arabia.

In this regard, I would like to invite you to take part in this research study by participating in an interview for about 45 minutes. You will be given a pseudonym that protects your identity. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason until the point at which the data are reported. The anonymised data will be published as part of my Ph.D. and you may request a copy of the findings.

Describing your experiences of facilitating virtual schooling at home, your opinions, and recommendations is invaluable as part of this research.

If you have any questions, please contact the researcher using the contact details below.

Contact details:

Researcher: Dheya.boudy@nottingham.ac.uk / dboudy@kfu.edu.sa +447436401691/+966552122155

Supervisors: Dr. David Murphy david.murphy@nottingham.ac.uk / 0115 846 6455

Dr. Sue Price Sue.Price@nottingham.ac.uk 0115 951 4480

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator: educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Thank you,

Yours sincerely,

Dheya Boudy

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Research Topic: Parents' facilitation of remote learning at home and its support of the autonomy and motivation of primary school students in Saudi Arabia.

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to take part in this research study but before you decide please read this information sheet carefully to understand the reason for conducting the research and what your participation involves. You can discuss it with others if you wish. If anything, you read is not clear or if you need more information do not hesitate to ask questions. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

Introduction:

Children have the ability to learn and explore but they need opportunities from teachers and parents to do so. Each child has some strengths and limitations and so will feel more confident in learning about some things than others. We are interested to understand more about what helps children learn and especially outside of the formal school environment.

Aims:

The aim of the study is to understand how parents facilitate and support the autonomy and motivation of their children when engaged in remote learning during the coronavirus pandemic.

Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been chosen because you have a child in primary school. Describing your experience of virtual schooling at home, your opinions are an invaluable part of this research.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and the refusal or withdrawal will involve no penalty or loss, now or in the future.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed for approximately forty-five minutes in a setting that you feel comfortable with a face to face meeting where adequate social distancing is possible or online using Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams. The interview will be recorded using an audio recording device that is outside of Skype for Business/Teams.

Data Confidentiality:

After the interview, you will be given a pseudonym that protects your identity and all the recording will be transcribed, anonymised, and stored in a secure location provided by the University of Nottingham, UK. The transcripts will have all the identifying information removed. During the presentation of any results obtained from the data collection, your own words may be used in the text but your name or identity will not be revealed. All data will be secured in a password-protected digital file store. This method complies with the Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics of the University of Nottingham (Version 6.2019).

Participants' rights:

- You are free to decide whether or not to take part in this study.
- You will be given a pseudonym that protects your identity.
- You are free to not answer any question.
- You can ask for more details and information related to the research.
- You can withdraw from the study at any time you want until the point that the data are analysed and incorporated into the final report.

Contact details

Researcher: Dheya.boudy@nottingham.ac.uk / dboudy@kfu.edu.sa +447436401691/+966552122155

Supervisors: Dr. David Murphy david.murphy@nottingham.ac.uk / 0115 846 6455

Dr. Sue Price Sue.Price@nottingham.ac.uk 0115 951 4480

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator: educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Research Participant Privacy Notice

For information about the University's obligations with respect to your data, who you can get in touch with and your rights as a data subject, please visit:

<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/utilities/privacy.aspx>.

Why we collect your personal data

We collect personal data under the terms of the University's Royal Charter in our capacity as a teaching and research body to advance education and learning. Specific purposes for data collection on this occasion are for the purposes of research.

Legal basis for processing your personal data under GDPR

The legal basis for processing your personal data on this occasion is Article 6(1e) processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest.

How long we keep your data

The University may store your data for up to 25 years and for a period of no less than 7 years after the research project finishes. The researchers who gathered or processed the data may also store the data indefinitely and reuse it in future research. Measures to safeguard your stored data include anonymisation through the use of a pseudonym and removal of identifying details from interviews, secure storage on a University of Nottingham password protected digital file store.

Who we share your data with

Extracts of your interview data may be disclosed in published works that are posted online for use by the scientific community

Appendix 4: Consent Form

Project title The impact of remote learning at home on the autonomy and motivation of primary school students in Saudi Arabia

Researcher's name Mrs. Dheya Mohammed Boudy

Supervisor's name Dr. David Murphy and Dr. Sue Price

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential. {If other arrangements have been agreed in relation to identification of research participants this point will require amendment to accurately reflect those arrangements}
- I understand that I will be audio/video recorded during the interview. {Omit this point if the interview will not be taped}
- I understand that data will be stored ... {insert details of how and where data – including hard and electronic copies of transcripts, or any video or audio recordings used – will be stored, who will have access to it and what limits will be placed on that access}
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed (research participant)

Print name Date

Contact details

Researcher: Mrs. Dheya Boudy dheya.boudy@nottingham.ac.uk/ dboudy@kfu.edu.sa
+447436401691/+966552122155

Supervisors: Dr. David Murphy david.murphy@nottingham.ac.uk / 0115 846 6455

Dr. Sue Price Sue.Price@nottingham.ac.uk 0115 951 4480

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 5: Ethical Approval From UoN Ethics Committee



**University of
Nottingham**
UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

School of Education

University of Nottingham
The Dearing Building
Jubilee Campus
Wollaton Road
Nottingham
NG8 1BB

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

18/06/2020

Our Ref: 2020/15

Dear Dheya Boudy

Thank you for your research ethics application for your project:

Parents' facilitation of virtual schooling at home and its support of the autonomy and motivation of primary school students in Saudi Arabia

Thank you for confirming you will make the minor amendments we requested in a letter to you dated 17/06/2020. Following this we are now pleased to confirm your research is:

- **Approved**

This research is approved provided it is completed by End Sept 2023

If your research overruns this date, please contact the Ethics Team to arrange an extension and update on any additions/changes to your work.

We wish you well with your research.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M Oliver".

Prof Mary Oliver
Ethics Committee

+44 (0)115 9514470
educationadmin@nottingham.ac.uk
nottingham.ac.uk/education

Appendix 6: Participants' Transcript Extract

As in, he is not only attending lessons at school but he is also learning useful things, which are online. This is so he does not take a negative stand on online classes. I know it's tiring and hard for children. So I subscribed him with Japanese classes; he requested me as he wanted to learn Japanese Language. He also requested me to sign him in a children's geometry class. So he started joining them. Many people tell me that this creates pressure and so on. I said, "no, it's the opposite." When he started, his timetable was organised. He knows that this morning, he has this lesson... he got used to online. In the beginning, he was not okay with the situation. But now, with courses and discipline, he got used to it.

Researcher: it's nice that you fulfilled his wishes. So, he liked these kinds of things and told you "mom, register me with this course". On the contrary, I think that this boosted his motivation to study other subjects; as in, satisfying his desire with the extra learning.

Participant: True, and it connects. For instance, for geometry, in order to improve in it, you need to join mathematic lessons at school. This is all things that cannot be separated from each other. "you need to follow here so that you achieve there". For languages, it's the same thing. After he started school, he told me that one of the girls came from Japan. He told me he was the only one who could communicate with her. She did not speak any language apart from Japanese. Therefore, he feels the importance of courses he took and he connected them to his school classes.

Researcher: do you think he asks for your help frequently or not?

Participant: to be honest ... for my kids...let me speak about my son in the primary. I incorporated in them self-reliance is a fundamental skill. Therefore, in extreme cases, no. He comes to me. He tells me "I cannot solve this." I always remind them you have to search for solution/information by yourselves. If you don't know, don't come to me immediately; check google and check youtube links. Search by yourself and try to do your own research before