FOSTERING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SAUDI FEMALE STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS IN APPAREL AND TEXTILES PROGRAMS IN SAUDI ARABIA

by

SARAH G. ALZAHRANI

M.S., Kansas State University, 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design
College of Human Ecology

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Manhattan, Kansas

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Abstract

Today, home economics in Saudi Arabia, in particular, apparel and textiles programs (AT) typically emphasize two major areas: apparel design and textile science. However, AT programs in Saudi Arabia need to evolve to help students take advantage of new job opportunities in the apparel retail sector. Establishing an apparel merchandising track in AT programs in Saudi Arabia will provide women with better preparation to succeed in the industry. Until recently, most female graduates of home economics programs in Saudi Arabia were prepared for teaching positions.

The purpose of this study was to develop an apparel merchandising program for the AT discipline in Saudi Arabia. Qualitative data were collected in three phases to examine the focal points of choosing the new curricula: (a) the nature of the subject matter, (b) the nature of society, and (c) the nature of individuals. In Phase 1, the content of the top apparel merchandising programs in the US was examined to explore the nature of the subject matter. In Phase 2, the perceptions of industry professionals in Saudi Arabia were explored by interviewing 21 human resource managers and apparel store managers. Finally, the AT students' needs to succeed in the apparel industry were examined by interviewing 17 female students. The data were analyzed by utilizing the word-based technique as well as comparing and contrasting responses to each question. The findings for all three phases were combined and compared to identify the knowledge and skills that need to be added to the new apparel merchandising track for AT discipline in Saudi Arabia.

Results of the study indicated that all three phases reported the importance of considering hard skills, or content and process knowledge, and soft skills, or professional attitude and skills, in preparing AT student for the apparel retail industry. AT major knowledge, business

knowledge, mathematics, as well as professional skills (e.g., communication, commitment, teamwork, English language, lifelong learning, and experience) are found to be essential for the success of Saudi women in the apparel retail industry. For AT educators in Saudi Arabia, this knowledge and skills have to be addressed in the apparel merchandising program.

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Approved by:

Major Professor
Dr. Joy M. Kozar

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Women's participation in the Saudi Arabian workforce is only 14.4%, with the unemployment rate for Saudi female college graduates at 54% (AMEinfo, 2010; Saudi Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2010). Unfortunately, for women in Saudi Arabia, the restricted opportunities to earn a higher education contribute to the high unemployment rate among women. The Saudi Arabian Ministry of Higher Education restricts the areas of studies women are allowed to pursue. They are limited to majors in teaching, home economics, language, mathematics, and the sciences (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, and social sciences). As a result of this and other restrictions regarding women's work, the demand for positions in allowed fields is greater than the actual number of jobs available for women in Saudi Arabia (Alausami, 2010).

To reduce the unemployment rate among Saudi women, a number of government policies have been recently introduced. The retail sector specifically witnessed the implementation of several government policies in this respect (Khashoggi, 2014). In 2011, the Saudi government passed a law to replace salesmen, mostly from other countries, with local saleswomen in retail stores selling beauty products and clothing to women. As a result, the Ministry of Labor mandated that all employees in retail stores selling products for women be female. However, the Ministry of Labor has not yet addressed the complaints of the retailers; namely, that it is difficult for them to find well-trained women to fill these positions. Because of their failure to comply with this feminization law, the Ministry of Labor's inspection campaign between July and November 2013 closed 514 out of 1,173 Saudi women's clothing stores (AsiaNews, 2013).

The Saudi government is now pushing to replace foreign salesmen with Saudi women in its apparel stores to accommodate the large number of unemployed Saudi females; however, this

is being done without properly preparing women to succeed in the industry. Thus, this study aims to empower Saudi women in the apparel retail industry through education by establishing an apparel merchandising track for the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. To empower women in general, critical feminist theory focuses on specific problems women encounter, such as the high unemployment rate, and works to provide solutions.

Critical feminist theory (CFT) is centered on understanding how women can become empowered and how women can change dominant societal patterns by asking how cultural structures shape women's lives (Saxe, 2012). CFT involves the construction of alternative visions for a "good," or more equal, society. Given the diversity of experiences, interests, and resources as well as the commanding support for concrete strategies that reinforce women's liberation, a good society cannot be generalized. This vision needs to focus on particular issues that implicate both material and ideological concerns, rather than hypothesizing some universal utopian program. A standard practice for CFT is to begin with concrete experiences, integrate these experiences into theory, and then rely on the theory for a deeper understanding of these experiences (Carspecken, 1996). Rhode (1990) claims that the strength of CFT is that it allows not just an understanding of women's experiences but that it also works to develop concrete responses to those experiences. This study is a response to previous studies that report a lack of business knowledge among Saudi women in the field of apparel and textiles (Alwan, 2013; Alzahrani, 2012). The current study, guided by critical feminist theory, is intended to examine Saudi women's experiences further by interviewing Saudi female students in apparel and textiles programs to develop an apparel merchandising track.

The home economics program in Saudi Arabia provides Saudi women with employment opportunities within the education field and inspires them to establish their own business in

apparel production. However, the home economics program in Saudi Arabia does not necessarily prepare women to be successful in this industry because the curriculum focuses on basic textile science and apparel design skills and knowledge (Alzahrani, 2012). To educate Saudi women better so that they succeed in the apparel retail industry, apparel and textile curricula need to evolve. The Home Economics College needs to expand by integrating business disciplines and establishing an apparel merchandising track option. Currently, apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia choose from specializations in apparel design and textile science.

The early educational system in the US was dominated by a focus on subject matter; all curricula decisions centered on past knowledge, such as history, religion, mathematics, and language. Later during the nineteenth century, American educators came to recognize that society was another important source for making curriculum decisions. At the turn of the twentieth century, under the influence of John Dewey, American educators considered the individual as a basis for curriculum choices. Currently, the focal point of subject matter still has a strong impact on the curricula of American schools. Postmodernity educators consider these three focal points (subject matter, society, and the individual) together in an attempt to bring them into an appropriate balance for developing curricula (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). Thus, this study considers these three focal points as well, with the aim of facilitating an appropriate balance between the subject matter, society expectations, and individual (student) needs when constructing the apparel merchandising track in Saudi Arabia.

Coupled with the high unemployment rate among college female graduates in Saudi Arabia, the societal shift regarding women's work and a lack of professional development opportunities for women requires academicians to respond and update college curricula to meet today's students' needs and societal and industry standards. An apparel merchandising track

within the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia is warranted. Establishing an apparel merchandising track will better prepare Saudi women for new careers in the apparel industry and will allow them a third option when choosing to study in the apparel and textiles discipline.

Purpose and Justification

The purpose of this study is to develop an apparel merchandising program for the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. This new program will enhance female students' success in the apparel retail industry. As part of this study, three focal points were examined to construct the apparel merchandising curriculum: (a) the nature of the subject matter, or in this study, the content of current apparel merchandising programs in the US; (b) the nature of society, or in this study, the perceptions of industry professionals in Saudi Arabia; and (c) the nature of individuals, or in this study, the needs for Saudi Arabian apparel and textiles students to succeed in the apparel industry.

Adding an apparel merchandising track to prepare Saudi women for new careers in the apparel industry is necessary, particularly due to the new law that is now replacing non-Saudi men working in apparel stores with Saudi women. The high unemployment rate among college female graduates and the societal shift regarding women's work signal the need for an evolution of the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. Most importantly, while responding to these societal changes, the apparel and textiles discipline must consider students' needs and interests. By incorporating the apparel merchandising track within apparel and textiles programs, there will be several contributions to Saudi society: (a) empowering women in the retail industry, (b) fostering the professional development of Saudi females in this field, and (c) providing apparel and textile students a third option which when choosing to study in the apparel and textile discipline besides apparel design and textile science.

Qualitative research was conducted to answer the questions of this study. In the study's first phase, the required subject matter of current apparel and textiles merchandising programs in the US was examined to explore the inherent logic of the apparel merchandising major. A content analysis was conducted utilizing the websites of the top fashion schools in the US to provide a foundation for this study. In the second phase, interviews were conducted to examine Saudi human resource managers' and apparel store managers' perspectives on the skills and knowledge needed for Saudi women to be qualified for job opportunities within the apparel retail industry. In the third phase, interviews were conducted with current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia. The aim of interviewing current students is to build an understanding of their perspectives on the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the apparel retail industry as well as their own needs and interests. In order to design a four-year plan with course descriptions for apparel merchandising students in the apparel and textiles program in Saudi Arabia, this three-phase study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What subject matters are required as part of apparel merchandising programs at Western universities?
2. What are the skills and knowledge needed for Saudi female students to be qualified for job opportunities within the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia?
3. What are the needs and interests of current Saudi students in apparel and textiles programs?

Data in this study was inductively analyzed by utilizing the word-based technique: word repetition and key-word-in-contexts as well as by comparing and contrasting responses to each interview question, using the constant comparison strategy (Gay & Airasion, 2003). The findings of each phase were compared and contrasted to the findings of the other phases. Similarities and

differences were addressed. The focus was on the knowledge and skills that need to be included in the new apparel merchandising track for the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. Knowledge and skills identified among the three phases were included in the new apparel merchandising program.

Definition of Terms

A more thorough explanation for the following definitions is included in Chapter 2.

Apparel merchandising: Merchandising is a major segment of marketing. Merchandising is "the process through which products are obtained (designed, developed, or bought for resale) and promoted to the point of sale" (Wolfe, 2003, p. 56). A merchandiser has a responsibility to create the right blend with the right product, the right quantity, the right place, the right time, the right price, and the right appeal. Although all companies that deal with apparel goods do merchandising to some extent, retailing concentrates almost entirely on the merchandising functions of planning, buying, and selling. Thus, it is common to refer to retailing as an apparel merchandising field (Wolfe, 2003).

Critical feminist theory: When critical and feminist theories intersect, the result is a theory that identifies, critiques, and seeks to change inequities and discrimination, particularly those that are based on sex and gender (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). Critical feminist theories are interested in understanding how women become empowered and how they can change dominant patterns and their underlying ideologies by asking how cultural structures shape women's lives (Saxe, 2012).

Critical theory: Critical social theory is concerned with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class, gender, ideologies, discourses, education,

religion, social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct and shape a social system (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011).

Feminist theory: Feminist theory is the theory of gender that is comprised by the social definition of masculinity and femininity in a specific culture at a specific historical moment. Feminist theory is centered on the patriarchal system, which reflects the interests, perspectives, and experiences of men. Feminist theory, with all of its different disciplines, aims to question women's subordination to men (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995).

Organization of Dissertation

In this chapter, the current study, the related research questions, the purpose and justification, and the definitions of terms have been outlined. In the next chapter, background information related to women across cultures and their access to education and job training are discussed. Educational and employment opportunities for Saudi women, particularly in the apparel retail industry, are also reported in Chapter 2. An overview of the home economics discipline as well as the skills needed for the academic preparation of students for apparel retail positions are discussed. This discussion is followed by a description of the theoretical framework, critical feminist theory, and post-modern theory in education. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of this study, including sample and data collection procedures, instruments, and data analysis of the three phases of this study. It also includes the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 4 presents the major findings of this study, organized by each phase, to answer the three research questions noted above. Chapter 5 includes a summary of findings, discussions, and implications about the results of the current study as well as limitations and recommendations for future research. Chapter 6 presents the outcomes of this study, including the four-year

curriculum plan for the apparel merchandising track in Saudi Arabia and course descriptions for each course included in the program.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

As a part of this chapter, gender challenges that women face across cultures are discussed. The role of educating women is explored; then, the focus shifts to addressing the educational opportunities available for Saudi women. Current employment opportunities as well as new employment opportunities in the apparel industry for Saudi women are also addressed. This chapter provides a background on the apparel industry in Saudi Arabia and the current experiences of Saudi women in this industry. Next, this chapter briefly examines the history of home economics in the Western world and compares it to the home economics program in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, this chapter includes an examination of apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia. Subsequently, the skills needed for the global apparel industry as well as the meta-goals of the International Textiles and Apparel Association (ITAA) are illustrated. Finally, this chapter discusses critical feminist theory and post-modern theory in education as the theoretical framework for this study. Most importantly, the discussion of the three focal points for curriculum development is included.

Women across Cultures

Women across cultures differ in the gender challenges they face. In Western nations such as the United States, workplace discrimination and reproductive rights are primary issues. On the other hand, women in less developed nations are often faced with issues that are directly relate to the survival of their families, such as the availability of clean water and other issues regarding racism and economic exploitation (Burn, 2005). In Western nations, societal pressure has led to the adoption of policies and rules to promote gender equality. These policies have led to significant improvements in shifting toward gender equality in educational settings. Western nations have changed education curricula to promote gender equality and ensure that both girls

and boys have equal opportunities to learn (Croxford, 2000). In contrast, in less developed societies, the United Nations still works to ensure that girls have the same opportunities as boys to enroll in secondary schools (United Nations, 2012).

Cheung and Chan (2007) concluded that gender inequality in education and employment is a result of cultural traits. They found that regions with high-power distance, high masculinity, and low individualism need strong reasons to motivate people to change the education system. Cheung and Chan (2007) defined high-power distance as "the degree of inequality of power between a person at a higher level and a person at a lower level" (p. 161); high masculinity as "the extent to which the goals of men dominate those of women" (p. 162); and low individualism as "the relative importance of individual goals compared with group or collective goals" (p. 162). Issues such as gender inequality in these societies need greater attention in order for progress to occur.

Although women worldwide live in different cultures and face different issues, there are many cross-cultural similarities in the gender challenges women face. In many societies, women do not have the resources to live independently from men and/or to leave situations of abuse. By and large, women worldwide live in patriarchal societies where men hold the highest status in the family and family members are legally dependent on fathers/husbands (Burn, 2005). Chowdhury (2009) stated that any feminist movement could be connected to the earlier Western liberal feminism movement to help counter economic, social, and political forces. As such, these Western feminist theories may provide insights for this study.

Women's Education and Development

A strong educational foundation is essential to the success of women and their communities around the world. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United

Nations Secretariat reports that achieving the Millennium Development Goals[1] (MDGs) greatly depends on women's empowerment and their equal access to education (United Nations, 2012). Economically, women with more schooling participate in greater numbers in the labor force, and they are able to earn more for their families and society. Additionally, women's education increases the income of women and leads to growth in gross domestic product (GDP) (Goldin & Reinert, 2007). In fact, countries with lower levels of national wealth tend to have more men enrolled in higher education than women. According to the United Nations (2012), 45 countries with an average per capita GDP of $5,200 had more men in higher education than women while women outnumbered men in 94 countries where the per capita GDP averaged $16,500.

The importance of women's education is not limited to economic development but is connected to social development as well; women who attend school are less likely to be married early. Marriage delay leads to decreased fertility rates and lower infant and maternal mortality rates (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). Additionally, women's education has a cognitive benefit for women that includes increasing their ability to make decisions related to the health and education levels of all family members.

Educational opportunities for Saudi women

Over the last 40 years, the Saudi government has succeeded in building an educational infrastructure that has led to an increase in school and university enrollment. Saudi Arabia has invested large amounts of money on its public education system; yet, this has not resulted in an equal increase in women's participation in the workforce. The public system of women's

[1] The Millennium Development Goals are eight international development goals that were established in 2000. All United Nations member states at that time and other international organizations have committed to saving lives and improving life conditions for other people around the world by focusing on three areas: human capital, infrastructure, and human rights.

education in Saudi Arabia is segregated by gender. It was only in the late 1950s and early 1960s when the first school for females was established in Saudi Arabia. In the early 1980s, education was available to all Saudi women including higher education (Almunajjed, 2009). However, the public education system treats males and females differently due to the gender-based expectations of the Saudi society. At the primary, middle, and secondary levels, the curriculum at women's public schools is dominated by religious studies and Arabic language with foreign language, science, and mathematics lagging behind. Additionally, the curriculum at women's schools lacks fieldwork, teamwork, and innovative research based on evaluation and brainstorming (Alarabiya, 2011).

For women in Saudi Arabia, the restricted opportunities to earn a higher education contribute to the high rate of unemployment among women. The Ministry of Higher Education restricts the areas of study women are allowed to pursue, limiting them to fields in teaching, home economics, language, mathematics, and sciences. All Saudi universities have set rules that prevent women from pursuing degrees in fields available for men, such as engineering, architecture, agriculture, earth science, marine science, and Islamic law. Although the population of Saudi men and women is nearly equal (50% and 49% respectively), there is an imbalance in the labor market (Almunajjed, 2009). One cause for this imbalance is that most females graduate in the fields of education and social services. The increasing number of female graduates in Saudi Arabia and the lack of government employment opportunities contribute to the high unemployment rates of female university graduates.

According to Alroogy (2009), Saudi universities should restrict the number of students in majors given the competitiveness of finding employment upon graduation. Moreover, women

should be allowed to major in disciplines that further prepare them for work in the private sector. AlMunajjed (2009) reports that:

> [G]irls curricula at all school levels have not been seriously revised for more than 20 years and textbooks have not been updated. Without the introduction of new information that reflects developmental changes in society, the curriculum is not providing students with the necessary skills to enhance their overall education and to find jobs (AlMunajjed, 2009, p. 12).

Alroogy (2009) suggests that universities should re-educate female college graduates by offering diplomas that would qualify them to work in the private sector. Universities should also develop their curricula to enhance work skills, such as responsibility, decision making, leadership, English language, and other technology skills. As a response to Alroogy and other researchers, this study aims to establish an apparel merchandising track in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia to qualify Saudi women for employment in the private sector of the apparel industry.

Employment opportunities for Saudi women

A recent study revealed that Saudi Arabia is one of the last countries to integrate women into the workplace besides Qatar, Oman, and other non-Arab countries (e.g., Ecuador, Bolivia, Botswana, and Rwanda). In these non-Arab countries, there is a gap of around 22% between males and females in the workplace (Al Arabiya News, 2012). In 2007, the active workforce in Saudi Arabia comprised 8.2 million people; 85.6% were men. Saudi women's participation in the workplace was only 5.4% in 1992; in 2009, only 14.4% of the workforce was women (AlMunajjed, 2009).

While there has certainly been an increase in Saudi women's participation in the job market, it is still weak. Most women in Saudi Arabia work within the field of education in either teaching, administration, or support staff. According to the Ministry of Labor, 52% of the workforce in elementary, middle, and high schools and 44% of the workforce in colleges and universities is comprised of women. Besides education, Saudi women also often work in medicine. According to the Ministry of Labor, women in the medical fields account for 31% of the total female workforce in Saudi Arabia (Alharbi, 2010). Saudi women work in the medical sector as physicians, allied health personnel, administrative personnel, custodians, and messengers.

Saudi women also work in several government ministries including the Ministry of Civil Service, the Ministry of Culture and Information, the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Economy and Planning, and the Ministry of Finance. As compared to men, Saudi women in these ministries work in lower ranking positions restricted to menial tasks, such as filing paperwork and other secretarial duties. Some Saudi women also work in other government positions including rehabilitation, elderly care, the Saudi Central Department of Statistics & Information, prison services, customs services, and the General Presidency of Sacred Mosque and Prophet's Mosque (Alsinedi, 2007). Similar to women's work in the ministries, women's work in these departments is limited to departments separate from men and typically in lower ranking positions without much power or authority. Thus, education, medicine, lower ranking positions in ministries, and some banking industries are the primary employment opportunities available to Saudi women.

In the private sector, women are estimated to comprise only 2% of total workers. Saudi women work in the private sector in many fields with the most prominent being education and

medicine. These facilities are owned by individuals and have different rules regarding salaries and work hours as compared to government-owned facilities. Women in the private sector also work in the banking industries, the marketing and services sectors, and the non-profit sector. The two major entrepreneurial opportunities for women in the Saudi Arabian private sector are in beauty salons and apparel production workshops. Women in these two fields do not have to wait to secure employment, as is the case with governmental jobs, and do not have to endure complicated rules set by the Ministry of Labor. One of these rules, for instance, is that women who ask for permission to own a restaurant or laundromat cannot establish this work unless they provide male representatives since they may be mixing with men. Male representatives are responsible for handling government required paperwork and meeting with male clientele. As expected, being required to have a male representative is a significant obstacle that Saudi women encounter while working in the private sector, especially in large businesses. The Ministry of Labor requires a woman to provide a male representative who represents her in all transactions, giving him complete power to control her money under the protection of the law. However, in apparel production workshops and beauty salon establishments, women are allowed to control their money without a male representative. Thus, they can retain financial power to invest their money in savings accounts.

Alzahrani (2012) reported a lack of business knowledge among Saudi female entrepreneurs who operate in the apparel production sector. Alzahrani interviewed Saudi female entrepreneurs who have been successfully employed in garment production for five or more years. As part of the findings, the Saudi female entrepreneurs reported filing paperwork, the conflict between roles at work and home, a changing marketplace, and lack of management skills as business obstacles. Moreover, it was found that Saudi women seek more advanced positions in

apparel design, product development, and business management. The participants revealed a need for education in management and business-related topics. They viewed a lack of management and accounting skills and training as significant obstacles impacting their overall success (Alzahrani, 2012). As such, an outcome of the current study is to develop an apparel merchandising curriculum that concentrates on developing students' skills in these areas.

New employment opportunities for Saudi women

Currently in Saudi Arabia, many efforts have been established to reduce the high unemployment rate among female college graduates. The Saudi government has taken many steps aimed at promoting women's advancement in the labor market. This movement has been called the feminization movement of apparel stores. In its first phase, starting in July 2011, Saudi women were allowed to work in lingerie stores after years of non-Saudi men operating such establishments (Anderson, 2012). Six months later, the second phase of the feminization movement of apparel stores started and Saudi women were granted permission to work in cosmetics stores as well (Chuch, 2012). By the end of 2012, Saudi women began filling all positions in stores selling abayas, the traditional black cloak worn by women (Allam, 2012). At the beginning of 2014, the Ministry of Labor launched the third phase of the feminization movement of apparel stores to include retail stores selling women's fragrances, handbags, shoes, socks, clothes, and fabrics, as well as stores selling mother-care products. It is now mandatory for all apparel stores selling women's apparel and beauty products to employ only Saudi women or face the penalty of being closed by the Ministry of Labor (Khashoggi, 2014). However, many Saudi women are not yet qualified to work in the apparel retail sector. The lack of knowledge and skills needed to succeed in the apparel retail industry is an obstacle that Saudi women encounter when working in this industry. This phenomenon is discussed in further detail below.

Saudi women in the apparel retail industry.

To avoid the consequences of not complying with the requirements of the Ministry of Labor regarding hiring only Saudi females, large retail companies train Saudi females or collaborate with a training firm. One of these companies is Alshaya International Trading Company, a retail franchise for Western brands in the Middle East and North Africa. Recently, Alshaya signed an agreement with the Human Resources Development Fund on behalf of the Ministry of Labor to qualify young men and women to work in the retail industry. The agreement states that Alshaya International Trading Company will train and assign Saudi citizens of both sexes in the company's retail stores. In return, the Human Resources Development Fund has agreed to pay 50% of the salaries of Saudi employees in Alshaya Company stores for the first two years ("Alshaya," 2008). Alshaya International Trading Company has established a seven-week retail-training program for Saudi women only. The training includes both practical and theoretical training with the aim of equipping applicants with the skills and experiences necessary for success. Saudi women study the principles of fashion retailing, customer service, salesmanship, store operations, and visual merchandising. In addition, Saudi women are trained in areas of professional development, such as communication skills and problem solving. As a part of the program, Saudi women must also participate in in-store training. Following completion of the course, Saudi women who can successfully fulfill the requirements are assigned to Alshaya International Trading Company stores with the support of the Human Resources Development Fund.

The Alshaya Company and other large companies have the resources and capabilities to organize and manage a training program to qualify and prepare Saudi females for the retail industry; however, other small businesses and retail stores cannot afford such training programs.

Consequently, these small businesses are more likely to end up closing for not complying with the requirements of the Ministry of Labor in hiring Saudi females. Moreover, the training programs only last a few weeks, meaning that applicants are more likely to be hired for lower or middle ranking positions with limited income opportunities.

Within apparel retail stores, Saudi women work as buyers, cashiers, and store managers, however, as Alolmai (2013) reported, more employment opportunities should be created for women including higher-ranking and leadership positions. Saudi women must be qualified for such positions and need to be familiar with the processes of the apparel industry. Current curricula in post-secondary apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia lack such content. Additionally, Saudi females need to have a professional attitude and skills necessary to succeed in the apparel retail industry. When Ghaith Azzam, a brand manager for La Vie En Rose (owned by Fewaz Alhokair Group), was asked about replacing foreign salesmen with Saudi women, he said that it is a good to hire Saudi women in apparel stores, but they need to be prepared. Colleges and universities must prepare young women to operate successful apparel retail stores in Saudi Arabia (Abu-Nasr, 2011).

The apparel merchandising major typical in most Western apparel and textiles baccalaureate programs is currently not offered to Saudi female students. Unfortunately, educators in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia have not yet considered the large and available employment opportunities for Saudi females in the apparel retail sector. Apparel and textiles departments in Saudi Arabia within home economics colleges focus primarily on textile science and apparel design but not merchandising. According to AlMunajjed (2009), curricula at all school levels have not been seriously revised and updated for a long time. In fact, female

graduates of apparel and textiles programs are more likely to end up teaching in primary, middle, or high schools.

Saudi females who enter the retail sector with only a few weeks of training are not capable of performing job functions successfully. A study conducted by Alwan in 2013, a recently established regional coalition of experienced and emerging leaders from 17 countries across the Middle East and North Africa, surveyed 100 Saudi women between the ages of 18 and 36. An analysis of the data collected revealed that 42% of the participants reported that they had no knowledge about what retail work comprises. The participants explained that the lack of awareness of what the retail sector actually is and family pressures and expectations are their main concerns when working in the retail sector. The participants reported that their families are often resistant to women working in apparel the retail sector. The reason of that is the adhering of Islamic teachings that prevent women working unless the separation between men and women in the workplace is ensured. Thus, the participants emphasized the role of media in portraying success stories as well as benefits of working in the retail sector to encourage families to support women in the apparel retail sector. Most importantly, Saudi women in this study reported a need to understand what retail work includes (Alwan, 2013). Consequently, establishing an apparel merchandising track within apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia will help in training women and preparing them to work in the retail industry.

Educating Saudi women on topics related to retail work, such as apparel retailing, buying, consumer behavior, the structure of the apparel industry, and forecasting, is essential in providing women with the confidence they need to apply for work in apparel retail industry positions that are currently available in Saudi Arabia. Moreover, educating Saudi women in a formal way, such as in the university setting, is more likely to convince women's families of the

importance of their work in the apparel industry. The legitimacy of the educational system and its outcomes as compared to the training programs that last a few weeks within some of the apparel retail companies foster this viewpoint change. The Saudi apparel retail industry is one of the fastest growing markets in the Arab region, especially in the women's and children's segments ("Kingdom's Clothing," 2014). The industry is expected to accommodate a large number of Saudi women if these women are able to meet the requirements of the jobs available. The following is an overview of the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia.

The Apparel Retail Industry in Saudi Arabia

The apparel retail industry is one of the fastest growing markets in Saudi Arabia ("Kingdom's Clothing," 2014). It includes large indoor malls and outdoor markets. Competition among competitors is very high. Finding a segment of the market whose needs are not being met is also difficult, but doing so has a high profit potential in this country where shopping is a popular pastime. The apparel industry has grown rapidly over the last several years as a result of a young population and the increase of purchasing power (Ali, 2008).

In terms of clothing style in Saudi Arabia, Western dress is most common, especially among the young people. Since the discovery of a sizable oil reserve in the country in 1938, Saudi Arabia has experienced large-scale economic shifts, rapid industrialization and modernization, and increased contact with the West (Long, 2005; Wilson, 2004). With this came an adoption of Western branded fashions, primarily sold through international retail chains (Sanghvi, 2010). Although Saudi women wear *abayas* on top of their clothes, they take off the abayas when they are ensured separation from men. Underneath the abaya, Saudi women have been influenced by Western fashions for many years, including dresses of varying lengths, trousers, and T-shirts.

The main retail franchisers for Western and European brands in Saudi Arabia are the Alshaya International Trading Company, the Fawaz Alhokair Group, the Alsawani Group, the Rubaiyat Company for Industry and Trade, and Alfuttaim (Samadi, 2008). Combined, these companies represent 142 American and European brands sold in the Saudi marketplace. See Table 1 for further information about these firms.

Table 1. Brands Operated by Alhokair Group, Alshaya Group, Rubaiyat, Al-SawaniGroup, and Alfuttaim

Franchiser	Brands Operated					
Alhokair Group	ZARA Home	LC Waikiki	Banana Republic	Wallis	Women's Secret	Steve Madden
	Flormar	GAP	U.S. Polo ASSN	Quiz	Lasenza	Nine West
	FG4 kids	Marks & Spencer	New Look	Camaieu	La Vie en Rose	Parfois
	BLU	Origem	Promode	Lipsy	Oysho	Primadonna
	IKKS	F & F	Desigual	Eclipse	Celio	Uterque
	The Children's Place	Springfield	Gerry Weber	Dynamite	Clarks	Pedro
	Okaidi	Gelco	Superdry	Monsoon	Spring	Six
	ZARA	Tiffosi	Miss Selfridge	ADL	Beya	I am
	Topshop	Mango	Cortefiel	ANOTAH	Charles & Keith	Aldo
	Topman	SuiteBlanco	Massimo Dutti	FG4 London	Viss	Accessorize
Alshaya Group	American Eagle	River Island	Jack Wills	Top Shop	Dorthy Perkins	Miss Selfridge
	Pink	Justice	Milano	La senza	Debenhams	BHS
	H&M	Payless	Express	Wear house	COS	Victoria's Secret
	Coast	Next	Mother Care	SARAR	Harvey Nichols	Express

	Foot Locker	Evans	Oasis	Wallis	Claire's	Topman
	Muji					
Rubaiyat	Armani	Dolce & Gabbana	GF Ferre	Kenzo	Prada	Lanvin
	Emporio Armani	Armani jeans	Balenciaga	Ermenegildo Zegna	Just Cavalli	Loro Piana
	Gucci	Rykiel Enfant	Bottega Veneta	Giorgio Armani	Just Cavalli Underwear	Armani Junior
	Sonia					
Al-Sawani Group	Max & Co	Courir	Marina Rinaldi	Marella	Osim	Levis
	Triumph	Sfera	XOXO	Replay	Butt Barclay	United Colors of Benetton
	The Wall	G2000	Guess	La Perla	Go Sport	Derchy
	Max Mara	Penny Black	Esprit			
Alfuttaim	Guess	Esprit	Ted Baker	Reebok	bebe	Gaudi
	Vince Camuto	Intersport	Billabong	Marks & Spencer		

Saudi businessmen generally have sufficient capital to invest in a business, but they try to avoid the risk of establishing new concepts or ideas, especially in the case of small or mid-sized firms (Ali, 2008). Being a franchiser for a foreign brand is commonplace in Saudi Arabia, especially for US and European brands. Over the past 10 years, the number of franchisers has increased in Saudi Arabia, the largest market in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is a suitable market for franchising with high income and purchasing power, a country with half of its population under the age of 15, a strong infrastructure, and many international and local banks (Ali, 2008).

As noted previously, women lack the appropriate training and skills necessary to succeed in such a competitive market. Establishing an apparel-merchandising track in apparel and textiles programs will help better prepare Saudi women for careers in today's apparel industry. To examine this issue further, a brief historical overview of the home economics discipline in both the US and Saudi Arabia is discussed.

The Home Economics Discipline

At the turn of the 20th Century, the home economics discipline was developed in the West in response to the growing need to educate women. With societal changes and evolving job opportunities for women, home economics in the Western world has been continually updated to meet the needs of its students. In 1968, Ruth Hoeflin, a leader in the field, reasoned that education has to be appropriate to the times, change with the times, and change with the needs of students and society. Even then, academic professionals in the discipline felt responsible for and challenged by helping to solve many societal problems facing women, including those related to low-income and unemployment (Hoeflin, 1968).

Today, home economics in Saudi Arabia includes programs in apparel and textiles, food and nutrition, and housing and home management among others. In particular, apparel and textiles programs typically emphasize two major areas: apparel design and textile science. However, as noted previously, apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia need to evolve to help students take advantage of new job opportunities in the apparel retail sector. Establishing an apparel-merchandising track in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia will provide women with better preparation to succeed in the industry. Until recently, most female graduates of home economics programs in Saudi Arabia were prepared for teaching positions. As recent as 2007, 93% of female university graduates in the home economics discipline, including apparel

and textiles, went into teaching positions (AlMunajjed, 2010). The following section provides an in-depth examination of the current apparel and textiles programs at King Abdulaziz University, a large, well-known, prominent university in Saudi Arabia. Students interviewed as part of this study are currently enrolled in the apparel and textiles programs at this institution.

The apparel and textiles program at King Abdulaziz University

King Abdulaziz University (KAU) is one of 25 public universities distributed geographically in Saudi Arabia. These universities are linked to the Ministry of Higher Education with a high level of independence in both administrative and academic scopes. KAU was founded in 1967 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, as a private university by a group of businessmen. Later in 1971, King Abdulaziz University was converted to a public institution. The main campus is in Jeddah with satellite campuses in the cities of Tabuk, Rabigh, Al-Kamel, and Khulays, and four branch campuses in Jeddah. Over time, enrollment has grown to more than 49,000 students in 24 colleges, which includes more than 160 academic departments and more than 120 graduate programs offering many specializations (King Abdulaziz University, 2012).

KAU was the first university in Saudi Arabia that allowed women to be taught in classrooms. While still segregating men and women, KAU allows women to pursue degrees in most colleges in separate facilities from men. Women are not allowed to pursue degrees in the Marine Sciences College; Meteorology, Environment, and Arid Land Agriculture College; and Earth Science. Two apparel and textiles departments exist at KAU: one in the College of Home Economics and one in the College of Art and Design. Students in these two colleges are female only as male students are not allowed to pursue degrees within the Home Economics or Art and Design Colleges.

The Bachelor's degree in Apparel and Textiles in both colleges requires the completion of a four-year plan; 128 credits are required to earn a degree in both colleges. In the Home Economics College at the main campus, apparel and textiles students need to complete 36 credits in general education including math, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, statistics, and English. Students need to complete 14 credits in Arabic language and Islamic culture, 18 credits of major electives and free courses, and 60 major or professional credits. Major courses are centered on apparel design, textile science, apparel construction and sewing, and two courses in apparel marketing. Courses are offered in different formats including lectures and labs with projects that students can work on under instructor supervision.

In the Arts and Design College at the branch campus, apparel and textiles students must complete 27 credits in general education including math, physics, chemistry, biology, statistics, and English. Additionally, students must complete 12 credits in Arabic language and Islamic culture, 15 credits of major electives and free courses, and 74 major or professional credits. Major courses are centered on apparel design, textile science, apparel construction and sewing, interior design, and graphics with one course in apparel marketing (King Abdulaziz University, 2012).

Overall, although both programs offer various courses related to apparel design and textiles, the apparel and textiles program in the Home Economics College focuses on enhancing students' knowledge of textile science. Conversely, the apparel and textiles program in the College of Arts and Design focuses on enhancing students' knowledge of and skills related to apparel design. What both of these programs lack, however, are concentrations in the area of apparel merchandising and retailing, which, noted previously, is one of the fastest growing sectors of the Saudi marketplace today. Given the lack of business knowledge among Saudi

women in the apparel industry field, establishing an apparel-merchandising track in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia is essential. The apparel-merchandising major prepares women to meet the requirements of job opportunities available to them and empowers them in the apparel industry by offering the necessary training and skills needed to succeed. These specific skills are further discussed in the next section.

Skills Needed for the Global Apparel Retail Industry

Previous literature has shown that successful professionals in the apparel retail industry possess both hard and soft skills. Hard skills are those tangible, technical, cognitive skills that can be measured, such as typing, writing, accounting, and the ability to use software programs (Investopedia, 2012). Hard skills are reflected in one's knowledge, practice, and aptitude (Robles, 2012). Soft skills are those intangible, nontechnical, practical, personal skills that determine a person as a leader, negotiator, and facilitator. Soft skills are subjective talents that people demonstrate in their occupations, including effective communication, conflict management, human relations, presenting, and team building (Investopedia, 2012).

A number of studies have been conducted to determine hard, technical skills, and soft, nontechnical skills that are needed for the workplace. An early study by Heitmeyer and Grise (1992) identified the technical skills and knowledge that retailers perceived as important for college students desiring a career in fashion merchandising. As part of their study, retailers rated skills related to inventory management, buying, and salesmanship as essential. In addition, retailers valued knowledge of the relationship between price and quality as well as factors influencing consumers' purchasing decisions and behavior. Similarly, Donnellan (1996) analyzed the qualifications and academic preparation necessary to succeed in a retail management career. Specifically, Donnellan showed that retailers value management and

leadership qualities in their employees, particularly skills that facilitate interaction with people, such as communication and supervisory skills. Donnellan also showed that skills related specifically to merchandising and management functions were essential for retailers.

Other recent studies emphasized soft skills and their importance in the current workplace. Robles (2012) reported that students need to exhibit mastery of hard skills to be interviewed for a job, but more importantly, they need soft skills to maintain and advance in their careers. Soft skills identified in previous studies include effective communication, team building, leadership, time management, decision-making, and organization (Robles, 2012; Sahni, 2011). Robles (2012) suggested that educators consider both the technical or hard skills and soft skills when preparing students to enter the workplace. Robles also reported that although soft skills are important to recognize and improve, hard skills are critical on the job as well.

With increasing competition in the global market, scholars have also studied and discussed the skills and knowledge that retail managers must possess. Javidan, Teagarden, and Bowen (2010) identified three characteristics that reflect a global mindset: intellectual, psychological, and social capital. For example, intellectual capital is the ability to understand how one's business works at the global level. Knowing how the industry operates worldwide, how global consumers behave, how to piece together multiple scenarios with many parts, and/or how culture, history, political, and economic systems of different parts of the world are similar or dissimilar is reflective of intellectual capital. Psychological capital is about being receptive to new ideas and experiences. It is essential to have a passion for diversity, a thirst for adventure, and self-assurance. Social capital is the capacity for building trusting relationships with people who are diverse in their backgrounds and characteristics. It is important for mangers in the global market to be able to engage and connect emotionally with people from other parts of the

world, bring together divergent views, and listen to what is said and what is not said (Javidan, Teagarden, & Bowen, 2010; Tonidandel, Braddy, & Fleenor, 2012).

Other literature identified effective learning activities that assist apparel and textile students in participating and mastering the skills necessary to be successful in the global market. For instance, LeHew and Meyer (2005) argued that the business model for courses and activities within the curriculum of apparel and textiles undergraduate programs is not adequate to prepare students for the apparel and textiles industry. LeHew and Meyer reported that the apparel and textile curricula should go beyond improving profitability and satisfying target markets in order to help students understand their roles in improving global conditions. LeHew and Meyer suggested learning activities such as debating current issues in the apparel and textiles industry to encourage students to seek out and understand the multidimensionality of issues within the industry.

Similarly, Carpenter and Fairhurst (2005) argued that traditional methods of instruction limit instructors' ability to help students acquire a working knowledge. According to Carpenter and Fairhurst, skills desired by retailers such as critical thinking, teamwork, and problem solving need to be exercised in real world situations where learning is facilitated through the problem-based learning method. This method includes several steps: developing a clear definition of the problem, analyzing the problem, identifying how the problem could be solved, collecting more information about the suggested solution, and synthesizing and summarizing all the information gathered in order to solve the problem.

Other literature reports the need for including technology into apparel and textile courses. Foster (2005) emphasized the importance of incorporating industry-based software into apparel merchandising curricula. Cone and Perry (2002) developed a course in which apparel marketing

students used the Internet to design a product, develop its prototype, present it for manufacturing, and advertise the product domestically and internationally. This hands-on experience helped provide students with skills in sourcing and advertising online that they will likely need in real work situations. Other literature has focused on the role of multi-national, team-based collaboration in preparing apparel and textiles students for the global apparel industry. This strategy of teaching allows the students to learn about different cultures and fosters professional development, including skills related to communication, teamwork, and time management (Karpove, Jacobs, Lee, & Andrew, 2011; LeHew and Meyer, 2005).

In addition, the International Textiles and Apparel Association (ITAA), the primary professional organization for scholars in the apparel and textiles discipline, provides a general framework of the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that students in the discipline should possess to perform competently and ethically in the industry. These meta-goals are outlined in the following section.

ITAA Meta-Goals

In 2006–2007, ITAA members approved several meta-goals or core competencies for voluntary use by member institutions for curriculum planning and review. Based on this initiative, a graduate of a four-year baccalaureate apparel and textiles program should be able to demonstrate proficiency in two primary areas: content and process knowledge (e.g., industry processes, appearance and human behavior, aesthetics and design, and global interdependence) and professional attitude and skills (e.g., ethical and social responsibility, sustainability, critical and creative thinking, and professional development).

The ITAA meta-goals can be utilized as a foundation for the development of apparel and textiles programs. Apparel and textiles educators can build upon these general recommendations

provided by ITAA after examining their current content, the needs of the local market, and the students' perspectives. As such, the findings of previous studies on skills needed to succeed in the apparel industry combined with the ITAA meta-goals provides a foundation for this study in developing an apparel-merchandising program in Saudi Arabia. To do this, the current study examines the hard and soft skills needed to succeed in the industry as well as the experiences of current students in the College of Home Economics and the College of Art and Design. Further theoretical underpinnings used to guide this study are outlined below.

Theoretical Framework

Two theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for this study: critical feminist theory in the field of women's studies and postmodernity theory in the field of education.

Critical feminist theory

To understand critical feminist theory, two broader groups of theories, critical theory and feminist theory, are briefly discussed.

Critical theory

Critical social theory is concerned with issues of power and justice and the ways in which the economy and matters of race, class, and gender as well as, ideologies, discourses, education, religion, social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct and shape a social system (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2011). The ideology of critical social theory is criticism, meaning that critical social theory has the function of unmasking the incorrect rationalizations of past or present injustices, such as the ideology that women are inferior to men or that people of color are inferior to white people, and proposing alternative practical ways for deconstructing these ideologies (Corradetti, 2011).

Feminist theory

Feminist theory is the theory of gender that is comprised by the social definitions of masculinity and femininity within a specific culture at a specific historical moment. Feminist theory is also centered on the patriarchal system, which reflects the interests, perspectives, and experiences of men as the societal norm. Feminist theory, with all of its different disciplines, aims to question women's subordination to men. Feminists have developed a wide range of theories to understand gender oppression over many years with the goal of affecting change. Acker (1987) and Dominelli (2002) reported three theories of feminism that have been developed to analyze women's oppression: liberal feminism, radical feminism, and socialist feminism.

Martin (2002) reported that although both feminist theory and critical theory have been developed separately, both focus on economic and social inequality. Alvesson and Willmott (1996) provided a list of common interests between feminist theory and critical theory: (a) both are concerned with the reification and dichotomization of concepts such as male and female, rationality and emotionality, objectivity and subjectivity, and competition and cooperation; (b) both feminists and proponents of critical theory have explored the ways managerial interests have been represented as the interests of all subordinated groups; (c) both examine the domination of instrumental reasoning over material concerns, such as meeting people's economic needs for survival; and (d) both critique hegemony by focusing on discourses, communication, and text analysis to explore the patriarchal system. Additionally, there is another area of commonality between critical and feminist theories, which is actually the major limitation of both foundations; while both inquiries share a commitment to system change, neither offers a generally accepted solution to the problem of how to achieve or realize change. Alvesson and

Willmott (1996) argued that merging these two theories together can generate unexpected *synergies*.

Critical feminist theory

When critical and feminist theories intersect, the result is a theory that identifies, critiques, and seeks to change inequities and discrimination, particularly those that are based on sex and gender (Baxter & Braithwaite, 2008). Critical Feminist Theory (CFT) is centered on understanding how women become empowered and how they can change dominant social patterns by asking how cultural structures shape women's lives (Saxe, 2012). CFT disputes that liberal feminist theory focuses on a critique of the status quo and has not gone far enough to counter women's social subordination (Martin, 2002; Clark, 2007). CFT is reflective of the cultural, historical, and linguistic constructions of human identity and social experiences. Not all women experience and perceive their circumstances in terms of domination, and not all who share this perception agree on its implications. Therefore, CFT assumes that the legitimacy of sex-based treatment should not depend on whether the sexes are differently situated. Rather, analysis should turn to whether legal recognition of gender distinctions reduces or reinforces gender disparities in power, status, and economic security.

Part of the strength of CFT is the observance of women's differences and commonalities. CFT allows for the multiple experiences of women while identifying the commonalities that also exist among women despite their diversity (Rhode, 1990). CFT involves the construction of alternative visions for a "good society" (i.e., equal). Given the diversity of experiences, interests, and resources, as well as the commanding support for concrete strategies that liberate women, the vision for a good society cannot be generalized. A standard practice of CFT is to begin with an understanding of women's concrete experiences, integrate these experiences into a theory, and

rely on that theory for a deeper understanding of these experiences (Carspecken, 1996). Rhode (1990) claims that CFT is both useful in understanding women's experiences and in developing concrete responses to those experiences, thus allowing for more equality among men and women.

As CFT aims to understand women's experiences in order to develop the means of social change, this study aims to understand the experiences of current Saudi apparel and textiles students in order to develop a new educational program. As discussed previously, Alzahrani (2012) explored the experiences of women business owners in the apparel production sector in Saudi Arabia. The participants in this study revealed a need for education in management and business-related topics. They viewed a lack of management and accounting skills and training as significant obstacles impacting their overall success (Alzahrani, 2012). Alzahrani (2012) concluded that the current curriculum of apparel and textiles departments in Saudi Arabia needs to be re-evaluated to reflect recent social and industry changes and to promote Saudi women in the apparel industry. Building upon CFT, this study is intended to further examine Saudi women's experiences by interviewing current Saudi female students in the apparel and textiles discipline. Understanding students' perspectives of the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the apparel industry in Saudi Arabia is essential for constructing an apparel merchandising program. Establishing the apparel merchandising major is a concrete solution for Saudi women who operate their own small businesses or those who seek employment in apparel retail. An apparel merchandising track will provide the educational opportunities necessary to empower and support students' independence by preparing them to succeed in their chosen industry. Additionally, this study utilizes the underpinnings of postmodernity theory in the field of education in interpreting findings. An overview of this theory is provided below.

Theoretical perspective on curriculum, postmodernity

Many definitions have been given to curriculum depending on whether it is viewed as a plan, an educational program, or a set of learning experiences, among others. Curriculum is a term that might also refer to a plan for subsequent action; in this case, the curriculum is organized based on the decisions of the planners about what should be taught in schools/programs. Normally, the intended subsequent action is instruction, in which the course content is taught to students. Curriculum is a very broad term that includes the psychological processes of the learners as they acquire educational experiences (Bellack & Kliebard, 1977). Tanner and Tanner (1995) defined curriculum as planned instructional experiences designed to help learners develop and extend individual capability. Curriculum, in general, includes a consideration of the purpose of education, the course content, teaching approaches with a focus on the product and process, and a program designed to evaluate outcomes (Koo Hok-chun, 2002).

Several theories attempt to explain the relationship between curriculum and the wider social environment. Of these, the most important is postmodernity theory. Postmodernity theory, in creating a new curriculum, emphasizes the importance of establishing a link between social, economic, political, and historical analyses on the one hand and people's beliefs, imaginations and aspirations on the other (Lau, 2001). Doll (1993) explained the characteristics of postmodern curricula, specifically stating that it requires indeterminacy, self-organization, paradox, and intellectual playfulness, all of which are further outlined below.

In curriculum matters, educators tend to structure curricula only in sequential, linear terms and consider learning only as a direct result of teaching. Such sequential ordering and cause-effect epistemology underlie Tyler's (1949) rationale for a well-designed curriculum.

Tyler emphasized four major questions for educators to consider while planning educational activities: (1) what educational purposes (objectives) should the school seek to attain, (2) how can learning experiences be selected to be useful in attaining these objectives, (3) how can these educational experiences be organized, and (4) how can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated? Tyler provided a clear, simple, and useful framework in the modern era. However, Tyler's rationale was criticized for being mechanistic, closed, and behavioristic. Dewey (2001) pointed out that Tyler's rationale assumes the learner to be a receiver rather than a creator of knowledge and meaning. In contrast to Tyler's predetermined approach, postmodernism sees indeterminacy in a positive, not negative, manner. Indeterminacy encourages instructors and students to communicate about the course content with one another to become creators of meaning and knowledge.

However, indeterminacy becomes a meaningful concept only to the degree that self-organization occurs. Doll (1993) defined self-organization as "the primary hypothesis of his [Jean Piaget's] theory of cognitive development" (Doll, 1993, p. 283). To Piaget, people develop intellectually when they recognize discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their environment. For more illustration, Doll described the educational system as a social system, our body as a biological system, and an ant hill as a fitting example of both. A system starts off in a state of equilibrium and continues its existence until it experiences a state of chaos. For example, someone throws ant poison on the hill. Driven by survival instinct, the ants attempt to rescue the queen and the larvae by moving them to a safe location. In a collaborated effort, the system makes all necessary changes, or self-organizes, in this case for survival.

In postmodern education, the instructor's role is to present course content in just enough of a challenging and controversial manner to disturb the equilibrium state of the students. When students recognize the discrepancies between what they already know and what they experience in the learning situation, self-organization is encouraged to make the necessary changes in order to retrieve a state of equilibrium. This self-organization allows students to fully participate in the learning experience and consequently to generate greater meaning and knowledge (Doll, 1993).

Paradox lies at the heart of postmodern reality. Paulo Freire (2013) criticized the social hierarchy system in which a few people with power control the larger, disempowered population. He also criticized how educational systems replicate this pattern. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire criticizes the "banking system" in education. This system is an anti-dialogic method in which teachers are responsible for "filling" students' minds with information. Within this system, students are required to repeat information given by teachers word for word. Freire argued that the banking system in modern education classifies teachers and texts as the knowledgeable/powerful side of the learning experience while the students/readers are cast as unknowledgeable/powerless. This model of education replicates the hierarchical system of power that exists in most societies and hampers both change and equal opportunities for its members. To counter this, postmodern educational theory rejects power-based classifications and focuses on the integration of these extremes: dominant-subordinate, instructor-student, and text-text reader. As postmodernity acknowledges the differences among these extremes, it denies the superiority of one classification over others.

Finally, although the traditional modernist approach in curriculum planning discounted intellectual play as a useful tool in higher education, play is a good medium for developing students' skills in dialoguing, negotiating, and interacting in the post-modern educational

environment. Intellectual play provides students the opportunity to go beyond the course content and allow the contradictors to celebrate their differences (Doll, 1993).

Adapting post-modern curricula does not suggest teaching without structure. In fact, as post-modern instructors adapt indeterminacy, they also have to allow for self-organization in which instructors and students organize their efforts to produce knowledge. Doll (1993) noted that post-modern instructors face two extremes: a closed/traditional educational approach that focuses on content and an open/progressive approach that focuses on individuals. Doll (1993) recommended that instructors focus on a *closed-open approach* to give a sense of structure to the educational system as well as remaining open to new approaches in teaching and curriculum planning. To evaluate the quality of this closed-open approach, Doll (1993) suggested four criteria or the four R's: richness, recursion, relations, and rigor.

Richness refers to a curriculum's depth and its possibilities of interpretations. In postmodern education, curriculum should be rich in indeterminacy, chaos, and lived experiences. Each academic discipline has its own historical context, fundamental concepts, and vocabularies. Thus, each interprets richness in its own way. For instance, in the language discipline, educators might develop richness by focusing on the interpretation of metaphors, myths, and narratives while in the social sciences, educators might foster more dialogue among instructors and students. In the other sciences, including biology and physics, educators might develop richness by going beyond the collection of facts to generate and test hypotheses (Doll, 2013).

Recursion lies at the heart of a transformative curriculum. Recursion is not repetition; within modernist educational systems, students repeat the same process over and over to improve a set of performances. Conversely, recursion aims at developing students' competences: the ability to organize, combine, and inquire. Students achieve competences by reflecting on their

primary experiences after receiving feedback from peers or instructors. In such a context, every text, paper, and journal can be seen not merely as the completion of one project but also as the beginning of another. In a transformative curriculum, every ending is a new beginning, and every beginning emerges from a prior ending.

Relation, the third R, refers to two essential kinds of relations in postmodern curricula: pedagogical relations and cultural relations. Pedagogical relations focus on the connections within a curriculum's structure that gives the curriculum its depth. The process of doing and reflecting is important in postmodern education; through this process, the curriculum becomes richer with the passage of time. Cultural relations refer to the interaction between curriculum and the local and global context and the relationship between individuals and nature (Doll, 2013).

Finally, to become a true alternative to the traditional modern approach, rigor is an important R in Doll's model. To be rigorous in methodology is to be strict in applying a procedure. In empirical sciences, rigor is to reduce possible causes to the influential one, and in Tyler's (1949) rationale, rigor is to produce a high correlation between the purpose intended and the result achieved. To be rigorous in dealing with indeterminacy in postmodern curricula, one cannot be certain about the facts provided within the course content; one must continually be exploring and looking for new combinations, interpretations, and patterns of knowledge. Additionally, to be rigorous in dealing with interpretation, one needs to be aware that all valuations depend on hidden assumptions. In postmodern contexts, dialogue between readers and texts as well as negotiation over these assumptions is what constructs a transformative curriculum of the postmodern era (Doll, 1993, 2013).

Doll's model is an appropriate model in the process of developing the undergraduate apparel-merchandising curriculum in Saudi Arabia. As part of current market needs in the era of

globalization, Saudi students need to be able to meet the expectations of the workforce. The closed-open system encourages critical thinking and decision making by all people, not just those in charge, as is the case in modernism. Saudi educators should no longer be authorities but facilitators helping to meet the different needs of their female students. Doll's model is essential in encouraging Saudi female college students to explore, organize, interpret, negotiate, create, and communicate well. To construct the apparel merchandising track for apparel and textile students in Saudi Arabia, the three focal points for curriculum development must be addressed.

Three focal points for curriculum development

There are three basic focal points around which decisions about curricula should be made: (a) the nature of the subject matter, (b) the nature of society, and (c) the nature of the individual. In post-modern education, curriculum decisions should be built based on all of these points. First, in the wider view, subject matter refers to a specific area of study. Marsh & Willis (2007) stated that subject matter refers to the specific subjects or course content to include within the curriculum and which subjects or content to leave out. The decision of whether to include particular subject matter in the curriculum requires examination of the accuracy of the subject matter (whether it represents reality) as well as the logic behind how subject matter should be arranged. Each subject has its logic. For instance, the intellectual logic of history deals with the chronology of events, and the intellectual logic of science deals with the causal relationship within the natural world (Marsh & Willis, 2007).

The nature of society relates to the usefulness and the utilitarianism of the curriculum. The nature of society takes into account the societal situation in which the students are situated. Students have absorbed knowledge of their society in order to function successfully as citizens. Curriculum based on the nature of society might prepare students for current jobs but not

necessarily for future ones (Marsh & Willis, 2007). However, schools should not just mirror society to students and replicate its patterns to meet its needs. Freire (2005) stated that when educational institutions take it upon themselves to play a role in changing society, they are radically transformed in their material conditions.

Finally, the third focal point for curriculum development is the nature of the individual, which requires that the individual be the center of the educational environment. In this perspective, the purpose of education includes fostering the developmental growth of each individual because each individual is unique. It is essential that educators consider the individual experience; the curriculum cannot be entirely determined in advance due to the diversity of student interests and backgrounds (Marsh & Willis, 2007). Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) reported that effective education does not require strict discipline. Rather, the instructional approach should be somewhat free, drawing on the learner's innate tendency to become engaged in interesting things. Limiting the curricula to one focal point is not recommended; instead, all three focal points —subject matter, society, and the individual—need to be incorporated in an appropriate balance (Marsh & Willis, 2007).

The current study aims to achieve this balance in addressing the three focal points in constructing an apparel merchandising track for Saudi educators in apparel and textiles programs. Establishing this major requires making decisions regarding what subject matter to include and what skills students need to be successful in the industry. Postmodern curriculum should be built upon a balance of the three focal points of curriculum discussed above. To achieve this balance within the context of this study, the researcher: (a) identified the subject matter offered in current apparel merchandising programs at Western universities, (b) explored

the requirements of the Saudi retail industry by interviewing current industry professionals, and (c) examined the needs of current Saudi students in apparel and textile programs.

The subject matter of current apparel merchandising programs at Western universities was found by analyzing the program websites. Specifically, the subject matter and the sequencing of courses in the programs were analyzed. Information obtained from the Western universities' websites and ITAA meta-goals provided a foundation in developing an apparel-merchandising program in Saudi Arabia. Apparel merchandising is not yet a major in Saudi Arabia, so the subject matter offered in Western programs served as a foundation. Exploring the requirements of the Saudi apparel retail industry by interviewing Saudi Human Resource Managers (HRMs) and apparel store managers ensured that the curricula reflected the needs of society (i.e., the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia). Finally, understanding the lived experiences of Saudi women provided information regarding students' needs and interests. All of this information was considered in constructing the apparel merchandising curriculum. Educators should be able to utilize the findings of this study to establish a new apparel merchandising track within the apparel and textiles departments in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter 3 - Method

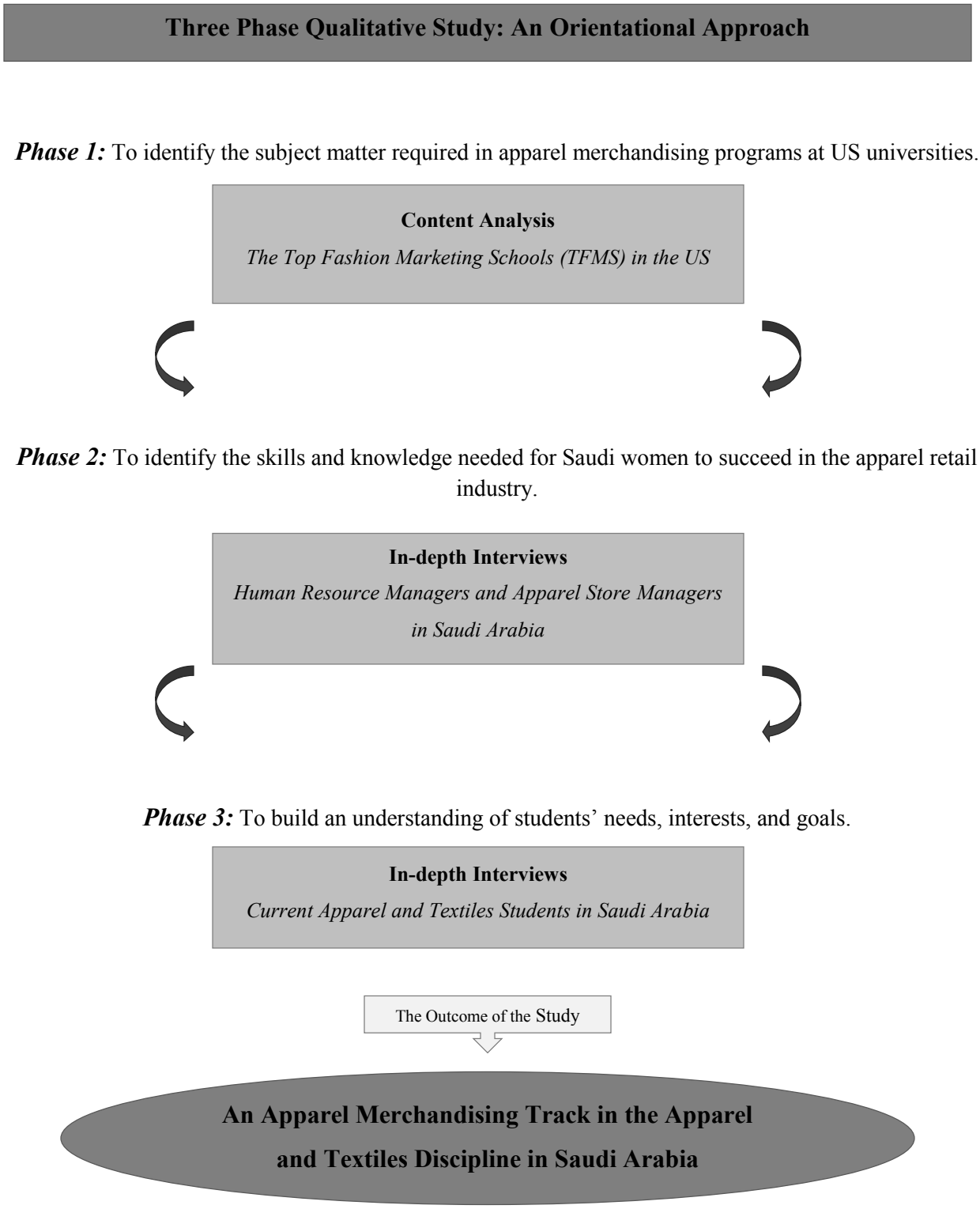
Qualitative data was collected as part of this study to guide the development of an apparel-merchandising curriculum in Saudi Arabia. An orientational approach was utilized given the nature of the theoretical underpinnings. For example, the foundations of critical feminist theory were used in directing the focus of study, data collection, and the interpretation of findings. A feminist perspective presumes the importance of gender in human relationships and social processes and oriented the study in that direction. The feminist perspective values women's means of obtaining knowledge including integrating reason, emotion, intuition, experience, and analytic thought. Additionally, the feminist perspective goes beyond knowledge generation to engage in using knowledge for change (Babbie, 2010; Batton, 2002). A standard practice for critical feminist theory is to begin with the concrete experiences of women, examine these experiences, and subsequently develop concrete responses to those experiences (Carspecken, 1996; Rhode, 1990).

As discussed in Chapter 2, this study was formulated as a response to previous studies that reported a lack of business knowledge among Saudi women in the field of apparel and textiles (Alwan, 2013; Alzahrani, 2012). The current study, guided by critical feminist theory, is intended to further examine Saudi women's experiences by interviewing current Saudi female students in apparel and textiles programs. The focus was on how their experiences as women shape their educational interests. In addition, students' perspectives on the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the apparel industry in Saudi Arabia were explored.

The postmodern perspective on education was utilized in this study as well, specifically in directing the focus of the study, data collection, and the interpretation of findings. In postmodernism, curriculum planning is a matter of three focal points: (a) the nature of the subject

matter, (b) the nature of society, and (c) the nature of the individual. These three focal points are encapsulated as part of a three-phase data collection process as described below (Figure 1).

Figure 1. A Diagram of the Study



Sample and Procedure

Phase 1

The goal of Phase 1 was to identify the subject matter included in apparel merchandising programs at Western universities. The websites of the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS) in the US was utilized. The aim of using this sample was to collect rich information from the unusual, special, and outstanding success cases. This "extreme" sample helped in understanding the requirements of programs which exemplify excellence (Patton, 2007).

Fashion-Schools.org provides a list of the best apparel schools in the US to give students who wish to pursue a degree in apparel design and apparel marketing a starting point for identifying the schools that offer apparel programs. The Top Fashion Marketing Schools are included in this list. Fashion-Schools.org uses academic reputation, admission selectivity, depth and breadth of the program, and faculty as criteria to make these lists. Two of the schools on the Top Fashion Marketing Schools list offer an Associate's Degree in Fashion Marketing and therefore, were excluded from further analysis. Twelve schools offer a Bachelor's Degree in Apparel Marketing and Merchandising similar to the degree program in Saudi Arabia. These 12 institutions include the following:

- Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, New York;
- Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia;
- Columbia College in Chicago, Illinois;
- University of Missouri in Columbia, Missouri;
- Laboratory Institute of Merchandising (LIM) in New York, New York;
- Lasell College in Newton, Massachusetts;
- Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas;

- University of Rhode Island in Kingston, Rhode Island;
- Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri;
- Mount Ida College in Newton, Massachusetts;
- University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, Missouri;
- and the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Boyatzis (1998) suggested reducing the data in some way to better manage the process of analyzing. The websites of the top fashion schools contain a lot of information that is not relevant to the basis of this study. Thus, the researcher condensed the information of the TFMS to answer the first research question, "What subject matter are required as part of apparel merchandising programs at Western universities?" The researcher began by reading through the school websites. Then, a database for each school was created. This database included the goal of the program and the required courses identified for the apparel-merchandising curriculum at each institution. Descriptions for required courses were included in the database as well. Additionally, the sequencing of courses at each institution were identified.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, in-depth interviews were conducted with Human Resource Managers (HRMs) and Apparel Store Managers (ASMs) in Saudi Arabia to identify the skills and knowledge needed for Saudi women to succeed in the apparel retail industry. HRMs of the five main retail franchisers for Western brands in Saudi Arabia were selected. This study utilized the entire population of HRMs. HRMs have a clear insight regarding the knowledge and skills that employees need to succeed in the apparel retail industry. HRMs provided the data needed to identify what knowledge and skills should be considered to develop a new program in Saudi Arabia for apparel and textile merchandising students.

Due to the small number of HRM participants, the sample was supported with another sample of Apparel Store Managers (ASMs). ASMs were chosen due to their capability of answering the research questions related to the day-to-day operations of apparel stores in Saudi Arabia. A snowball sampling approach was utilized. At the onset, two well-known ASMs were interviewed. The snowball sampling procedure was employed to provide additional names of ASMs. The saturation concept guided the sampling process, meaning that additional participants were sought out and interviewed until saturation of the data was achieved (Mason, 2010).

By collecting data from two sources (HRMs and ASMs), the triangulation of data was achieved, providing greater credibility of data and greater understanding of the findings across different data sources (Patton, 2002). Comparing the perspectives of the HRMs with the perspectives of ASMs was essential to this study. HRMs are the decision-makers in the hiring process, while ASMs are an ample resource to gain in-depth information about the operations of the apparel retail industry. As a result, identifying both similarities and differences between the two sources in this study offered opportunities for deeper insight and enhanced the credibility of the study (Patton, 2002).

Phase 3

In Phase 3, current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia were interviewed to build an understanding of the students' needs, interests, and goals as well as their perspectives of the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the apparel industry. Students will be the actual consumers of the new apparel merchandising program; therefore, having an understanding of this group was also essential for this study. To design an effective educational system, content must be presented in a way that allows students to relate the information to prior experiences (i.e., they must be able to make a connection to the new knowledge). By considering the interests and

experiences of current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia while designing the apparel merchandising program, Saudi female students can take part in their own education.

The snowball sampling approach was utilized in Phase 3 as well. At the onset, the researcher interviewed a well-known apparel and textiles student at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. The snowball sampling procedure was employed to provide additional names of current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia. A phone call was placed to the participants to schedule interview times. The saturation concept guided the sampling process, meaning that additional female students were sought out and interviewed until saturation of the data was achieved (Mason, 2010).

For Phases 2 and 3, data was collected through interviews during fall 2014. After contacting HRMs via email and ASMs and students via phone calls, interviews were scheduled with the participants. Each interview was recorded using the paper-pen approach as none of the participants felt comfortable being audio recorded. At the end of each interview, the researcher read the responses to the participants to ensure credibility of the data. Each interview lasted approximately 90-120 minutes. The participants' responses were kept confidential. Each participant was assigned a number to protect her/his anonymity. HRMs were coded as HRM1 HRM2, HRM3, etc. while ASMs were coded as ASM1, ASM2, ASM3, etc. without any mention of names. Current students at apparel and textile programs were coded UG1, UG2, UG3, … UG17. Prior to collecting data, the respondents were provided a letter of consent, which included a general explanation of the research project and the specific research questions. The researcher discussed the letter of consent with each respondent carefully. After review, the respondents were asked to keep the letter of consent (Appendix A). In Phases 2 and 3, an Arabic professor assisted in translating the questions to ensure translation equivalency. He also assisted in

translating the interviews to English. Permission from the Institutional Review Board at Kansas State University was obtained prior to collecting data.

Instruments

Phase 1

In Phase 1, the researcher conducted a content analysis of the curriculum in the apparel marketing and merchandising programs at the TFMS in the US identified by Fashion-Schools.org. This analysis answered the first research question of the study: "What subject matter is required as part of apparel merchandising programs at Western universities?"A database for each institution was created in an attempt to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What is the mission of each program?
2. What are the required courses for each program?
3. What is the suggested sequencing of courses at each institution?

Phase 2

In Phase 2, semi-structured interviews were conducted with HRMs and ASMs in Saudi Arabia. The aim of this phase was to answer the second research question of this study: "What are the skills and knowledge needed for Saudi female students to qualify for job opportunities with the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia?"

A semi-structured interview format was utilized with a standard probing technique to glean additional information not specifically noted in the initial interview questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Four overarching topics guided the interviews: (1) participants' work experience, (2) hard skills necessary to succeed in the apparel industry, (3) soft skills that are essential in the apparel industry, and (4) impeding barriers to women's success in the Saudi apparel industry. These topics were developed based on Robles' (2012) recommendation that educators address

both hard skills and soft skills when making curriculum decisions. To control the reactivity and ensure the credibility of the method (Lincoln & Guba, 1999), participants first answered general questions with follow-up questions addressed as needed. The follow-up questions were developed utilizing the ITAA meta-goals. The aim of going more specific and asking beyond the stories of the participants was to identify the appropriateness of the ITAA recommendations for the Saudi apparel retail industry. The interview questions were the same for both HRMs and ASMs with slight variances regarding differences in everyday tasks. Below is a list of the overarching questions used in interviewing both human resource managers and apparel retail store managers in Saudi Arabia. See Appendix B for the list of follow-up questions for HRMs and Appendix C for the list of follow-up questions for ASMs.

Human resource managers and apparel store managers interview questions.

1. Tell me about how you came to be in this position.
2. What knowledge do students need to be prepared for careers in the apparel retail industry?
3. What personal attributes and characteristics should students possess before entering the apparel retail industry?
4. How can Saudi women be promoted within this industry?

Phase 3

In Phase 3, semi-structured interviews were conducted with current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia. The aim of this phase was to explore the educational experiences of Saudi female students and to identify the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the apparel industry from the perspective of the students. This phase helped support the findings of Phase 2

as well as answer the third research question of the study: "What are the needs and interests of current Saudi apparel and textiles students?"

Semi-structured interviews were utilized with a standard probing technique to glean additional information not specifically noted in the initial interview questions. Three primary topics guided the interviews. After allowing participants to present their stories, values, facts, and beliefs pertaining to the main topics, the researcher asked follow-up questions for deeper understanding as needed. Starting with general and non-leading questions controlled the reactivity and supported the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1999). These overarching questions were developed based on: (1) a need to understand students' current learning experiences, (2) a desire to identify students' perspectives regarding the requirements for strengthening their professional and personal development, and (3) a need to identify the skills and knowledge students' perceive they need to succeed in the future. See Appendix D for the list of follow-up questions for students participating in this study.

Apparel and textiles student interview questions.

1. Tell me about your experience in this program so far.
2. How can the apparel and textiles program help you achieve your goal(s)?
3. What are your thoughts/opinions about the employment opportunities for women in the private sector in Saudi Arabia, particularly for apparel and textiles students?

Data Analysis

Phase 1

The goal of this phase was to identify the subject matter required for apparel merchandising programs at Western universities, which was then utilized as a foundation for establishing a new apparel merchandising track in Saudi Arabia. Data analysis of the databases

generated for the TFMS included *manifest content* in which the researcher counted the number of courses pertaining to soft skills and the number of courses pertaining to hard skills. Additionally, *latent content* was applied in the analyzing process. According to Babbie (2010), manifest content ensures reliability in coding and informs the researcher of the precise number of courses at each university. In terms of validity, latent content provides a deeper understanding of the courses offered rather than just the number of times the course was repeated.

For the mission and the sequences of the courses in each program, an open-ended analysis was applied. Notes were taken regarding the general goal of each program as well as other information including the geographic location, nature of the student body, and suggested program of study. Final decisions regarding the mission and the sequencing of courses were based on the identification of keywords in the database. For the description of the required courses as part of the TFMS, an extensive coding scheme was developed. The first code related to *skill type*, which was determined based on whether the course aimed to develop hard or soft skills (Robles, 2012). Then, the courses were coded based on *areas of specialization* using the ITAA meta-goal subcategories.

The first category, *hard skills or content and process knowledge*, was further classified into four sub-categories: industry processes, appearance and human behavior, aesthetics and the design processes, and global interdependence. Later, each sub-category was further classified. First, industry processes was classified into supply chain management, forecasting and advertising/promotion, industry terminology, product quality, and social, economic, and political boundaries. Second, appearance and human behavior was classified into appearance theories, human behavior theories, dress and culture, and the interaction of historic, sociocultural, and psychological factors of dress on human behavior. Third, the aesthetics and the design prosses

sub-category was further classified into aesthetics and dress, design processes and dress, creating a product using the design process, aesthetics/design and sustainability, and the role of historical, socio-cultural, and psychological factors in aesthetic expression. Fourth, the global interdependence sub-category was classified into the impact of different political, economic, and cultural systems on the apparel and textiles (AT) industry and the impact of theoretical perspectives on markets, trade, and economics impacting the AT industry.

The second category, *soft skills or professional attitude and skills*, was further classified into three sub-categories: ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability, critical and creative thinking, and professional development. These sub-categories were also classified further. For instance, the ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability sub-category was classified into the impact of social responsibility on decision making and environmental sustainability. The critical and creative thinking sub-category was classified into critical and creative thinking skills, the impact of social, culture, economic, technological, ethical, political, educational, language, and individual influences on industry issues, quantitative and qualitative skills to problem solving within the AT industry, and using technology. Finally, the professional development sub-category was further classified into career planning, serving as an effective team member and leader, and communicating ideas in written, oral, and visual forms. See Table 2 for the initial code list.

Table 2. The Initial Code for Phase 1

	Type of Skills
A	**Hard skills (content + process knowledge)**
A1	*Industry Processes*
A1-1	Supply chain management
A1-2	Forecasting, advertising, promotion
A1-3	Industry terminology
A1-4	Product quality
A1-5	Social, economical, political boundaries
A2	*Appearance & Human behavior*
A2-1	Appearance theories
A2-2	Human behavior theories
A2-3	The role of dress (culture)
A2-4	The interaction of historical, sociocultural, and psychological factors of dress on human behaviors
A3	*Aesthetics and the Design Process*
A3-1	Aesthetics and dress
A3-2	Design process and dress
A3-3	Product creation using the design process
A3-4	Aesthetics/Design and sustainability
A3-5	The role of historical, sociocultural, and psychological factors in aesthetic expression
A4	*Global Interdependence*
A4-1	The impact of different political, economic, and cultural systems in the AT industry
A4-2	The impact of theoretical perspectives on markets, trade, and economics impacting the AT industry
B	**Soft Skills (Professional Attitude and Skills)**
B1	*Ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability*
B1-1	The impact of social responsibility on decision making
B1-2	Environmental sustainability
B2	*Critical and creative thinking*
B2-1	Critical and creative thinking skills
B2-2	The impact of social, cultural, economic, technological, ethical, political, educational, language, and individual influences on industry issues
B3-3	Quantitative and qualitative skills to problem solving within the AT industry
B3-4	Using technology
B3	*Professional development*
B3-1	Career planning
B3-2	Serving as an effective team member and leader
B3-3	Communication of ideas in written, oral, and visual forms

Coding Procedure of Phase 1

After developing the initial codes derived from the theoretical underpinnings of the study, the codes were utilized for analyzing the content of subject matter included in the curriculum at each TFMS. Through this process, it was discovered that some subject matters did not fit under any of the sub-categories. The coding system needed to be further refined to ensure the best representation of the data (Boyatize, 1998). The researcher added other sub-categories to the first main category, *hard skills or content and process knowledge*. The new sub-categories were general education and business foundations. Each of these new sub-categories was further classified. For example, general education was classified into social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, mathematics, and statistics. Business foundations were classified into economic, marketing, management, accounting, entrepreneurship, and finance. See Table 3 for the refined code.

Table 3. The Refined Code for Phase 1

	Type of Skills
A	**Hard skills (content + process knowledge)**
A1	*Industry Processes*
A1-1	Supply chain management
A1-2	Forecasting, advertising, promotion
A1-3	Industry terminology
A1-4	Product quality
A1-5	Social, economical, political boundaries
A2	*Appearance & Human behavior*
A2-1	Appearance theories
A2-2	Human behavior theories
A2-3	The role of dress (culture)
A2-4	The interaction of historical, sociocultural, and psychological factors of dress on human behaviors
A3	*Aesthetics and the Design Process*
A3-1	Aesthetics and dress
A3-2	Design process and dress
A3-3	Product creation using the design process
A3-4	Aesthetics/Design and sustainability

A3-5	The role of historical, sociocultural, and psychological factors in aesthetic expression
A4	*Global Interdependence*
A4-1	The impact of different political, economic, and cultural systems in the AT industry
A4-2	The impact of theoretical perspectives on markets, trade, and economics impacting the AT industry
A5	*General Education*
A5-1	Social sciences
A5-2	Natural sciences
A5-3	Humanities
A5-4	Mathematics
A5-5	Statistic
A6	*Business Foundation*
A6-1	Economic
A6-2	Marketing
A6-3	Management
A6-4	Accounting
A6-5	Entrepreneur
A6-6	Finance
B	**Soft Skills (Professional Attitude and Skills)**
B1	*Ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability*
B1-1	The impact of social responsibility on decision making
B1-2	Environmental sustainability
B2	*Critical and creative thinking*
B2-1	Critical and creative thinking skills
B2-2	The impact of social, cultural, economic, technological, ethical, political, educational, language, and individual influences on industry issues
B3-3	Quantitative and qualitative skills to problem solving within the AT industry
B3-4	Using technology
B3	*Professional development*
B3-1	Career planning
B3-2	Serving as an effective team member and leader
B3-3	Communication of ideas in written, oral, and visual forms

Within the process of applying the initial codes, the researcher began to generate rules about the categories. For example, if the class description indicated that the aim of it was to introduce or help students to understand content, theories, etc., then it was classified as *hard skills or content and process knowledge*. In contrast, if the class description indicated that, the goal of the course was to apply previous knowledge in a teamwork project, the course was

classified as *soft skills or professional attitude and skills*. The results of the coding process are presented using tabulating frequencies in order to derive the ratios of courses that emphasize both soft and hard skills and the courses in each area of specialization. Conclusions relating to the subject matter required as part of apparel merchandising programs at Western universities are reported in Chapter 4.

Phase 2 and 3

The data of Phase 2 and 3 were inductively analyzed by utilizing the word-based technique: word repetition and key-word-in-contexts as well as by comparing and contrasting responses to each question, using the constant comparison strategy (Gay & Airasion, 2003). Data analysis of these two phases included four steps. First, during data collection, the researcher started analyzing the data from the first initial interaction with participants. While gathering data, the researcher continually reviewed the interview data and posed the following questions: "What did participants say?" "What did participants mean?" "What new ideas emerged?" "Was this a new idea or was it the same as a previous one?" and so forth. This ongoing process enabled the researcher to seek more participants until reaching the point of data saturation.

The second step of the data analysis process was data managing. The data was managed for the purpose of organizing and checking the completeness as well as for starting the process of analyzing the data. Three different files were created in this phase including HRMs interviews, ASMs interviews, and UGs interviews. In each file, interviews were dated and organized chronologically and prepared for the data analysis process.

The third step of the data analysis process was reading. For each file, responses for each question were read across all participants. Notes were taken in the margins based on each interview for key words and phrases to record initial thoughts about the data (Gay & Airasion,

2003). It was essential to examine what was in the data and label it (Patton, 2002). Then, to facilitate the analysis process, a table for each interview question was created. Each table included the participant's number, the response, and the initial theme. The responses were re-read for comparison, noting repetitive words and documenting the similarities and differences among participants. This technique was applied for all interview questions. Themes that arose from the data were merged to derive categories which were based on sensitizing concepts identified from the literature.

Next, the responses were read one more time to modify the categories as needed. Additionally, during this step, categories were compared to develop more general patterns of data. The researcher worked to find a link between two or more categories for the purpose of identifying the categories that best represent the data. The findings of Phase 2, including the findings of the data collected from HRMs and ASMs, were combined and are presented in Chapter 4. The findings of the data collected from the current students of apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia are presented separately.

Finally, the results of Phases 1, 2, and 3 were combined to facilitate the comparing and contrasting process. The findings of each phase were compared and contrasted to the findings of the other phases. Similarities and differences were noted. The focus was on the knowledge and skills needed in the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia. This information was then used in forming the new apparel merchandising track in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. Common knowledge and skills identified among the three phases were included in the new program. A balance was achieved among the three focal points of curriculum development: (a) the content of current apparel merchandising programs in the US, (b) the perceptions of

industry professionals in Saudi Arabia, and (c) the needs and interests of students currently enrolled in apparel and textile programs in Saudi Arabia.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research strives to capture the human meaning of social life as it is lived, experienced, and understood by the research participants. It allows the researcher to familiarize him/herself with the problem or concept to be studied, collect data, analyze the data, interpret the findings, and write the narrative. It is commonly noted that in qualitative research that "the research is the research method" (Gay & Airasion, 2003, p. 164). In contrast, a quantitative research design attempts to fragment and delimit phenomena into measurable or common categories that can be applied to all of the subjects or a wider audience in a similar situation. In both qualitative and quantitative research, it is crucial to ensure validity and reliability of the research design (Patton, 2002). Reliability refers to the extent to which studies can be replicated. Reliability requires that a researcher using the same methods can obtain the same results as those of the prior study. Validity, on the other hand, is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings. Validity in quantitative research is described as construct validity. The constructs are the questions or the hypotheses that determine the data to be gathered. To ensure the validity of the research, measurements have to measure what they are intended to measure (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984).

Because of the multidimensional nature of reality as well as the engagement of the researcher as an instrument in qualitative research, validity and reliability have to be redefined in qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor, and quality in qualitative research. Anfara, Brown, and Mangione (2002) oppose the language associated with experiments (e.g., validity and reliability) and suggest the

use of tenets such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. To ensure the credibility of the findings of Phase 1 in this research study, manifest and latent content analysis techniques were applied. As noted previously, manifest content informed the researcher of the precise number of courses at each university. Latent content provided a deeper understanding of the courses offered other than the number of times the course was repeated.

As an attempt to improve the dependability of the findings of Phases 2 and 3, this study employed several techniques identified from prior research. First, open coding of interview responses was conducted in a nonlinear fashion. Rereading the responses across participants allowed the researcher to go back and forth between codes in order to revise the categories (Babbie, 2010). In addition, to control for bias, the researcher began the interview by using neutral and non-leading questions. This strategy helped participants express themselves without being influenced the researcher. Additionally, to control for bias prior to data analysis, any possible personal bias for the overarching topics of Phases 2 and 3 was acknowledged. The researcher remained attentive to report all themes that emerged from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1999).

In addition, providing extensive verbatim transcription of the interviews (e.g., direct quotes) resulted in rich representative data that supports the transferability of the data. Even though many qualitative researchers have no desire to generalize beyond the research setting, this study could be transferred to another situation when it is proximately similar. This study might be transferable when treatment, setting, population, outcome, and time circumstances of this research apply (most likely in other Saudi Arabian universities) (Jahnson, 1997; Patton, 2002).

Most importantly, the conclusions derived from all three phases were achieved through triangulation. By collecting data from different sources (Western universities in Phase 1, HRMs

and ASMs in Phase 2, and UGs in Phase 3), the triangulation of data was achieved. Triangulation provides greater credibility of data and greater understanding of the findings across different data sources (Patton, 2002). Keeping in mind that the research questions provide the scaffolding for the researcher and the cornerstone of data analysis, research questions should be carefully cross-referenced to the study's overall research questions or intended purposes (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). See Table 4 to compare interview questions to research questions. Finally, in forming the new apparel merchandising program in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia, the relationship between the knowledge and the skills included in the program and data sources was established (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). See Table 5 for the relationship between the skills and the different data sources.

Table 4. The Relationship between the Research Questions and Interview Questions.

Research Questions	Research Phase	Interview Questions
1. What subject matter is included in the curricula in U.S. apparel merchandising programs?	1	*Phase 1 - Content Analysis of TFMS* Question - 1, 2, and 3
2. What are the skills and knowledge needed for Saudi female students to qualify for job opportunities within the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia?	1, 2, and 3	*Phase 1 - Content Analysis of TFMS* Question - 2 *Phase 2 - Interviews with Human Resource Managers (HRM) and Apparel Store Managers (ASM)* Question - 1, 2, 3, and 4 *Phase 3 - Interviews with current Apparel and Textiles Students (ATS)* Question - 2
3. What are the needs and interests of current Saudi students in apparel and textiles programs?	3	*Phase 3 - Interviews with current Apparel and Textile Students (ATS)* Question - 1 and 3

Table 5. Skills Identified in the Study Phases

Hard skills related to	Study phase	Soft skills related to	Study phase
Finance	1, 2	Persuasion skills	2
Accounting	1, 2	Communication	1, 2, 3
Business planning	1, 2	Commitment	2
Management	1, 2, 3	Sense of responsibility	2
Sales	1, 2	Sustainability and social responsibility	1, 2
Customer service	2	Teamwork	1, 2, 3
Consumer behavior	1, 2, 3	Hard work	2
Mathematics	1, 2	English language	1, 2, 3
Design theories and processes	1, 2, 3	Lifelong learning	2
Appearance theories	1, 2	Identifying areas of weakness and strength	2
Aesthetics and dress	1, 2	Work experience	1, 2, 3
Advertising and promotion	1, 2	Creativity	1, 3
Supply chain management	1, 2		
Globalization	1, 2, 3		
Company product line and culture	1, 3		

Chapter 4 - Results

In the previous chapter, detailed information was reported regarding the three phases of this study. Samples, instruments, and data analysis procedures for each phase were described. In this chapter, an overview of the samples and data collected in each phase is summarized and reported in sufficient detail. This chapter first presents the results from the content analysis of the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS) in the US. Then, this chapter describes the findings collected from Human Resource Managers (HRMs) and Apparel Store Managers (ASMs) during the second phase of the study. At the end of this chapter, the results from interviewing the current students in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia (UGs) are described.

Phase 1

As noted in Chapter 3, the aim of Phase 1 was to identify the required subject matter of apparel merchandising programs at Western universities. This was achieved by generating data for each institution to explore the program missions of the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS), the required courses within the programs, and the sequencing of these courses. A brief summary of each institution provided by Fashion-Schools.org including the mission of each program is listed below:

1. Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, New York. The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) is New York's internationally recognized college for design, fashion, art, communication, and business. FIT was founded in 1944 and its campus is home to more than 10,000 students. The school offers unique degrees, such as Visual Presentation and Exhibition Design, Cosmetic and Fragrance Marketing, Textile Development and Marketing, International Trade and Marketing, Advertising and Marketing Communications, and Fashion Merchandising Management. FIT prepares fashion merchandising management students for careers in buying,

sales management, planning, allocation, product development, retail, wholesale management, and many other merchandising positions. FIT equips students with the skill set to compete in today's international marketplace. Students in the program can further develop their areas of expertise through internships and other opportunities, such as field trips for experiential learning. A total of 120 credits are needed to receive a BS in Fashion Merchandising Management from FIT (FIT, 2014).

2. Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, Georgia. Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) was established in 1978 as a private, nonprofit institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The school is home to more than 11,000 students, and it has campuses in Savannah, Atlanta, Hong Kong, and Lacoste, France. The Fashion Marketing and Management program at SCAD prepares students for responsibilities, such as sourcing materials, supply chain management, manufacturing, economic strategy, consumer understanding, and communication with all stakeholders of fashion products. To earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts, SCAD students must complete 121 credits (SCAD, 2014).

3. Columbia College of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois. Columbia College was founded as the Columbia School of Oratory in 1890. Columbia College is home to more than 12,000 students and more than 120 programs. Marketing students have a number of programs to choose from including a BFA in Fashion Design, a BFA in Advertising and Art Direction, and a BA in Fashion Business. The BA in Fashion Business comprises 51 core credits in the major, leaving ample room for students to pursue interdisciplinary course options, a minor, or a double major. The curriculum is rooted in a business foundation, which is complemented by a full range of fashion courses. Students need 120 credits to graduate with a BA degree in Fashion Business (Columbia College of Chicago, 2014).

4. The University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. The University of Missouri (MU) was established in 1839, and attracts more than 33,000 students from 115 countries each year. There are four tracks available in textile and apparel management. Among them are Apparel Marketing and Merchandising. The program prepares students for a range of positions in soft goods and the business world. This includes jobs with apparel firms, retailers, textile firms, marketing firms, sourcing firms, media, and others. Students must complete 120 credits to receive a BS in Apparel Marketing and Merchandising (University of Missouri, 2014).

5. LIM College, New York, New York. LIM was founded in 1939 as the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising. Later in 2009, the school became LIM College. Although the LIM student body consists of students from 39 states, many of the students are from New York and New Jersey. LIM College prepares students for careers in every aspect of the fashion business. The Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Fashion Merchandising prepares students for a wide range of positions in fashion and related industries. The degree can be obtained by completing 126 credits (LIM, 2014).

6. Lasell College, Newton Massachusetts. The Lasell College was founded in 1851 as a private school. Lasell College is home to more than 1,600 undergraduate students and more than 200 graduate students. Fashion students at Lasell College have an interesting selection of programs to choose from including a BA in Fashion Communication and Promotion, a BA in Fashion Design and Production, and a BS in Fashion and Retail Merchandising. Fashion Marketing and Retail Merchandising graduates pursue careers as buyers, inventory planners, merchandisers, magazine writers, visual merchandisers, and store managers for various product categories. For graduation, a minimum of 120 credits is required (Lasell College, 2014).

7. Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Kansas State University (K-State) was founded in 1863. K-state has more than 24,000 students from all 50 states and 100 countries. K-state offers 250 undergraduate majors, 65 master's degrees, 45 doctoral degrees, and 22 graduate certificates in multiple disciplines across campus. The Department of Apparel, Textiles, and Interior Design offers a BS degree in Apparel and Textiles with specializations in Apparel Marketing or Apparel Design and Production. Apparel Marketing students are prepared for a wide variety of careers in the fashion industry, such as retail merchandiser, sales representative, department or store manager, trend forecaster, buyer, fashion stylist, fashion coordinator, product developer, and operations manager. Students must complete 125 credits for graduation (K-State University, 2014).

8. University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island. The University of Rhode Island (URI) was founded in 1892 and offers more than 80 majors to more than 13,000 students. Fashion majors at URI have five programs to choose from including a BS in Textile Marketing and a BS in Textiles and Fashion Merchandising and Design. Textile Marketing graduates possess knowledge in market research, product development, and sales functions for corporations producing fiber, yarns, fabrics, and apparel for interior and industrial customers. To complete the BS degree in Textile Marketing, students need 120 credits (University of Rhode Island, 2014).

9. Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri. Stephens College was established in 1833. Stephens College is a private women's college located in Missouri, and is the nation's second oldest women's college. The school offers more than 50 majors and minors as well as study abroad opportunities. Fashion students have several programs to choose from including a BS in

Fashion Communication, Fashion Design and Product Development, and Fashion Marketing and Management. To graduate, completion of 127 credits is required (Stephens College, 2014).

10. Mount Ida College, Newton, Massachusetts. Mount Ida College is an independent college located in Boston. With around 1,500 students, Mount Ida College offers small classes and more than 25 areas of study. Mount Ida's School of Design offers several programs for students to choose from including Interior Design, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, and Fashion Merchandising and Marketing. A Fashion and Merchandising degree includes courses on the historical and cultural roots of fashion as well as the modern trends that drive today's fast-paced fashion industry. In addition, business-oriented courses that focus on specific aspects of the fashion marketing industry are included in the program, such as promotion, retail management, trend forecasting, and import and export functions. The Fashion and Marketing and Merchandising degree requires 120 credits (Mount Ida College, 2014).

11. University of Central Missouri, Warrensburg, Missouri. The University of Central Missouri (UCM) was established in 1871. Today, the school is home to more than 12,000 students. UCM offers 150 programs of study leading to a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree. Textile and Clothing in Business students are required to complete a minor in Marketing or Business Administration. The Textile and Clothing in Business program at UCM prepares students for a business-related career in the fashion/textile industry. The program offers students challenges and opportunities ranging from employment with large companies to being a self-employed merchant. The program prepares students for positions in the fashion industry, such as store/department manager, buyer, fashion representative, fashion coordinator, manufacturers' representative, and visual merchandiser. To complete the degree, students need 120 credits (University of Central Missouri, 2014).

12. University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma. The University of Central Oklahoma was established in 1890 as the first public institution of higher education. The University of Central Oklahoma is home to more than 17,000 students. The university offers 116 undergraduate programs and 58 graduate programs. The Department of Human Environmental Sciences offers a Bachelor of Science in Fashion Marketing. The Fashion Marketing program concentrates its coursework in three specific areas: apparel, advertising/promotion, and retailing. The curriculum is designed to give students specialized training and information to move forward within a challenging fashion marketing career. The program prepares students for employment opportunities, such as retail buyer, allocation analyst, account executive, department store manager, merchandise manager, district retail manager, sourcing manager, manufacturer's representative, marketing specialist, merchandise manager, merchandise planner, visual merchandiser, and marketing manager. To complete the program, 124 credits are required (University of Central Oklahoma, 2014). See Table 6 for a summary of the TFMS.

Table 6. Summary of the Top Fashion Marketing Schools

Institution	Degree	Year of Establishment & location	Size of Student Body	Credits required
Fashion Institute of Technology	BS in Fashion Merchandising Management	1944, New York, New York	10,000+	128
Savannah College of Arts and Design	BS in Fashion Marketing and Management	1978, Savannah, Georgia	11,000+	112
Columbia College of Chicago	BFA in Fashion Business	1890, Chicago, Illinois	12,000+	120
The University of Missouri	BS in Apparel Marketing and Merchandising	1839, Columbia, Missouri	33,000+	120
LIM College	BBA in Fashion Merchandising	1939, New York, New York		126
Lasell College	BS in Fashion and Retail Merchandising	1851, Newton, Massachusetts	1,800+	120
Kansas State University	BS in Apparel and Textiles with Specialization in Apparel Marketing	1863, Manhattan, Kansas	24,000+	125
University of Rhode Island	BS in Textiles, Fashion Merchandising, and Design	1892, Kingston, Rhode Island	13,000+	120
Stephens College	BS in Fashion Marketing and Management	1833, Columbia, Missouri	1,000+	127
Mount Ida College	BS in Fashion Merchandising and Marketing	Newton, Massachusetts	1,500+	120
University of Central Missouri	BS in Textiles and Clothing in Business	1871, Warrensburg, Missouri	12,000+	120
University of Central Oklahoma	BS in Fashion Marketing	1890, Edmond, Oklahoma	17,000+	124

Missions of the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS)

Apparel and textiles programs within the TFMS have been named differently; some schools utilize the term marketing while others utilize the terms merchandising or business to refer to the business aspect of the program. Specifically, out of 12 schools' program titles, four include the term marketing, four include the term merchandising, two have the term business, and the last two combine marketing and merchandising. In addition, the schools refer to the apparel and textiles discipline differently as well; ten of the TFMS use the terms fashion and apparel interchangeably. One of these schools includes the terms textile and clothing in the title of its program. Additionally, one of the schools includes the terms textile and fashion in the title. See Figure 2 and Figure 3 for the US TFMS frequencies for using different words in program titles.

Despite the different title names, the goals of the TFMS are nearly similar. For instance, Lasell College offers a Bachelor of Science (BS) in fashion and retail merchandising. This college clearly states that the program's aim is to prepare students for a career in the fashion industry, such as fashion stylist, technician, buyer, inventory planner, merchandiser, store manager, magazine writer, and visual merchandiser. Kansas State University offers a BS in Apparel and Textiles with a specialization in Apparel Marketing to prepare students for careers in the fashion industry. For instance, graduates can pursue careers as a retail merchandiser, sales representative, department or store manager, trend forecaster, buyer, fashion stylist, fashion coordinator, product developer, and operations manager. It is obvious the careers that students are being prepared for are roughly similar in nature, but the terms included in each program title differ and may hold different meanings. For example, the term apparel means clothes in a formal manner (Longman, 2007). The term fashion means a style of clothes that is popular at a

particular time or among a particular group. A style does not become a fashion until it gains popular acceptance. It remains a fashion only as long as it is accepted (Wolfe, 2003). This indicates that the terms fashion and apparel cannot be utilized interchangeability, despite the fact that many Western programs do this.

Figure 2. Clothing, Apparel, and Fashion Term Frequencies among TFMS

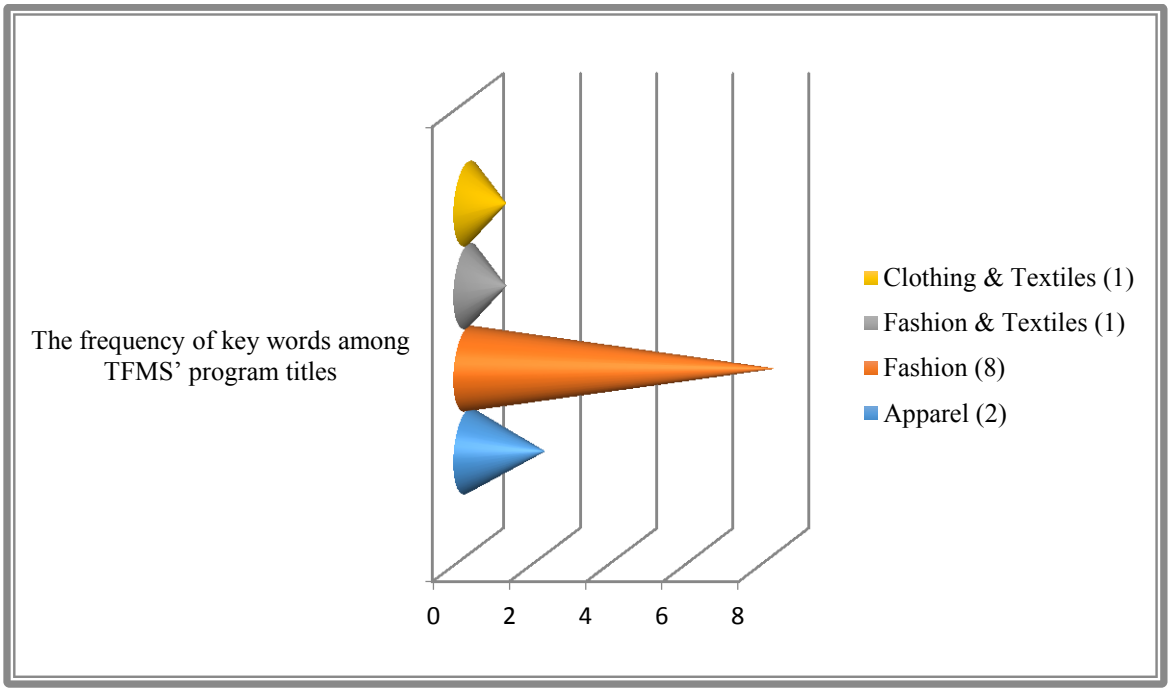
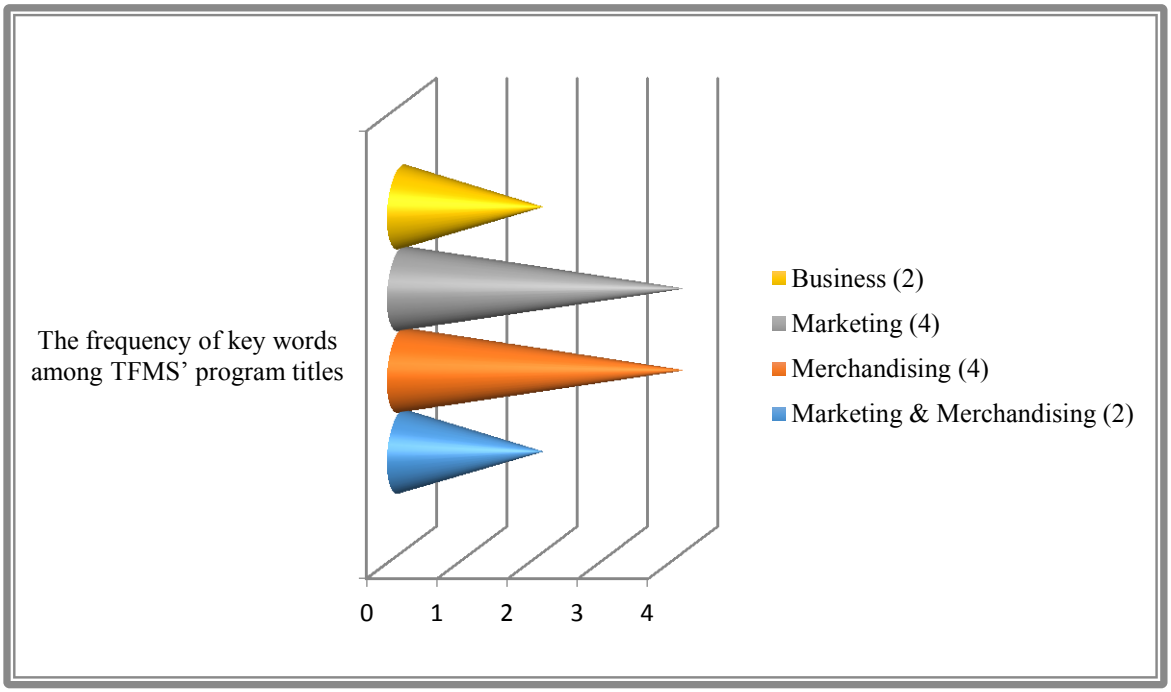


Figure 3. Marketing, Merchandising, and Business Term Frequencies among TFMS



In addition, the term business means the activity of buying or selling goods or services (Longman, 2007). Marketing is the process for finding or creating a profitable market for specific goods or services. The marketing process includes identifying customers, determining those customers' wants and needs, and providing satisfying products at acceptable prices to those customers. The process also incorporates distribution and promotional activities with an overall goal of satisfying customer desires while making a profit for the seller (Wolfe, 2003). Merchandising is a major segment of marketing. While marketing identifies the company's target market and determines that market's needs and wants, merchandising involves varying degrees of planning, buying, and selling. Ideally, merchandising creates the right blend of the right products, the right quantity, the right place, the right time, the right price, and the right appeal (Wolfe, 2003). Marketing and merchandising do not mean precisely the same thing, but they are also used interchangeability in the apparel and textiles discipline. The interchangeable utilization of terms with different meanings in the programs' titles of the TFMS reveals an

identity confusion for the apparel and textiles discipline which requires an immediate attention from apparel and textiles educators. Attention for selecting precise terms that reflect the focus of the apparel and textiles discipline is necessary.

Required courses at the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS)

In general, the schools offer courses that develop a broad range of practical and intellectual skills that meet the requirements of the dynamic nature of the global apparel and textiles industry. The schools offer courses in three main areas including: professional major courses, business foundation courses, and general education courses. Professional courses in the major are those related to the facts, theories, and perspectives regarding the apparel and textiles industry in which students learn how to apply the knowledge gained in the courses to real life situations. Examples are courses that offer content pertaining to apparel and textile processes, appearance and aesthetics, human behavior, global interdependence, social responsibility, and sustainability. In addition, professional major courses also include any courses that offer students the opportunity to apply apparel knowledge to create a product or prepare for future employment. Business foundations courses include economics, marketing, management, accounting, entrepreneurship, and finance. General education courses are in the field of social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, mathematics, and statistics. In addition, students fulfill their program of study requirements with other free elective courses.

Table 7 presents the subject matter included at the TFMS with the number of courses in each subject area as well as the ratio of each required subject matter. A total of 485 courses were analyzed as part of Phase 1. As displayed in Table 7, hard skills (content and process knowledge) had a high frequency among other subject matters (n = 290, 59.79%) while soft skills or professional attitude and skills was second (n = 134, 27.63%). Hard skills included all courses

within industry processes, appearance and human behavior, aesthetics and the design processes, global interdependence, general education, and business foundation. Soft skills included all courses that offer content in ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability, critical and creative thinking, and professional development. Among the subcategories of the subject matter, general education had the highest frequency (n = 91, 18.77%). As noted previously, general education was classified into social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, mathematics, and statistics. Among these, mathematics had the highest frequency among the general education courses (n = 25) followed by social sciences (n = 20), natural sciences (n = 19), humanities (n = 15), and statistics (n = 12).

The second highest frequency among the subject matter was professional development within the soft skills category (n = 83, 17.11%). The professional development subcategory included three main areas of study: career planning, working effectively with team members/

Table 7. Required Subject Matter at TFMS

Topics	Number of courses (*n*)	Ratio (%)
Category 1: Hard Skills (Content & Process Knowledge*)*		
Industry processes	69	14.23
Appearance & human behavior	13	2.68
Aesthetics & the design process	42	8.66
Global interdependence	11	2.27
General education	91	18.77
Business foundations	64	13.19
Total	290	59.79
Category 2: Soft Skills (Professional Attitude & Skills)		
Ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability	8	1.65
Critical & creative thinking	43	8.87
Professional development	83	17.11
Total	134	27.63
Electives	61	12.58
Total	485	

leaders, and communication of ideas in written, oral, and visual forms. Among these three areas, communication of ideas in written, oral and visual forms had the highest frequency (n = 47) followed by career planning (n = 24), and then working effectively with team members and leaders (n = 12). After professional development, the industry processes subcategory within the hard skills category placed third in the frequency list of required subject matter at the TFMS (n =69, 14.23%). As noted previously, industry processes consisted of supply chain management, forecasting and advertising, industry terminology, product quality, and social, economical, and political boundaries. Within the industry processes category, supply chain management had the highest frequency (n = 50). Supply chain management included all courses pertaining to the development, production, sourcing, marketing, and buying of apparel and textile goods.

Business foundations was fourth in the list of the required subject matter at the TFMS (n = 64, 13.19%). The most frequent course among business courses was marketing (n =18) followed by management, economics, finance, accounting, and economics. The critical and creative thinking subcategory within the soft skills category and the aesthetics and the design processes subcategory within the hard skills category came next with similar frequencies (n = 43, 8.87% and n = 42, 8.66%). Next came appearance and human behavior as well as global interdependence (n = 13, 2.68% and n = 11, 2.27%). The last required subject matter within the TFMS was the ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability subcategory as part of the soft skills category (n =8, 1.65%).

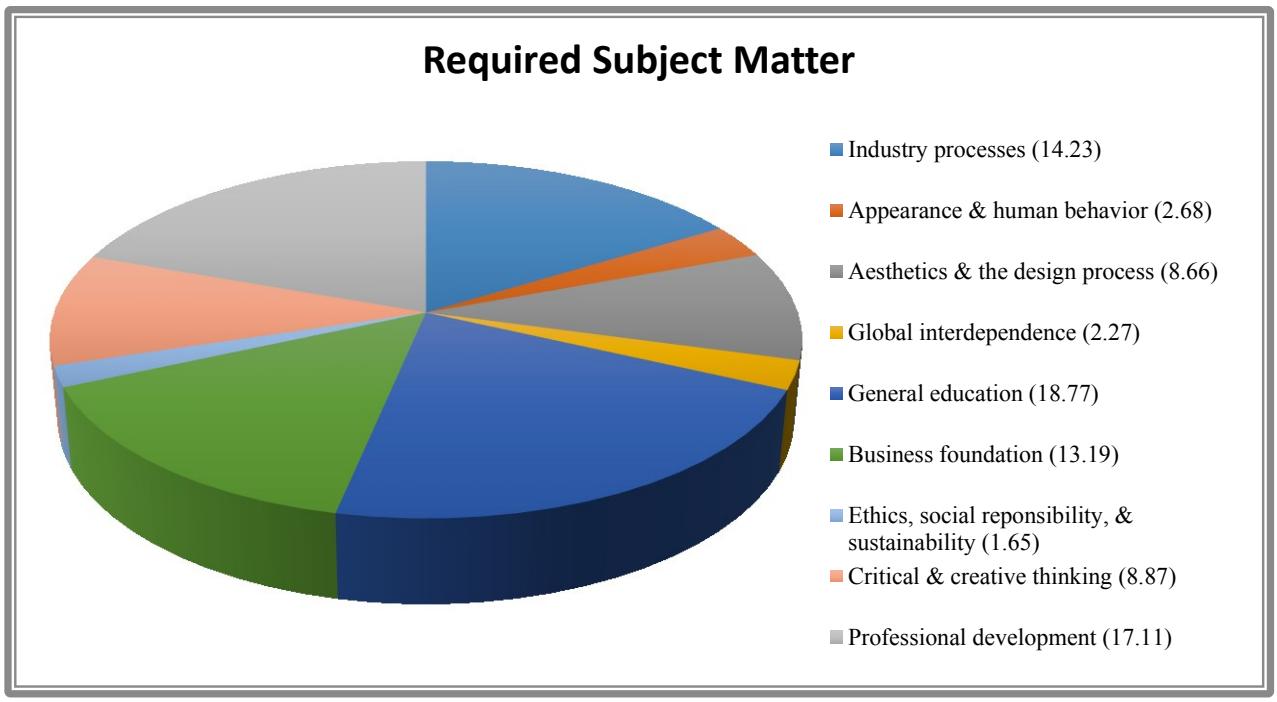
Sequencing of courses at the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS)

Seven schools of the TFMS provide their students with a suggested sequencing of courses within the programs. This guide helps the students plan their program of study. The other five schools do not provide a guide but encourage students to meet with their advisors to plan the program of study. Analyzing the seven schools' suggested course sequencing indicates that students need to enroll in 12 to 18 credits per semester in order to complete all degree requirements in four years. The schools require students to enroll in at least one or two courses in the major area each semester. Students are required to start the program with introductory, basic, and fundamental concepts and theories related to the major area. In conjunction, students need to enroll in business foundation courses as well as general education courses. Later in the third and fourth years, students can enroll in advanced major courses where they utilize previous knowledge in hands-on experiences and real life situations.

The TFMS website content analysis indicated valuable information regarding subject matter as a focal point of curricula choosing. This information could be used as a foundation for

building a new AT apparel merchandising program in Saudi Arabia. Yet, this information must be supported by another curricula focal point that implements the nature of society or, in this study, the perception of industry professionals in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 4. Required Subject Matter at TFMS



Phase 2

As noted in Chapter 3, the aim of Phase 2 was to answer the second research question of this study: "What are the skills and knowledge needed to qualify for job opportunities within the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia?" This was achieved by conducting in-depth interviews with HRMs and ASMs in Saudi Arabia. Six HRMs of the main retail franchisers for Western brands in Saudi Arabia were contacted via email to schedule interview times. This sample included one female and five male participants, ranging in ages 30–39. All participants held a 4-year Bachelor's degree.

Among the ASMs, the number of Saudi women who participated in this phase was also limited. Among 15 ASMs participating in this phase, only five of them were female. The apparel

store managers were in the 26–47 age range. Their level of education varied from having a high school diploma to having earned a bachelor's degree. The business size was different among the sample as well. Five of the participants managed less than five employees, seven participants managed five to ten employees, two participants managed 10–15 employees, and one participant managed 20 employees. Table 8 describes the demographic characteristics of HRMs and ASMs participating in this phase.

The interview data was organized into three main categories: (1) over time, the apparel retail industry has become a new working environment for Saudi women, (2) characteristics needed to succeed in the Saudi apparel retail industry, and (3) the need for Saudi government support exists.

Table 8. Demographic Summary of Human Resource Managers and Apparel Store Mangers

Participant ID #	Nationality	Age	Sex	Highest Education	Years of experience	Number of workers
HRM1	Saudi Arabian	36	Male	Bachelor's	15	-
HRM2	Saudi Arabian	30	Male	Bachelor's	5	-
HRM3	Jordanian	38	Male	Bachelor's	15	-
HRM4	Saudi Arabian	36	Female	Bachelor's	10	-
HRM5	Syrian	34	Male	Bachelor's	16	-
HRM6	Saudi Arabian	39	Male	Bachelor's	19	-
ASM1	Egyptian	39	Male	Bachelor's	12	4
ASM2	Egyptian	38	Male	Associate's	10	4
ASM3	Syrian	33	Male	Bachelor's	10	20
ASM4	Egyptian	27	Male	Associate's	10	5
ASM5	Egyptian	32	Male	Associate's	15	15
ASM6	Syrian	35	Male	Bachelor's	10	9
ASM7	Pakistani	30	Male	High School	18	3
ASM8	Saudi Arabian	29	Male	High School	8	6
ASM9	Yamani	26	Male	High School	7	5
ASM10	Yamani	27	Male	High School	9	3
ASM 11	Saudi Arabian	33	Female	Bachelor's	3	5
ASM12	Saudi Arabian	47	Female	High School	3	3
ASM13	Saudi Arabian	28	Female	Bachelor's	2	4
ASM14	Saudi Arabian	30	Female	Bachelor's	3	5
ASM15	Saudi Arabian	35	Female	High School	2	5

1) Over time, the apparel retail industry has become a new working environment for Saudi women

The participants in this phase agreed that Saudi women entering the apparel retail industry today possess no previous knowledge or sufficient training, which has resulted in a variety of issues. All HRMs and ASMs praised the feminization movement of apparel stores that allows Saudi women to work in the apparel retail industry; however, they all agreed that women need more preparation before entering the industry. The data revealed two essential themes for this category: (a) a lack of understanding of the retail industry, and (b) challenges of mixed working environments.

- Lack of understanding of the retail industry

Out of the 21 participants, 19 participants reported that Saudi women do not have sufficient knowledge about the employment opportunities available for them in the apparel industry, nor do they understand the requirements needed to be successful in the industry. This misunderstanding seems to be a main obstacle Saudi women encounter, which prevents them from taking advantage of new employment opportunities. HRM4, a human resource manager who is the only female among the HRMs in this study, shared her experience regarding working with Saudi women:

> HRM4: The apparel retail industry in Saudi is large and full of job opportunities for males and females. Now according to the new Ministry of Labor laws concerning employing females in clothes shops, there is a great need for women working in this very large sector. The problem is that there aren't qualified women understanding how to work in this field, it is very hard to find suitable women. Women here don't understand clothes trade. They don't know the kinds of jobs we offer. They have the image that we

only seek sellers [saleswomen]. This is not true. The field is much larger! Selling is a primary phase, after that there will be many chances for management positions they can be upgraded and assigned for, but these posts require qualified knowledgeable people. I'd like to have women from the apparel department to work with me but they should know about textile materials and things like that. The problem is that if women study design, they think that they should have design work only! We market for international brands that have their own designers. The needed jobs for us are completely different from designing.

The participants also mentioned the lack of understanding of what the retail industry consists of and how it works. Saudi women currently working in the apparel retail industry do not receive sufficient training before entering the workforce. For the participants, the feminization movement of apparel stores was implemented in a short period of time, which did not allow enough time to prepare women for this industry. Because of the Ministry of Labor's campaign to close any apparel store not complying with the feminization law, retailers had to hire women in their stores after a few weeks of training. This has resulted in negative repercussions, such as a loss in sales. Such circumstances have led franchising apparel companies to assume that women are not a good choice for operating apparel retail stores in Saudi Arabia. ASM6, a store manager for one of the luxury brands, clearly described a situation that happened in one of the brand stores in the capital city, Riyadh:

ASM6: When the women [were] employed in the market, they weren't qualified and the result was that sales in one of our shops in Riyadh went down 80%. This, of course, affected the women from the employer's point of view and even the society. I think if women were having enough awareness of the work in the market before joining it, there

wouldn't be such great loss. On the other hand, some women proved to be reliable, they succeeded and reached great managing jobs but they aren't many and [the] majority of them were studying abroad.

- Challenges of working in the Saudi apparel retail industry

By adhering to Islamic teachings, Saudi women have to work in an environment where separation between men and women is ensured. However, the increasing number of female graduates in Saudi Arabia and the lack of government employment opportunities create a need for additional job opportunities for women in the private sector, particularly in the apparel retail industry. Because the apparel retail industry is a mixed working environment, Saudi women working in this field is a controversial topic. Saudi society still resists women's work in the apparel retail sector. The Saudi society still does not appreciate the apparel retail industry as a suitable workplace for women. Saudi women's participation in the apparel retail industry became a solution for the high unemployment rate among female college graduates through the feminization movement of apparel stores. This movement was adopted by the government without the full support or blessing of the Saudi people. Although some of the participants avoided this topic, eight openly explained their point of view regarding Saudi women working in the apparel retail industry where the separation between men and women is impossible. People need to understand that the education sector cannot accommodate more numbers of Saudi women, and other employment options for women even in mixed working environments must be provided. ASM7 shared:

ASM7: One of the qualities of our society is refusing change. It's difficult to change people and make them accept something new. It takes time for people to accept women

work in the market and till that time comes, all women working in the market should be patient and should ignore the unpleasant comments.

In addition, the social perspective of inferiority of women working in the apparel retail industry must change as many Saudis still think that the apparel industry is a low paying sector. The participants reported that the proper use of media can educate people and raise awareness about the employment opportunities in the apparel retail industry. Evidence of this is provided in the following quotes:

> ASM6: We have a young woman, qualified from London in Business Management Administration. She is working in a position of regional manager. She is very distinguished and her personality is so strong that all the workers in the company had to respect her. In our Eastern societies, it's a problem for men to have a female manager but this woman greatly succeeded by her strong personality and information she offers for the workers in the company. If the strong personality unites with knowledge, nothing stops success. This type of women should be a model to the others. They should be well known to make people understand that apparel retail sector has successful efficient people.

> ASM14: Few days ago, an old woman entered the shop. She was asking about dresses and I was answering her. We were going around watching dresses. Then she told me that I wouldn't be working here if I studied. I was about to tell her that I have bachelor degree! They should be told that they are wrong. Media should show the successful women especially those who started from the very beginning and took it gradually until having good positions in apparel retail. It is true that they are not many but this may lead people to appreciate us. Frankly, this woman's speech annoyed me much and I felt I

should give up my job although I love it. Then I changed my mind, as there won't be another work. What to do? Work as a teacher! I don't like that.

Another challenge, which Saudi women encounter in the apparel retail industry, is the interaction with men in the workplace. HRM1, a human resource manager, explained that because being in a mixed working environment of the apparel retail industry is new for Saudi women, not all Saudi women are able to communicate well with men. The difficulties in communication between the two sexes creates an inconvenient working environment as illustrated below:

HRM1: Working in a mixed community is considered a rather new experience for the Saudi woman. What we see now in the market is that the majority of women working in the retail sector are divided into only two sections. Some are so shy for dealing with men and this often slows work down and others are very open when dealing with men and this is not acceptable in a conservative society like ours. I wish the academic people would find a solution to this problem, as we in the training centers of the company couldn't solve it.

Another HRM who is the only female among the HRMs participating in this study went further in discussing a mixed working environment of apparel retail industry as a new experience for women. She explained that there is a lack of understanding for what is considered appropriate behavior for women in mixed working environments. In a conservative society, this has influenced the social perspectives of Saudi women working in this field. The following excerpt provides evidence of this:

HRM4: In a conservative society like ours, external appearance is very important especially in mixed situations. When we first started hiring females, women were putting

on make-up, which was not suitable for any working environment. It happened that sales went down. On searching and investigating, we discovered that the customers enter the store and left after seeing the girls in full make up. That is not good, I want the customer [to] stay in the shop and buy. For me, satisfying customers is what I am looking for. From that time on, we have become careful about such things but young women still need to understand our society better and pay attention to such details.

The challenges of working in the Saudi apparel retail industry were also mentioned among the female store managers participating in this study. ASM15 emphasized the need for educating women about working with men. She reported that in any mixed working environment, there are always potential sexual harassment threats, and it is better to avoid these by educating women. Her argument is addressed below:

ASM15: Working in a mixed environment needs women to be aware of the relation between them and the male manager. This is not in Saudi Arabia only but all over the world. If we are going to work with men, we should know the limits in the relation between men and us. I would educate women before hiring them. I expect your university studies will deal with such matters. Knowing things is better than being ignorant about them!

2) Characteristics needed to succeed in the apparel retail industry

All themes in this category were viewed as essential among the participants. The participants shared their thoughts about characteristics necessary for women to succeed in the Saudi apparel industry. HRMs and ASMs discussed several themes and went further to support their opinions by telling real life stories in which they were inspired. Through the process of data

analysis, three main themes emerged: (a) the need to develop a strong personality, (b) the need to have career goals, (c) and the need for balancing duties at work and home

- Developing a strong personality

Out of the 21 participants interviewed in this phase, 11 participants described having a strong personality as a major characteristic needed for Saudi women to succeed in advanced employment opportunities in the apparel retail industry (e.g., store manager, area manager, brand manager, human resource manager, etc.). According to the participants, Saudi women need to work more on leadership skills to be promoted in the apparel retail industry. They emphasized that the traditional image of Saudi women is characterized by a reliance on men. These findings are noted in the following responses:

> ASM3: Traditions and customs still effect the Saudi woman. We have women working with us in the market, they are managing shops specialized [in] lingerie and it's clear that they have a problem in taking decisions and they always wait for orders for what to do. The manager is responsible for everything. It is not acceptable that she has to wait for solutions from others. If the officials working with her noticed that, they wouldn't be convinced with her personality. Women's personality before the officials is very important because the whole society is observing her behavior in that new field for her.
>
> ASM6: We have a young woman, qualified from London in Business Management Administration, she is working in a position of regional manager. She is very distinguished and her personality is so strong that all the workers in the company had to respect her. In our Eastern societies, it's a problem for men to have a female manager but this woman greatly succeeded by her strong personality and information she offers for

the workers in the company. If the strong personality unites with knowledge, nothing stops success.

- Having career goals

Out of the 21 participants, four HRMs and eight ASMs, discussed that Saudi women need to determine their goals before accepting any employment opportunities in the apparel retail industry. The participants explained that most women working in the apparel retail industry do not have a clear goal to achieve while working in retail positions or in any position at all. Working with this attitude hinders women's success in the apparel retail industry and keeps them in lower paying jobs. For the participants, success is met by setting a goal and working hard to achieve it. Below are some quotes in which the importance of determining career goals in order to achieve success are addressed:

ASM4: I think the problem is the absence of goals. Many women don't have experience in the field and its available opportunities. So, they don't have an aim to achieve. I think women entered this field only to pass time. Of course thinking like that doesn't lead to success. Each successful person should have a goal and look up to achieve it and when getting it, she wants something better. The absence of a goal prevents work progress.

ASM15: I always say specifying the goal is the only way to success in any project in [the] apparel retail sector or any other work. A woman should decide her goal; she should ask herself, Why do I apply for this job? What do I want? Do I want to go on here? Is it only a step in my life? Do I really like working here or not? What is my motive to work here? When she thinks like that, she will think seriously about the work and draw a way of her success.

In addition, the participants provided examples of successful women in the apparel retail industry who achieved their goals in a short period of time by working hard. Mostly HRMs addressed those women and hoped that such stories would inspire other women to set goals, and then draw their path to achieve it:

> HRM1: I always give an example about a Saudi woman in our company who started working with 4000 riyal as a salary and only 3 years later, she has 20 thousand Saudi riyal. She is a model for the well aware person who puts an aim before her. Working hard and faithfully and her care for realizing success lead her to it. I wish all the female workers in the apparel retail sector would take her as a model.

- The need for balancing duties at work and home

Among the 21 participants, 11 discussed the need to make sacrifices as an important theme to succeeding in the apparel retail industry. Work-life balance is an issue that women encounter in any workplace. Particularly in the apparel retail industry where work hours are long and subject to be extended, women face more difficulties managing their time between home responsibilities and work commitments. In fact, the only female HRM in this study reported that her success was not achieved easily:

> HRM4: I am currently working in the post of human resources manager. My position is good and l have suitable privileges (advantages), but all that happened by hard work. I travelled to the US and had a certificate in human resources and spent [a] long time in my work and thank God, I gained the authorities' trust and deserved to be here. Every woman [who] likes to succeed should know that success costs her something and sometimes it affects her home.

3) The need for the Saudi government support exists

The need for Saudi government support was the third category generated from the data of Phase 2. Themes in this category resonated among a majority of the participants. The participants in this phase agreed that Saudi women need the Saudi government support in terms of education and transportation. The data revealed two essential themes for this category: (a) the need for academic preparation to succeed in the apparel retail industry, and (b) the need for a transportation system.

- The need for academic preparation to succeed in the apparel retail industry

This theme was the most dominant theme in this phase of data collection. The need for academic preparation was discussed by all of the participants. All HRMs and ASMs agreed that the lack of appropriate knowledge and skills is a major obstacle Saudi women face in the apparel retail industry. The participants noted that educating Saudi women to succeed in the apparel retail industry has to be through Saudi universities. First, in terms of what Saudi women need to learn, Apparel Store Managers shared their work experiences; they described their daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, and yearly tasks. Apparel Store Managers emphasized the knowledge and skills necessary to perform these tasks. In addition, they reported challenges in their work because of the lack of training and difficulty in strategizing solutions to problems. HRMs reported the skills and knowledge considered important to ensure a successful career in apparel merchandising. HRMs and ASMs in this study perceived business knowledge, apparel and textile knowledge (e.g. discipline-specific knowledge), basic math, and professional development skills as desirable for retail positions. Each one of these sub-themes was further classified and fully discussed by all participants. For instance, HRM6 emphasized four subject areas that are important to succeed in the apparel retail industry: (a) management skills; (b) apparel and textile

knowledge described as design, color theory, and fabric/textile knowledge; (c) an understanding of consumer behavior, and (d) communication skills:

> HRM6: In clothes trade and especially store management, there are two important things; first, a manager should have sufficient knowledge about management. It is also important to know about clothes (textiles, colors, suitable designs for the country, and suitable textiles for our weather). It is important to know the brand you work with, the materials used in clothes' production and the company policy. We can say she (brand expert) should know people and how to deal with different types of people.

A store manager (ASM11) who is female and has been working in retail merchandising for three years shared her struggles in organizing/merchandising the store window and writing emails in English. The participant acknowledged that the training she had at the firm's training center was not enough to equip her with needed skills. She hoped that she would have an opportunity to learn those skills early in school or at least have free time to acquire them now:

> ASM11: I face a difficulty in arranging the window and writing reports in English. Concerning the windows, a specialist comes to arrange it and I try to learn from him but till now I can't be independent. Writing reports and e-mails in English is my biggest problem. I use Google to help me but its translation is full of mistakes and I always look for someone to correct Google mistakes.

In this study, professional development was highly recommended as a subject to prepare college students for retail positions. When participants discussed professional work behaviors, they mentioned persuasion skills, dealing with difficult people, written and verbal communication, commitment, sense of responsibility, teamwork, and hard work. In addition, participants described the importance of the English language, life-long learning, time

management, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and having previous work experience. All 21 participants valued these skills for preparing students for apparel retail careers. The following excerpts from the interviews provide further evidence of this:

> ASM7: Any manager should know his own strength and weakness points to be able to improve himself and so becomes self-confident. The second step, he should understand people he works with. Clothes trade involves teamwork and the successful manager is the one who is able to understand officers, urge them to work and awards the hard working. I see that studying at universities is completely different from working in a store. One should practice work as experience enables him to test himself and so improve himself.
>
> ASM13: People are different and everyone has his own desires. Sometimes, I don't know what to do to satisfy them. Months ago, a customer came to the shop and asked for an abayia and I gave her a receipt indicating the receiving time. A few days later and before the receiving time, she entered the shop, shut the door and began throwing things on the floor. She was shouting and destroyed the shop. She wanted her abayia but it hadn't been finished yet. I was confused and didn't know what to do and the girls [employees] were looking at me to do something to stop her. I was shocked for a time then I called the mall security but before they come, she had destroyed the shop. I wish there would be subjects at universities to help us in such situations, how to deal with such people and how to solve such problems. This will be very useful.

Participants were asked follow-up questions regarding the core competency areas included in the ITAA meta-goals. Specifically, participants were asked about the importance of globalization, supply chain management, and knowledge of sustainability for retail position applicants. Different points of views were recorded. Twelve participants, three HRMs and nine

store managers, did not perceive globalization as being an important subject for college graduates seeking employment in the Saudi apparel retail industry. In contrast, nine other participants valued globalization knowledge in preparing students for apparel retail positions as noted in the quote below:

> HRM3: We are part of a global business. Goods come to us from abroad and we have to know everything [that] happens in the countries we import from and be aware of any circumstances that could influence our business. Even apparel store managers, they have to learn about globalization. People are now travelling more than before and they visit malls around the world. It is important to convince the customers that we have the best and we offer the best. Otherwise, we would lose sales.

Out of the 21 participants in this study, 10 devalued sustainability as an important subject matter and reported that students do not need sustainability knowledge to function well in retail positions. In contrast, 11 participants valued sustainability knowledge in the academic preparation of college graduates seeking employment opportunities in the apparel retail industry. Participants explained the importance of sustainability in improving company image and increasing sales. HRM2 shared his interest in sustainability in the following quote:

> HRM2: People is the main target for any company, so we have to show them how much we care. To reach people, we need to do good. We participated in different events such as breast cancer campaign, international day for eradication of poverty, national day, etc. every social event that influence people. We are part of this society and we should care.

Supply chain management was another subject matter considered in preparing Saudi women for the apparel retail industry. Among the participants, 15 perceived knowledge related

to the functioning and management of the supply chain as essential in educating college graduates and qualifying them for apparel retail positions:

> HRM4: Apparel store managers have to manage the stock level and ensure that goods are available on time for consumers. Making orders needs knowledge regarding supply chain. Also, damaged items need to be returned to the company. How goods are produced, distributed, and arrived to us, and time needed to get to the floor are important knowledge for applicants for the apparel retail positions.

As discussed previously, the need for continued learning and skill training was a dominant theme among the HRMs and ASMs. All participants agreed that Saudi women must be educated and prepared to succeed in the apparel retail industry. HRMs and ASMs in this study perceived business knowledge, apparel and textiles knowledge, basic math, and professional development areas of study as desirable for retail position applicants. Each of these sub-themes were further classified into several items. See Table 9 for the subject areas identified by industry professionals as important areas of study for college graduates interested in apparel retail.

Table 9. Important Subject Matters Identified by Industry Professionals

	Area of study	Ratio of participants	Skills or knowledge to be learned
1	**Business**	**100%**	
	Finance		Report and discuss financial data using the appropriate terminology
	Accounting		Utilization of accounting methods to forecast revenue and plan for growth
	Business planning		Constructing a business plan and working to communicate this plan with staff to achieve targeted goals
	Management		Managing staff and resources effectively to achieve targeted goals
	Sales		Increasing sales
	Customer service		Creation of a long-term relationship with customers
	Consumer behavior		Learning about Saudi culture; what is accepted from women in public

2	**Mathematics**	**100%**	Basic mathematics
3	**Apparel and Textiles**	**100%**	
	Fashion		Having appropriate knowledge related to design, colors, and fabric
	Appearance		Understanding the impact of culture on human appearance and the role of dress as a communication tool
	Company Product Lines		Understanding company culture, product lines, and policies
	Sense of beauty		Coordination of apparel items in a fashionable way
	Visual merchandising		Implement skills related to in-store visual merchandising techniques
4	**Professional development**	**100%**	
	Persuasion skills		Increasing sales
	Communication		Communication of ideas effectively in a written and verbal manner
	Commitment		Having a commitment to work hours and to achieve targeted goals
	Sense of responsibility		Accepting responsibility
	Team work		Working well with team members and leaders
	Hard work		Motivation of oneself to complete the work and achieve targeted goals
	English language		Learning specialized English
	Lifelong management		Being able to keep developing and improving
	Identifying strengths and weaknesses		Developing and improving one's self
	Work Experience		Gaining real-world training
5	**Supply chain management**	**71.4%**	Understanding the structure of the apparel and textiles industry
6	**Globalization**	**42.9%**	Understanding the impact of globalization on today's apparel and textiles industry
7	**Sustainability**	**52.4%**	Improving company image through sustainability

Second, in terms of the role of Saudi universities in educating women to succeed in the apparel retail industry, participants noted that any educational system has to be through a formal educational system (i.e., public universities). Participants believed that knowledge regarding the company's product lines and basic knowledge related to design elements, color theory, and visual display might be attained in a few weeks training offered by the companies. However, professional behaviors that the workplace requires must be attained in school and through a long-term educational system. HRM4 shared her concern about the short-term training program offered in the training center of the franchisers' companies:

> HRM4: Our training program is enough to let the person start working but to continue, applicants need a longer time. It's important for anyone to find work but it's more important to continue in it. My viewpoint is that training for a short time before working is not enough. It needs long-term studying. There should be an independent authority (not the employers) to train the girls. We are not academic. We do our best to train them but some particular working behaviors need a long term training to be acquired for example, I can't change a very common person working only for his salary to a dedicated (honest) hard working productive but schools and universities can.

Another HRM in this study explained that public universities can provide the educational system that Saudi women need in order to succeed in the apparel retail industry. At the same time, they can help change society's perspective of women working in retail positions. An HRM shared the role that universities could play in supporting women through a formal educational system:

> HRM1: In our company, we have a training course for 3 months, as all the applicants for these jobs without experience in apparel trade. Training before work and practicing is

very important but the problem is that, we train people for 3 months to work in our company branches but after a short time, they leave. We have 50% turn out! It is a problem for us. Universities could help by education and by changing people's opinion about working in this field if education become through universities.

For Saudi women who are currently working as apparel store managers, the three-month training programs are not sufficient to advance in the apparel retail industry. Women participating in this phase as apparel store managers reported their need for a long-term educational system that qualifies them for advanced positions in apparel retail, most likely through universities. The participants explained that the three-month training was sufficient at the starting phase of their career. Yet, as they advanced, they needed in-depth information regarding management and product knowledge. One of the female apparel store managers in this study reported the following information:

ASM1: Before working here, I was trained for 3 months on the product, sales, type of clients, and how to deal with them. That was a theoretical training prior [to] the practical work. Then, we practiced our work in the shops and saw actually what we heard about in the classes. We used the cash machines and organized the goods. We had a really good suitable useful training at that time. Of course after practicing work here in the shop I learned more but my ambition increased I don't want to be a shop manager all my life. Whenever we look to the higher positions, the more knowledge about management and products it requires. Unfortunately, I haven't studied these things.

- The need for a transportation system

Saudi women must be supported in the apparel retail industry through establishing a transportation system. Because of the law that forbids women driving in Saudi Arabia, women in

apparel retail positions must have support from the government by providing an immediate solution for the transportation problem. HRM6 was quoted as saying, "Transportation is still a problem for women. We try to solve this problem by giving women more transportation replacement but if the transportation problem is completely solved, it would be much easier for us as companies."

The nature of society or, in this study, the perception of industry professionals in Saudi Arabia was a worthy source of information for this study. HRMs and ASMs provided valuable information that will help develop an apparel merchandising track in the AT discipline in Saudi Arabia. However, the third point of choosing curricula, the nature of the individual or, in this study, the needs of students currently enrolled in AT programs, has to be reported.

Phase 3

To construct a new undergraduate program for Saudi apparel and textiles students with a specialization in apparel merchandising, this study was conducted in three phases as described previously. In the third phase, in-depth interviews were conducted with current students in the apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia. The aim of the third phase was to answer the third research question: "What are the needs and interests of current Saudi students in apparel and textiles programs?" A total of 17 female apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia were interviewed. The students were in the 21–24 age range. Five of the students were married; two of them had only one child. Table 10 describes the demographic characteristics of the apparel and textiles undergraduate students (UG) in this study.

The analysis of the interview data revealed five main categories of findings, including: (1) a need to appreciate and understand AT as a major exists among the students, (2) students need to learn business knowledge to succeed in the Saudi apparel retail industry, (3) students

need to learn soft skills to foster professional development and growth, (4) a demand exists for creating two specializations (apparel merchandising and apparel design) as part of the Saudi AT major, and (5) an interest in promoting comradery among AT students is warranted.

Table 10. Demographic Summary of Current Apparel and Textiles Students in Saudi Arabia

Participant Code	Age	Marital status	College	Semester of graduation
UG1	22	Single	Art and Design	Fall 15
UG2	21	Single	Art and Design	Fall 15
UG3	21	Single	Art and Design	Fall 15
UG4	22	Married	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG5	22	Married	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG6	24	Married	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG7	23	Married	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG8	23	Married	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG9	22	Single	Art and Design	Fall 15
UG10	22	Single	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG11	23	Single	Art and Design	Spring 15
UG12	22	Single	Art and Design	Fall 15
UG13	21	Single	Art and Design	Fall 15
UG14	23	Single	Home Economics	Spring 15
UG15	22	Single	Home Economics	Spring 15
UG16	21	Single	Home Economics	Fall 15
UG17	22	Engaged	Home Economics	Spring 15

1) A need to appreciate and understand AT as a major exists among the students

A significant finding of this study was that many Saudi students do not appreciate and understand the nature of the apparel and textiles discipline. This is an issue that calls for immediate attention among apparel and textiles educators in Saudi Arabia. The apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia cannot evolve or thrive without people who believe in it and understand its nature. Most students participating in this study appeared to have a difficult time identifying themselves as apparel and textiles majors. Related to this category, three themes emerged: (a) students' felt they had few options in selecting a major, (b) students lacked an understanding of the reasoning for basic course requirements in the apparel and textiles major,

and (c) and a need for changing the social perspective of inferiority of women working in the apparel retail industry exists.

- Students' felt they had few options in selecting a major

Out of the 17 students, 12 reported that the apparel and textiles major was not their first choice. Students enrolled in the apparel and textiles program because of their low high school Grade Point Average (GPA). The apparel and textiles program was the only major available to them. During enrollment, students either did not have the required GPA for other majors or the enrollment cap of another major was already met. Thus, they had to enroll in the apparel and textiles program or stay home. Students started their education journey in the apparel and textiles program with no passion to learn or succeed. For 12 participating students in this study, the only motive to study apparel and textiles was not to stay home. Participants shared their feelings about being apparel and textiles students as highlighted in the following quotes:

> UG2: Actually, I did not want this field. In fact, I love fashion, but I don't want to be specialized in it. I hoped to be graduated in the medicine major, but I did not get a sufficient grade to enter the College of Medicine. I also tried to enter the Department of Interior Design, but I could not. They said that there is [enrollment] sufficiency in the Department of Interior Design. So, I was forced to join the fashion design department because I have no choice. At first I was annoyed by the subjects and practical work but after while, I accepted reality.
>
> UG3: I did not imagine that I would study sewing. I wanted graphics department but I got rejected. I thought not to study in any university at all. You know my mother forced me to studying and get the bachelor and due to my degree, I had to join this department. I have no choice!

In contrast, five students showed their love and enthusiasm to join the apparel and textiles program. These students were proud of their major and had a passion to succeed. The students expressed their goals or desires which led them to enroll in the apparel and textiles major. Apparel and textiles students should have this positive attitude about their major to successfully move forward in the discipline and also to propel the discipline forward. UG15 and UG16 shared their love for the apparel and textiles major in the following quotes:

> UG15: I joined the Fashion Design because I like the practical work. I don't like the theoretical subjects, as I don't enjoy them at all. The practical subjects have the production joy. When I work on an apparel piece, I feel happiness, as I'll see the result of my work and people will see and admire it even if this takes a whole semester. Our major is nice but is not well appreciated. Many people ask me why my specialty in apparel as long as my degree in the High school was good. I remember my first class when the professor talked about our major and said: "Physician are not needed every day but clothes are."
>
> UG16: We are a conservative society, and you notice that our clothes are imported and most of the time they are not suitable for our customs and traditions. I thought why not studying apparel designing and design what Saudi customers and I like. Some people travel to Dubai to purchase their apparel items from female apparel designers of Emirates; they are looking for unique items. I can do that; design fashionable clothes which are suitable for our society and people who don't like the Western fashion style.

- Students lacked an understanding of the reasoning for basic course requirements in the AT major

This theme was dominant among students in this study. Sixteen students argued that as designers, they should not have to learn sewing. From the students' point of view, designers have no need for sewing knowledge and only require drawing skills. Below, one of the participants shared her belief that she should not have to study sewing because she will be a designer:

> UG1: My aim after graduation is to have a workshop to produce apparel garments. I'll employ seamstresses and I'll design. The problem is that my study didn't qualify me to be a designer. All subjects are about sewing. Why is it important to study sewing while I'll be a designer? I am not going to sew. We have nice useful subjects like fashion shows. I learned a lot from them about clothes matching. Even my way of walking became different after studying this subject but it is an optional subject while all the sewing subjects are required although they are not useful. I really hate being named a seamstress.

Similar to the argument regarding sewing courses, ten students argued that working in the apparel retail industry is not related to their major in the apparel and textiles discipline. UG2 said, "Why working in apparel stores? It is not my major. I am apparel designer. Working in such shops is for students in business colleges. I can only work as a designer in the apparel production workshops." Students reported that all courses within the apparel and textiles major are about sewing and do not include anything about marketing and merchandising. According to the students, the apparel and textiles discipline is not the major that qualifies them for

employment in the apparel retail industry. The students criticized the only course in marketing, fashion marketing:

> UG13: I think working at apparel stores is interesting, but I am not ready for such type of work as I wasn't qualified. I didn't study anything related to that. We had a subject named "fashion marketing" I expected to learn how to market the product, how to make an advertisement or how to plan having my own business. Sadly, all that we studied was about the historical apparel. The subject was about the history of clothes more than marketing.

- A need for changing the social perspective of inferiority of women working in the apparel retail industry exists.

This theme was less dominant among the students in this study. An analysis of the data showed that not only do students need to better understand the nature of apparel and textiles as a major, but society needs to recognize and understand it as well. During the interview sessions, the researcher explained the relationship between the AT discipline and the apparel retail industry as well as the size of the Saudi apparel retail industry and employment opportunities. It was obvious that students had started thinking seriously about the employment opportunities in the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia. Yet, students were still concerned about the social perspective of women working in this field. Five of the participants shared their concerns that women working in the apparel retail industry may be labeled as inferior. UG8 stated, "Working in the markets means problems. If I worked in the markets, people would talk negatively about me and I may not get married." This quote reflects the concerns among women in mixing with men in the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia given current social perspectives regarding the separation of men and women.

2) Students' need to learn business knowledge to succeed in the Saudi apparel retail industry

Themes in this category were dominant among students in this study. All students discussed one or two themes within this category. Some students reported a desire to establish a small business after graduation while others reported their willingness to work in apparel retail stores. Yet, none of the participants were confident with their readiness to complete such work. Two themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) students need further skills in operating small businesses, and (b) competencies required in managing apparel retail stores need to be addressed.

- Students need further skills in operating small businesses

Out of the 17 students in this study, 12 shared their goal of establishing a small business after graduation. Unfortunately, however, all 12 students shared their concern about meeting this goal given a lack of appropriate business knowledge:

> UG3: I have an account in the Instagram, I work as a parties organizer. All my work dealing with balloons. I order strange shaped balloons from abroad and organize them for different occasions. Thanks God, people like my work and I have many clients. My studying helped me much in colors and balloons organizing but the problems that we don't study about marketing, how to deal with people, and how to make a name in the market. Concerning clients, they like talking a lot while I don't. Especially when I am busy in another piece of work or when I am studying for an exam, consequently, I lose client!
>
> UG6: My father promised to support me after graduating, by opening a small business. I'll bring garments and sell them. I think of adding specific things to be distinctive to

make people like my work and feel that my work is different from others, but I am afraid and hesitate. I don't know what to do exactly to succeed. I am afraid of losing my father's money. There must be workers, how to treat them? How much should I pay them? Every time I think about this matter seriously, I feel frightened and say it is not my work.

- Competencies required in managing apparel retail stores needs to be addressed

Among the student participants, seven found the apparel retail industry as an attractive work opportunity. Working in the apparel retail industry was interesting for those students; in fact, they appreciated working in management positions. However, students also reported a lack of confidence in their ability to manage apparel retail businesses, as evidenced in the following quote:

UG7: I wish to work in one of the big stores. I want to manage the store not to work as a cashier or saleswoman. But I don't know how to manage such big ones. I feel it is a great responsibility. The markets are full of clients shopping every day that means if I managed a store, I would deal with large sums of money. I don't have any experience in that field and I [am] afraid of failure. When I have self-confidence and be sure of my abilities, I'll work without hesitation. In fact, I wish I could.

3) Students need to learn soft skills to foster professional development and growth

Themes in this category were dominant among students in this study. All students discussed their need to learn and acquire soft skills, which are necessary to succeed in everyday life and in the work place. Challenges related to communication, teamwork, creativity, and the English language seemed to be serious issues that students dealt with. For communication, students described difficulties in communicating with peers and faculty members. Students have

a difficult time communicating their opinions and thoughts with peers and faculty members which influenced them psychologically. Students complained that the lack of communication skills caused them to lose friends, grades, and professional learning opportunities. Evidence of this is shown in the quotes below:

> UG4: I avoid talking with professors. If I have to, I can't talk! I can't even answer when they ask. I always have an answer and wish to discuss it but I hesitate. I can't talk before them. When I go home, I feel upset, annoyed and blame myself for not talking. It is my quality till now. I have only one semester to graduate and I still can't talk with professors.
>
> UG5: My problem is losing my friends. I feel I can't deal with them. We are surely working on many projects and when someone shows me a work and I tell my opinion, she gets angry. I'd like to express my opinion without annoying or losing anyone. People have become sensitive!
>
> UG11: Last year, I took part in a scientific forum with a project. It was necessary to present it to the audience. I had practiced at home to do so for more than a week and of course I made a PowerPoint presentation. But when I faced people, I couldn't say a word. I forgot everything I practiced on. Once I stood before people and they looked at me, I feared and felt embarrassed. I couldn't talk, so all what I could do was reading what was written in the PowerPoint slides without thinking. I was perplexed and frightened. This year, I refused to participate in the forum.

Functioning well in a group and being able to create new styles are other qualities that students in this study seek to acquire. For teamwork, all students found group work annoying

and hoped to avoid it unless the group members are all friends. One of the participants in this phase expressed her desire to work with her friends or not work in a group at all:

> UG10: I am at a loss in the teamwork, I never work in it except when I work with my friends, as we understand each other and everyone does her work. But if the group members are not my friends, there is always one who controls the project and consequently does all the work and often I am not that one because I don't like holding all the responsibility.

Students also have a strong desire to attain creativity skills. As students in the apparel and textiles department see themselves as designers, creativity is essential for them. From the students' point of view, they lack such quality and need to be trained on creating and innovating new designs as well as translating them into sketches. Participant UG16 said, "Surely I'll employ seamstresses to carry out my designs but my designs never appealed to the professor. She kept on telling me that my work is traditional! Designer should be creative and always have new ideas. I don't have this talent!"

Similar to the students' need to build creativity-skills, they also exhibited a lack of knowledge regarding the English language. Students brought out an important issue, which is the lack of Arabic references for apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia. Studying apparel and textiles requires students to search for new ideas and for a source of inspiration and to be connected with others. It is essential for apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia to communicate with the external world, explore what is new, and be innovative for the Saudi market. Yet, all such references are in the English language, which Saudi students have a difficult time understanding:

UG13: Our major depends on creativity and self-improvement. Surely, we have the bases in our classes. We supposed to improve ourselves, and professor keep on telling us to learn by searching the Web. But the problem is that every new distinctive thing in the field is in English and our English is weak. We studied English in the preparatory year but I forgot everything. I think we should study English here. At least some expressions related to our major to understand what people say in the Web and make use of it.

4) A demand exists for creating two specializations (apparel merchandising and apparel design) as part of the Saudi AT major

This category was another dominant category among students in this phase of data collection. In this study, the student participants from two different campuses were confused about their major. On one hand, students from the Fashion Design Department believed that they were not studying apparel design like they should be. On the other hand, all students from both programs, including the Fashion Design Department and the Apparel and Textiles (Textile Science) Department, felt their program of study was very diverse. Three different themes emerged from the data: (a) inconsistency between the title and the content of AT programs in Saudi Arabia, (b) a need for in-depth and updated knowledge, and (c) a need for hands-on learning experiences.

- Inconsistency between the title and the content of AT programs in Saudi Arabia.

Thirteen Fashion Design students expressed their interest in specializing in apparel design. With only two apparel design courses, students felt frustrated. Students enrolled in the department with the expectation that they would be learning apparel design knowledge; however, the program of study mainly focused on textile and apparel construction, sewing knowledge, and interior design. One of the participants shared the following quote:

UG5: The name of the department is fashion design. At universities [the main campus], the department name is apparel and textiles. The subjects are nearly the same in the two departments. They concentrate on sewing subjects. We have only two subjects in apparel design. There are other designing subjects taken from arts department such as designing bases and interior designing but all these subjects don't have a relation with apparel design. They are designs but not for us. I am, as apparel designer, did not make any use of them. The interior designing is another major!

- A need for in-depth and updated knowledge

All 17 students spoke of the diverse courses in the program with appreciation. Yet, they were concerned about the applicability of such knowledge to their future careers. Students shared their frustrations of attaining "nothing" from four years of studying in the apparel and textiles discpline. Subjects in apparel construction, design, textiles, manufacturing, marketing, and others from different departments are more than what students expect in a four-year plan. Students are interested in focusing their program of study on specific areas of specialization and narrowing down the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. Nine students wanted to focus their program of study on apparel design, six students wanted to focus on apparel merchandising, and two students wanted to focus on apparel production. For them, it was good to know everything, but it was more important to master at least one skill:

UG5: If you asked me, how I evaluate myself now while it is only one semester to graduate! My answer is that 90% I don't know how to do anything, 90% I don't know how to design, 90% I don't know how to sew, and 90% I don't know how to make a pattern. I don't feel satisfied. I have bases for everything but I am an expert at nothing.

I'd like to study and learn anything which enables me to be confident of myself as a good designer. I'd like to think about an idea for a dress then I turn the idea to a reality.

Participant UG7: We also haven't studied anything about the apparel retail industry now. We don't know anything about the brands that we wear. Why don't we study what exists now? For example, I myself would like to know how these apparel [brands] get in Saudi Arabia. I'd like to know who designs my ready-to-wear items. I don't mind learning about the clothes of ancient Egypt but I want to learn about my clothes first!

- A need to learn through hands-on learning experiences

Seven students discussed how teaching style influenced their learning in the classroom. Appreciation was reported for all courses that gave students the opportunity to participate in the classroom and take part in their learning experience. These courses, courses with hands-on learning experiences, contributed to the personal growth of students as noted below:

UG2: Psychology of textiles was an amazing course. Even though it is a theoretical course and seems to be boring, I learned a lot from it. I had to lecture one day and to present my research paper at the end of the semester. Even during the semester we were grouping and discuss the topic of that day. The professor was not always lecturing.

5) An interest in promoting comradery among students is warranted

This category was less dominant among the 17 students in this study. Only five students discussed issues that reflected this category. Students reported their interest in having appropriate times, places, and activities for developing friendships. They complained that course schedules do not allow any time to meet with each other. In addition, students reported their interest in having a comfortable place where they can gather, study, and work on group projects in a friendly environment. Students also hoped that they could participate in some college activities

that allow students to get to know each other better. One of the participants shared the following quote:

> UG5: Here in the college, we as students, have no places to sit and talk with each other or to work together. The building contains only laboratories, classrooms, and the cafeteria . We don't have activities! I wish we can meet together at least at the end of each term and we can sell our products to each other. This will provide us with self confidence and in addition, we will know each other better. Students now attend their lectures then go home. There is no relation between us because there is no suitable place for us to sit and enjoy our time.

In summary, it was found that AT students in Saudi Arabia reported several needs which can be met by AT educators. First, it was found that students lacked knowledge regarding apparel and textiles as a discipline and the core competency areas. Findings also revealed that current students in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia are not aware of the career options available for AT graduates. In terms of what current students in AT programs in Saudi Arabia need to learn, they reported the need to learn soft skills and hard skills related to the specialized areas within the AT major. It was also found that current students are interested in developing friendships and enjoying their university years. Finally, it was determined that the social perspective of women working in the apparel retail industry is a significant obstacle Saudi women face. Further discussion about how apparel and textiles educators should respond to students' needs is provided in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 - Discussion

In the previous chapter, data collected in each phase was reported in sufficient detail. The purpose of this chapter is to summarize, discuss, and make implications about the results of this study as well as recommend areas of future research needed to continue the journey. As discussed in Chapter 2, the demand for Saudi women's education and preparation to succeed in the apparel retail industry justifies the need for this study. Thus, the purpose of this study was to develop an apparel merchandising track in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. This was achieved by designing a three-phase qualitative study to examine the three focal points of choosing curricula. In the first phase, the nature of the subject matter, or in this study, the content of current US apparel merchandising programs was examined. Second, the nature of society, or in this study, the perceptions of industry professionals in Saudi Arabia was explored. In the third phase, the nature of individuals, or in this study, the needs of Saudi apparel and textiles students was addressed. This chapter starts by summarizing, discussing, and making implications regarding the findings of three phases.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, the results indicated that the Top Fashion Marketing Schools (TFMS) emphasize hard skills more than soft skills and require students to enroll in more content/process knowledge courses. It was found that 59.79% of required courses in the TFMS emphasize hard skills while only 27.63% offer students the opportunity to practice soft skills. Required courses emphasize hard skills related to industry processes, appearance and human behavior, aesthetics and the design processes, global interdependence, general education and business foundations courses. On the other hand, required courses emphasizing soft skills include ethics, social

responsibility, and sustainability, critical and creative thinking, and professional development. Most soft skills courses emphasize career planning and communication skills.

The mission and goal of each school were also analyzed. In this regard, it was found that apparel and textiles programs within the TFMS are named differently. Yet, the aims or the goals of the TFMS are similar. The TFMS use different terms with different meanings in naming apparel and textiles programs which prepare students for the same employment opportunities in the apparel industry. For instance, the terms marketing and merchandising are utilized interchangeably among the TFMS. In addition, the terms fashion and apparel are used interchangeably and often incorrectly. Consequently, greater attention should be given in selecting terms that accurately reflect the nature of the program at each institution. In addition, an equal attention from apparel and textile educators is needed for hard and soft skills offered at apparel and textiles programs as a response for previous studies (Javidan, Teagarden, and Bowen, 2010; Robles, 2012) that emphasize both hard and soft skills for apparel and textiles students.

Consistency in labeling AT programs

An analysis of the TFMS' mission statements revealed several vocabulary inconsistencies. The findings showed that despite the agreement on one goal, which is preparing students for a wide variety of positions in today's international apparel and textiles industry, the TFMS have named their programs differently. In addition, terms with different meanings are used interchangeably. A possible reason for this naming inconsistency could be the vocabulary preferences of faculty members in each program. Faculty members could have different points of view on the appropriate terms to utilize in their program titles. However, this may influence the clarity, identity, and branding of the overall apparel and textiles discipline.

Greater consistency is needed in the naming of apparel and textiles programs. Using different terms with different meanings to express one goal (preparing students for careers in the AT industry) confuses students who are going to school as a prerequisite to something more difficult (e.g., future career). Students should have a clear idea about the apparel and textiles discipline and the nature of the program before enrolling and starting classes. This will assist in the retention of students as well.

Equal attention for hard and soft skills offered in AT programs

The findings of this study indicated that the TFMS incorporate both hard and soft skills in educating and preparing students for the apparel and textiles industry, with an emphasis placed on hard skills. This goes against previous studies (Javidan, Teagarden, & Bowen, 2010; Robles, 2012) reporting that soft skills and hard skills require equal attention from apparel and textiles educators. In addition, the literature reports the need for including technology, hands-on experiences, and teamwork projects to help students gain knowledge and develop their personal and professional skills simultaneously. It may be necessary to consider including more courses related to the impact of social responsibility on decision making, environmental sustainability, critical and creative thinking skills, problem-solving skills, and the use of technology within apparel and textiles programs. In doing so, apparel and textiles programs will better prepare students with the necessary qualifications for the apparel and textiles industry.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, 21 industry professionals, six Human Resource Mangers (HRMs) and 15 Apparel Store Managers (ASMs), were interviewed. The analysis of the data collected in this phase produced three major categories of findings: (a) over time, the apparel retail industry has become a new working environment for Saudi women, (b) characteristics needed to succeed in

the Saudi apparel retail industry have been identified, and (c) the need for Saudi government support exists.

The industry professionals that were interviewed as part of this study identified three primary reasons that hindered women's success in the Saudi apparel retail industry, including: (a) a lack of understanding of the employment opportunities available to women in the apparel retail industry, (b) a lack of understanding of the impact of culture on the operation of businesses, and (c) a lack of education and academic preparation for apparel retail positions. There are several implications related to this. First, despite the governmental support for women in the apparel retail industry through the feminization movement of apparel stores, Saudi women entered the apparel retail industry without society approval or academic preparation. Consequently, starting in 2011 and until now, Saudi women have struggled to prove their potential in the apparel retail industry.

It was found that the social perspective of women working in the apparel retail industry has to be changed. Establishing a mass media campaign to support women could play an essential role in this regard. On one hand, mass media may educate Saudi women and society as a whole about employment opportunities available for women in the apparel retail industry. It is essential for Saudi people to understand that apparel retail positions include more than sales positions. In fact, there are many management and leadership positions available for Saudi women in the apparel retail industry. For instance, positions such as merchandising planners, area managers, brand managers, store managers, department managers, and human resource managers are available to Saudi women. For such positions, postsecondary education and expertise are required. Based on the fact that the Saudi apparel retail industry is one of the fastest growing markets in the Arab region, the industry is expected to accommodate many Saudi

women if they can meet job requirements ("Kingdom's Clothing," 2014). Thus, well-educated apparel merchandising graduates have attractive job opportunities in the apparel retail industry.

The mass media can also be used to inform the Saudi society about the importance of women working in the apparel retail industry and the negative consequences of ignoring the high unemployment rate (54%) among female college graduates (AMEinfo, 2010; Saudi Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2010). Despite being a mixed working environment that Saudi society generally disapproves, the apparel retail industry is a suitable workplace for apparel and textiles students. The initiative taken by the governmental law requires women to work in apparel stores. It is now the role of mass media to present the success stories of women who are now in high positions in the industry as the participants of this phase suggested. It also may be necessary to consider the repetition of presenting successful women in the media to convince people and lead them to appreciate women's work in the apparel retail industry.

The second major implication of this phase is the role that public universities can play in supporting Saudi women through education. HRMs and ASMs in this study reported the need for the academic preparation of Saudi women to work in the apparel retail industry. Similar to previous studies (Donnellan, 1996; Robles, 2012), the participants emphasized the importance of hard and soft skills for students. This supports Robles (2012) findings in which students need to master hard skills to interview for jobs, but more importantly, they need soft skills to maintain and advance in their careers. In addition, it supports Javidan, Teagarden, and Bowen's (2010) findings in which apparel educators must take the intellectual, psychological, and social preparation of students into consideration. To develop the intellectual capital of students, the apparel merchandising track should address hard skills. For the participants, the ability to understand how one's business works, how the industry operates globally, and how consumers

behave are all important to students' development. HRMs and ASMs also noted that students need a sense of design aesthetics in seeking employment in the Saudi apparel retail industry.

More importantly, the apparel merchandising track should include learning experiences that help students develop their soft skills in which students grow psychologically and socially. Students should be receptive to new ideas and be able to build trusting relationships with people who are diverse in their backgrounds and characteristics. It is also essential for Saudi women to be educated about Saudi culture and its influences on the operation of business. Because of the conservative nature of the Saudi society, Saudi women have been working for decades separated from men. It is expected that this separation impacts work relationships in any mixed work environment, such as apparel retailing. Thus, it is important for educators to emphasize this controversial topic in the classroom and prepare Saudi women to build trusting relationships with men as work partners. Saudi women should be educated on their communication skills, particularly with male customers.

Most importantly, as participants reported, Saudi women need to understand that the goal of any business is to satisfy customers and increase sales. However, this goal cannot be achieved in a conservative society by breaking norms regarding the appearance of women in public. Even though women working in the apparel retail industry are young and influenced by different cultures that make them more open to interacting with men, most of society (everyday consumers) still need time to change and embrace the liberalization of Saudi women's dress. Educators in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia should respond to this issue to promote the success of apparel merchandising students. This topic is addressed further in the Recommendations for Future Research.

The circumstances surrounding Saudi women working in apparel retail positions supports the foundations of critical feminist theory in which women with different experiences, interests, and resources need different strategies to overcome a situation of gender discrimination. The strategy adopted in this study is the education and academic preparation needed to empower Saudi women. However, critical feminist theory requires deeper understanding of women's experiences before developing any concrete responses to women's demands. Therefore, the third phase of this study was necessary to explore the needs and interests of current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia.

Phase 3

To design an effective educational system, content must be presented in a way that allows students to relate the information to prior experiences (i.e., they must be able to make a connection to the new knowledge). By considering the interests and experiences of current AT students in Saudi Arabia while designing the apparel merchandising program, Saudi female students can take part in their own education. In this phase, 17 students in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia were interviewed. The analysis of the data collected from the current students produced five major categories of findings: (a) a need to appreciate and understand AT as a major exists among the students, (b) students need to learn business knowledge to succeed in the Saudi apparel retail industry, (c) students need to learn soft skills to foster professional development and growth, (d) a demand exists for creating two specializations (apparel merchandising and apparel design) as part of the Saudi AT major, and (e) an interest in promoting comradery among AT students is warranted.

In this phase, it was found that the apparel and textiles program was not the desired program of study for most students in the discipline. In addition, it was found that students

lacked knowledge regarding apparel and textiles as a discipline and the core competency areas. Findings also revealed that current students in apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia are not aware of the career options available for AT graduates. In terms of what current students in AT in Saudi Arabia need to learn, they reported the need to learn soft skills and hard skills related to specialized areas within the apparel and textiles major. It was found that current students are interested in developing friendships and enjoying their university years.

This phase of data collection netted several important implications, including the barriers that hinder the education of apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia. On one hand, students reported an unwillingness to study primary topic areas in apparel and textiles which played a major role in hindering their enthusiasm of learning and developing their potential. Starting the learning journey with a bad attitude that refuses and underestimates AT as a major will definitely limit students' ability to reach their potential. In fact, this inner obstacle creates a situation of resistance in which students resist any external attempt to educate and improve their lives. This has a major implication for AT educators in Saudi Arabia. The apparel and textiles discipline has to be a major for people who appreciate the nature of the industry. Apparel and textiles should not be a major for people with no major. For the future apparel and textiles discipline, possessing a strong belief in apparel and textiles and its contribution to the good of people is needed. The apparel and textiles discipline cannot thrive and evolve on the shoulders of people who studied apparel and textiles as a means to escape from home. Students with a positive impression about the apparel and textiles discipline and its role in improving peoples' lives are more likely to push the discipline forward.

Apparel and textiles educators should also educate students about what the apparel and textiles discipline is and what knowledge and skills they need to master as part of their

education. It is necessary for apparel and textiles students to realize that sewing and apparel production skills are very important for apparel designers. Apparel and textiles students have to realize that sketching and drawing are not the only skills that designers need to master.

It is also essential for apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia to realize that the apparel retail industry is a potential workplace for them with many opportunities. In fact, with the prosperity and growth of the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia, it is expected that this industry will accommodate large numbers of Saudi women in the future. Thus, apparel and textiles students need to understand that majoring in apparel and textiles will not only help them learn about apparel design but also learn about product development, marketing, sales, product quality, and business ownership.

Another barrier perceived by apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia is the lack of specialization and the broad attention to many areas. Students reported that knowledge and skills related to design, textiles and fabrics, apparel production, marketing, and general education are too much to study in a four-year plan. In fact, students complained that they could not master any specific area of the discipline due to the general nature of the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. Based on the findings of this study, 52.9% of current apparel and textiles students are interested in apparel design, 35.3% in apparel merchandising, and 11.8% in apparel production. This supports the findings of Alwan (2013) and Alzahrani (2012) in which establishing the apparel merchandising track is necessary and timely in Saudi Arabia. Given recent employment opportunities for women in Saudi Arabia, students need the choice of specializing in apparel design or apparel merchandising.

The third barrier facing apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia was the style of teaching. Similar to Doll's Model (1993), students in this study preferred courses that allowed

them to fully participate in learning experiences rather than the banking system of teaching. For students, those courses have a positive impact on their personal growth. These findings also support Carpenter and Fairhurst's (2005) findings that traditional methods of instruction limit instructors' ability to help students acquire a working knowledge. According to Carpenter and Fairhurst, skills desired by retailers, such as critical thinking, teamwork, and problem solving, cannot be acquired through lecturing. This has important implications for apparel and textiles educators in Saudi Arabia. Educators must adapt their teaching styles to allow students to fully participate in their learning. It may also be important to provide Arabic references for apparel and textiles students to help them improve their work and find sources for new ideas. Otherwise, more consideration on English language is necessary for apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia to make a connection with the external world and find the desired references.

Finally, another barrier encountering apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia, especially those seeking apparel retail positions, is the social perspective of inferiority for women working in mixed work environments. As noted previously, the lack of understanding of the apparel and textiles discipline and its connection to the apparel and textiles industry is an obstacle facing current students. Yet, during the interview sessions, the researcher explained that connection for students and also explained the size of the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia. As a result, students reported their interest in applying for employment in the apparel retail industry. Unfortunately for Saudi women, the lack of knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in apparel retail positions is not the only obstacle they face. In addition, the social inferiority perspective of women working in apparel retail positions is a problem. This is consistent with findings from Phase 2 which supported that society needs to be educated about the importance of women's work in the apparel retail industry and the negative consequences of ignoring the high

unemployment rate (54%) among female college graduates (AMEinfo, 2010; Saudi Central Department of Statistics & Information, 2010). As noted previously, the apparel retail industry is a suitable workplace for apparel and textiles students. It is now the role of educators and the mass media to establish a support campaign to present successful stories of women who are now in leadership positions in the industry. More importantly, this campaign must be repeated in the media to convince people and help them appreciate women's work in the apparel retail industry.

Overview of the Three Phases of the Study

Each phase of this study provided valuable information in developing an apparel merchandising track in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. As noted in Chapter 2, limiting the curricula to one focal point is not recommended; instead, all three focal points—subject matter, society, and the individual—need to be incorporated in an appropriate balance (Marsh & Willis, 2007). Thus, the current study aimed to achieve this balance in addressing the three focal points in constructing an apparel merchandising track. Establishing this major requires deciding what subject matter needs to be included and what skills students need to be trained on. Postmodern curriculum should be built upon a balance of the three focal points of curriculum discussed above. To achieve this balance within the context of this study, the findings of the three phases were compared. The purpose is to document similarities and differences among the three phases and report a conclusion for what knowledge and skills must be included in the new program.

All three phases resulted in an importance of hard skills, or content and process knowledge, and soft skills, or professional attitude and skills, in preparing apparel and textiles students for the apparel retail industry. However, the level of emphasizing those skills was different among the three phases. For instance, in Phase 1, the content analysis of the TFMS

indicated that apparel and textiles programs in the US place emphasis on developing hard skills. In contrast, Phase 2 showed that industry professionals in Saudi Arabia, including HRMs and ASMs, indicated that soft skills were more desirable in Saudi apparel retail positions. For apparel and textiles Saudi students, both hard and soft skills were equally desirable by the students as they reported their needs for studying both. The students' equal needs for both are consistent with the findings of Robles study (2012) regarding the type of skills that apparel and textiles students need to acquire. Robles (2012) indicated that to prepare students for the retail industry, educators must include learning experiences that help students develop both soft and hard skills. As a result, TFMS may need to consider incorporating more experiences that build students' soft skills.

Clearly, based on the outcomes of this study, hard and soft skills must be equally presented in the apparel merchandising program in Saudi Arabia. On one hand, the apparel retail industry is an ever-changing and highly competitive working environment; thus, establishing the link between higher education and the retail industry by meeting industry expectations is a necessity. It is essential to address the needs of the industry by emphasizing soft skills in the merchandising program. In addition, it is essential to address hard skills and the theoretical preparation of students to educate them about the AT major and develop their intellectual capability regarding the operation of apparel businesses. It is also important to eliminate any barriers facing apparel and textiles students by meeting their needs and interests in attaining both hard and soft skills.

Although the importance of hard skills was identified in all three phases, some differences in the hard skills preferred in each phase were noted. For instance, in Phase 1, general education (social sciences, natural sciences, humanities, mathematics, and statistics) had

the highest frequency (n = 91, 18.77%). Among the specific courses, mathematics had the highest frequency (n = 25), followed by social sciences (n = 20), natural sciences (n = 19), humanities (n = 15), and statistics (n = 12). In Phase 2, HRMs and ASMs emphasized mathematics and the need for understanding consumers in which social sciences is useful. Natural sciences, humanities, and statistics were not perceived as important from the perspective of industry professionals in this study.

Industry processes was second in the list of hard skills included in the curricula at the TFMS. Similarly, it also came in second in the list of important subject matter identified by industry professionals. For business knowledge, business foundations came in third in the TFMS content analysis and one of the highest rated subject matter in the list of knowledge emphasized by Saudi industry professionals. Similar to business knowledge, aesthetics and the design process was fourth in the list of subject matter at the TFMS and one of the highest rated subject matter in the list of important knowledge identified by HRMs and ASMs in Phase 2. Appearance and human behavior was one of the least common areas identified in the TFMS' curricula, although it was highly recommended by the industry professionals in Saudi Arabia. Finally, among the hard skills apparel and textiles students should posses, globalization came in last. For HRMs and ASMs, globalization was important among approximately 40% of the participants.

For apparel and textiles students in Phase 3, it was hard for them to identify what content and knowledge they perceive to be important to prepare them for the apparel retail industry. The reason for this is the lack of knowledge regarding apparel merchandising as a major. However, students reported their needs and interests in learning what is necessary to succeed in apparel retail positions.

In terms of soft skills, or professional attitude and skills, some differences were found as well. In Phase 1, soft skills were not as highly emphasized as hard skills. Ethics, social responsibility, sustainability, critical thinking, creativity, and professional development were only marginally included in the curricula at the TFMS. For the TFMS, most soft skill courses emphasized career planning and communication skills, leaving ethics, social responsibility, sustainability, and critical and creative thinking skills lagging behind.

In contrast, industry professionals in Phase 2 reported soft skills as very important qualifications in the academic preparation of apparel and textiles students. Similar to the findings of Phase 1, HRMs and ASMs indicated that communication skills and career planning are important traits. In addition, industry professionals emphasized the need for work ethic, which included skills such as commitment, sense of responsibility, and hard work. Personal development included lifelong learning and constant personal growth. Ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability were addressed by HRMs and ASMs only as a means to improve and support a company image.

For apparel and textiles students in this study, communication with peers and faculty members, teamwork, creative skills, and challenges in learning the English language were highly reported by the participants as areas of weakness. Participants in Phases 2 and 3 also added valuable information regarding recommended teaching styles for apparel and textiles students. On one hand, HRMs and ASMs valued the practice of experiential learning. From the perspective of industry professionals, hands-on experiences should be given the same level of attention as theoretical preparation. On the other hand, students in Phase 3 reported their need for courses that allow them to fully participate in learning experiences because they linked their personal growth to such courses. As a result, in developing an apparel merchandising program in

Saudi Arabia, it is necessary to consider planning the courses in a way that allows students to fully participate in learning experiences.

This finding is consistent with Doll (1993) in which post-modernity curricula has to provoke students' participation. To achieve that, it may be necessary for apparel and textiles educators in Saudi Arabia to consider Doll's characteristics of postmodern curricula. Doll explained that postmodern curricula has to be characterized by indeterminacy, self-organization, paradox, and intellectual playfulness to allow students a fully participatory learning experience. These qualifications allow curricula to be open to dialogue, self-organization, full of contradictions, and enjoyable.

Finally, two main topics that were addressed in the three phases that are important for the focus of this study include the discussion regarding the identity of apparel and textiles as a major. It is important in developing the apparel merchandising program in Saudi Arabia to consider the consistency in naming the programs, their aim, and the courses offered as part of the programs. The content analysis of the TFMS in Phase 1 indicated some level of inconsistency in vocabulary used by TFMS. In addition, students in Phase 3 reported their confusion regarding the lack of correspondence between the name of the academic program and the courses included.

The second main topic involves the support of Saudi women in the apparel retail industry through establishing a mass media campaign. Although a mass media campaign has no direct connection to the development of the apparel merchandising track in Saudi Arabia, it is very important for the success of the new program and Saudi women in the apparel retail industry. Phases 2 and 3 indicated that the social perspective of women working in mixed working environments is a challenge for Saudi women working in the apparel retail industry. Thus, a mass media campaign is essential to convince people that the apparel retail industry is one of the

fastest growing industries in the country and provides plenty of suitable employment opportunities for Saudi women. In doing so, it is hopeful that the high unemployment rate among Saudi female college graduates (54%) will decrease.

Conclusions

To conclude, the hard and soft skills identified in the three different phases of this study are presented in Table 9. The apparel merchandising track in the AT discipline in Saudi Arabia will include all of these skills and subject areas. No major differences were found among the three phases regarding the academic preparation of apparel and textiles students for the apparel retail industry. All three phases indicated the importance of hard and soft skills in the academic program for apparel merchandising students. Therefore, an equal consideration will be given for hard and soft skills in the new program. All skills identified by industry professionals and students will be included.

The bachelor's degree in the apparel and textiles programs in Saudi Arabia is designed to be attained in four years. In the first year, apparel and textiles students, like other college students, are required to complete general education courses before pursuing their degree. Apparel merchandising students must complete the same general education courses. Then, skills identified in this study will be addressed in courses offered in the second, third, and fourth years of the program. Further information is provided in Chapter 6.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study makes an important contribution to the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia by designing a new undergraduate program in apparel merchandising. Apparel merchandising is not yet a major in Saudi Arabia, which justifies the need for this study. This study is important because of its outcome, an apparel merchandising program in Saudi Arabia.

Many of the courses to be included in the apparel merchandising track will be new to Saudi apparel and textiles educators. Thus, research is needed to further explore relevant topic areas and student learning outcomes for each course. Effective teaching styles which accommodate the needs of Saudi apparel and textiles students should also be explored. It is worthwhile to examine what assignments or projects are best suited to each course that encourage students' participation and engagement.

Another area of potential research involves a further exploration of the impact of Saudi culture on women's work in the apparel retail industry; that is, how can issues that Saudi women face in the apparel retail industry today be eliminated through education? What course content must be included to educate women who are expected to work in one of the most controversial industries in Saudi Arabia? Should theoretical perspectives in women's studies be used in developing courses and educating students? In this study, the Saudi women reported that the social perspective of women as inferior is a major obstacle they face in working in the apparel retail industry. Therefore, expanding research in this area can help Saudi women to succeed in these new employment opportunities. An in-depth analysis of the specific challenges Saudi women face in the mixed working environment should be conducted. In particular, case studies profiling successful women in mixed work environments and their strategies in encountering social pressures should be collected to educate students in this regard. In addition, an in-depth analysis relating to the perceptions of the public appearance of Saudi women in the apparel retail industry should be conducted. Interviewing current women in the apparel retail industry can assist in responding to social norms regarding women's appearance in public. By doing so, strategies to bridge the existing gab between the visual appearance that women choose for themselves and the visual appearance that society expects can be addressed.

In addition, a related recommendation would be to investigate the implementation of a mass media campaign to inform people about the employment opportunities available in the apparel retail industry in Saudi Arabia. One of the main aims of this campaign is to educate people about the role of the apparel retail industry in providing employment opportunities for Saudi women. Examining the effectiveness of such campaigns can be useful in recruiting students for the apparel merchandising track and communicating the benefits of studying in the apparel and textiles discipline in preparing for careers in the apparel retail industry. Finally, the effectiveness of the apparel merchandising program should be regularly evaluated to ensure that the curriculum and course content is reflective of the dynamics of the industry. This can be achieved by assessing student learning outcomes, collecting exit surveys from students upon completion of the program, post-graduation surveys with alumni, and evaluations provided by internship and workplace supervisors.

Limitations

The primary limitation of the study is that the data was collected from limited samples, 21 industry professionals (human research managers and apparel stores managers) and 17 students enrolled in apparel and textiles programs. Although the findings of this study are valuable to Saudi educators in apparel and textiles programs, the small samples used in this study make generalizing beyond this specific context challenging. A related limitation is that the students in this study are all seniors, rather than being from different academic years. Yet, a quantitative study on students in different academic years could be conducted to ensure the applicability of the findings.

Chapter 6 - Apparel Merchandising Track in Saudi Arabia

This chapter employs the findings from this study's three phases to develop an apparel merchandising course sequencing plan for the Apparel and Textiles (AT) discipline in Saudi Arabia. Analysis of the Top Fashion Marketing Schools' (TFMS) website content, interviews with Human Resource Managers (HRMs) and Apparel Store Managers (ASMs), and interviews with apparel and textiles students were conducted to identify the knowledge and skills necessary for preparing students for careers in the industry. The knowledge and skills reported in the Conclusions section of Chapter 5 are represented in the new program. This chapter includes the aim of the apparel merchandising track in Saudi Arabia, the core and elective courses, and course descriptions.

The Apparel Merchandising program in Saudi Arabia includes 128 credits with maximum of 18 credits per semester. The program includes a preparation year in which students complete general education requirements. Major professional and business foundation courses are offered in the second, third, and fourth years. Students are required to start with introductory, basic, and fundamental concepts and theories related to the major. Later in the third and fourth years, students can enroll in advanced major courses where they utilize previous knowledge in hands-on experiences and real life situations. In conjunction, students need to enroll in business foundation courses.

The program includes 43 required courses; 41.9% of them help students develop soft skills. An equal consideration was given for hard and soft skills in the new program. All skills identified by industry professionals and students were included. Information obtained in Phase 1 was also utilized in naming the titles of courses offered in the new program. For courses in designing, it is highly recommended that AT educators in Saudi Arabia consider the closed-open

educational approach (Doll, 1993). As noted in Chapter 2, the closed-open system encourages critical thinking and decision making. This approach is essential in encouraging Saudi female college students to explore, organize, interpret, negotiate, create, and communicate well. It is also highly recommended that AT educators in Saudi Arabia consider increasing the level of rigor and expectation in courses and develop courses that foster students' commitment skills.

The program

Apparel and textiles with a specialization in apparel merchandising.

The aim

An apparel merchandising program prepares students for apparel retail positions including careers in merchandising, sales, and management. Students develop the skill set (communication, technological abilities, leadership, and creativity) to compete in today's market. Students in the program further develop their areas of expertise through internships and other experienced-based learning opportunities.

Sequencing of Courses for Apparel Merchandising Students

Required Courses				
Year	Course Name	Code	Credits	Prerequisites
Level One				
First Year	General Math	MATH 110	3	
	General Physics	PHYS 110	3	
	English Language (1)	ELI 101	2	
	English Language (2)	ELI 102	2	
	Computer Skills	CPIT 100	3	
	Total		13	

Level Two				
First Year	General Statistic	STAT 110	3	
	General Chemistry	CHEM 110	3	
	English Language (3)	ELI 103	2	
	English Language (4)	ELI 104	2	
	General Biology	BIO 110	3	
	Communication Skills	COMM 101	3	
	Total		16	
Level Three				
Second Year	Introduction to AT Industry	AM 200	3	
	Apparel Fundamentals	AM 202	3	
	Color Theory	AD 200	3	
	Public Speech	AM 204	3	
	Introduction to Sociology	SOCI 201	3	
	Total		15	
Level Four				
Second Year	Computer Applications for Merchandising	AM 206	3	CPIT 100
	Apparel Design Principles	AM 208	3	
	Strategies for Business Communication	AM 210	3	COMM 101
	Accounting for Business	BUSS 201	3	
	Principles of Management	BUSS 204	3	
	Total		15	

Level Five				
Third Year	AT Consumer Behavior	AM 300	3	SOCI 201
	Visual Merchandising	AM 302	3	Am 208 + AD 200
	Professional Development	AM 304	3	AM 206
	Textile Science	AD 310	3	
	Sales and Negotiation	BUSS 301	3	
	Social Appearance	AM 306	3	
	Total		18	
Level Six				
Third Year	Merchandising Planning and Control	AM 308	3	
	AT Retailing	AM 310	3	
	Advertising and Promotion	AM 312	3	AM 206
	Aesthetics of AT	AD 304	3	
	Elective		3	
	Total		15	
Internship in Apparel Merchandising AM 310* (4 credits) Prerequisites: AM 304				
Level Seven				
Fourth Year	Leadership Development for Merchandising	AM 400	3	
	Marketing Research	AM 402	3	
	Global Sourcing	AM 404	3	
	Apparel Buying	AM 406	3	
	Readings in AT	AM 408	2	AM 202
	Elective		3	
	Total		17	

Level Eight				
Fourth Year	Team Development Workshop	AM 410	3	
	Sustainable Issues in AT	AM 412	3	AM 404
	Finance	BUSS 303	3	
	The Creation of Private Label Lines	AM 414	3	AM 402 + AM 300
	Elective		3	
	Total		15	
			Total 128	

***** Internship in Apparel Merchandising AM 310* is offered in the summer of the third year.

Courses Descriptions

Course Name	Course Code	Skills	Phase	Description
Introduction to the AT Industry	AM 200	Hard skill	1, 3	This course surveys the development, production, and marketing of AT goods from concept to consumers.
Apparel Fundamentals	AM 202	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course is an introduction to the terminology and fundamentals of the apparel industry in Arabic and English. Students study the contributions of past and present apparel innovators and designers.
Color Theory	AD 200	Hard skill	1, 2	This course introduces students to the language of color, color wheels and system, as well as color's physiological and psychological effects.
Public Speech	AM 204	Soft skill	1, 2, 3	This course introduces elements of speech and principles of effective public speaking. Emphasis is placed on performance and skills in preparing and presenting a public speech.
Computer Applications for Merchandising	AM 206	Soft skill	1, 3	This course introduces apparel merchandising students to software used in the AT industry. With a focus on methods of visual communication, projects include technical drawing, colorization, editing, and integration and manipulation of photographic images.
Apparel Design Principles	AM 208	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course offers a basic overview of the design process as well as various design elements relative to the field of apparel design.
Strategies for Business Communication	AM 210	Soft skill	1, 2, 3	This course teaches students various strategies to elicit appropriate responses for specific audiences. Students are guided in business research and documentation techniques and develop strategies for using available technology.
Consumer Behavior	AM 300	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course is a review of the

				consumer decision-making process and factors that influence consumers, including ethical issues.
Visual Merchandising	AM 302	Hard skill	1, 2	This course investigates merchandise presentation, analysis, and field research. Theory and practical applications of visual merchandising techniques in the apparel and textiles industry are studied. The course examines the development of design concepts, equipment, layout, and presentation for retail. Students learn to solve problems of space, volume, color, texture, lighting, and design.
Professional Development	AM 304	Soft skill	1, 2	This course enables students to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to function effectively and succeed in the apparel and textiles industry. Particular emphasis is put on improving students' ability to describe their accomplishments and sell their ideas in professional situations through written and verbal communication.
Textile Science	AD 310	Hard skill	1, 2	This course examines the fabrics commonly used in apparel for their sources of material, construction qualities, and usage. Methods of fiber identification, yarns, and fabric are analyzed for their practical application in the apparel and textiles industry.
Social Appearance		Hard skill	1, 3	This course analyzes social, psychological, and cultural factors in the creation, maintenance, and use of human appearance. The focus is on dress and appearance as a communication system. It also emphasizes issues encountering Saudi women in the apparel retail industry pertaining public appearance.
Merchandise Planning and Control	AM 308	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course introduces students to all of the factors that impact a firm's profits: profit and loss statements,

				initial pricing and markdowns, planning sales, and inventory planning are discussed.
AT Retailing	AM 310	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course teaches students how to recognize the steps needed to develop a retail operation, analyze business situations, and apply solutions based on sound management theory, and examine the processes involved in maintaining a successful retail establishment.
Advertising and Promotion	AM 312	Hard skill	1, 2	This course discusses major marketing strategies and the activities that support them, including: media selection and advertising, use of social media and internet marketing, and sales promotion techniques.
Aesthetics of AT	AD 304	Hard skill	1, 2	This course introduces students to the theories of dress, aesthetic norms, body concerns, personality expression, and context. Students demonstrate the ability to effectively combine design elements and principles through creative design projects.
Leadership Development for Merchandising	AM 400	Soft skill	2	This course is a comprehensive study of the role of the manager in today's retail climate. Students learn the effects of organizational culture on the management process. Decision-making, planning, structure, leadership, and defining control are also studied.
Marketing Research	AM 402	Hard skill	1, 2	This course describes the nature and scope of marketing research activities. This course also reviews research design, sampling, measurement, analysis, and other issues while helping students find suitable sources of information.
Sustainable Issues in AT	AM 412	Soft skill	1, 2	This course introduces students to sustainable issues in the AT industry. This course also introduces students to some sustainable

				practices and how companies can reduce their environmental impact while increasing profits.
Apparel Buying	AM 406	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course is designed to equip students with the facts, skills, and competencies necessary for entry into management or buying-level positions. Retail buying, inventory planning, and merchandising mathematics sharpen students' ability to make financial decisions.
Readings in AT	AM 408	Soft skill	2, 3	This course has selected AT readings in English to improve students' abilities to read in English as well as stay updated with new research in the area of apparel merchandising. Also, it includes reading on the impact of Saudi culture on women's work in the apparel retail industry.
Team Development Workshop	AM 410	Soft skill	1, 2, 3	Through teamwork projects, students explore the essentials that team members and leaders need to understand for team success. Toward the end of the semester, discussion sessions are focused on different types of teams, stages of team development, and how to understand and deal with different personalities on the team.
Global Sourcing	AM 404	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course discusses global sourcing and how and where manufactured goods are procured. Students learn the structure of the AT industry and distribution channels as well as the impact of culture, economics, and government regulations on production and distribution.
Internship in Apparel Merchandising	AM 310	Soft skill	1, 2, 3	The internship is a field assignment that provides students with hands-on experiences in the business of apparel, applying classroom theory to the professional work environment.
The Creation of Private Label Lines	AM 414	Soft skill	1, 3	Based on marketing research, students create special store-branded

				merchandise for targeted consumer segments. Students create a business plan that includes the sourcing process, distribution, pricing, merchandising, and promotional programs.
Elective Courses				
The History of the AT Industry	AM 212	Hard skill	1, 3	This course covers the evolution of the apparel industry in the Western world. Other industries in the Middle East are introduced.
Current Trends and Forecasting	AM 214	Hard skill	1, 3	This course introduces the processes and methods used by the apparel and textiles industry to conduct forecasts. Sources of information, knowledge, techniques, and skills needed to implement a forecast are studied.
Luxury Brand Management	AM 314	Hard skill	1, 3	This course is designed to develop students' intellectual ability through the understanding of the principles and practices of brand management and their application in connection with the apparel and luxury goods sectors.
Small Business Management	AM 316	Hard skill	3	This course examines the characteristics and nature of entrepreneurship. Personal analysis, the generation of a business, and market identification are discussed.
Fashion Show	AM 318	Hard skill	1, 3	This course provides a detailed overview of the processes involved in producing a successful fashion show and similar marketing events. Students work in groups to create an event of their choice.
International Marketing	AM 416	Hard skill	1	This course provides an introduction to international marketing theory and research. It focuses on the political, legal, economic, and cultural considerations inherent in international business and their relationship to decision making.

Foundation Courses				
Introduction to Sociology	SOCI 201	Hard skill	2	This course is designed to help students develop their ability to think critically about the world around them using the framework of sociology. The relationships between the individual, society, and social institutions are studied.
Accounting for Business	BUSS 201	Hard skill	1, 2	This course provides an introduction to the operation activities of businesses and the roles that accounting information plays in planning, evaluating, and recording those activities.
Principles of Management	BUSS 204	Hard skill	1, 2, 3	This course is a study of the organization, its individuals, technology, as well as planning, organizing, and controlling policies and procedures.
Sales and Negotiation	BUSS 301	Soft skill	1, 2	This course covers advanced personal selling skills and practices in the areas of contact with customers – from contact establishment, communication, building and maintaining relationships, to the specifics of negotiation in various settings.
Finance	BUSS 303	Hard skill	1, 2	This course discusses finance: the science of managing money. Discussions focus on financial institutions, instruments, and procedures for supplying funds to markets. This course applies the tools of the financial manager as a decision-maker of the organization.

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Appendix A - Letter of Consent

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT TEMPLATE

PROJECT TITLE:	FOSTERING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SAUDI FEMALE STUDENTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS IN APPAREL AND TEXTILES PROGRAMS IN SAUDI ARABIA

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: 9/ 25/ 2014 EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT: 5/ 15/ 2015

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):	Joy M. Kozar & Sarah Alzahrani
CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:	Joy M. Kozar Sarah Alzahrani 785-317-7566
IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:	• Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.
SPONSOR OF PROJECT:	
PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:	**The purpose of this study is to develop an apparel merchandising track in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia. As part of this study, three focal points will be examined in constructing the apparel merchandising curriculum: (1) the nature of the subject-matter, or in this study, the content of current apparel merchandising programs in the U.S., (2) the nature of society, or in this study, the perceptions of industry professionals in Saudi Arabia, and (3) the nature of individuals, or in this study, the needs of students currently enrolled in apparel and textile programs in Saudi Arabia to succeed in the apparel industry.**
PROCEDURES OR METHODS TO BE USED:	**Sarah Alzahrani (doctoral student) is planning to interview Saudi human resource managers and apparel store managers to examine their perspectives of the skills and**

knowledge needed for Saudi women to be qualified for job opportunities within the apparel retail industry. Then, interviews will be conducted with current apparel and textiles students in Saudi Arabia. The aim of interviewing current students is to build an understanding of the students' perspectives of the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the apparel retail industry. A semi-structured interview format will be utilized. It is anticipated that each interview will take 60-90 minutes. A consent letter will be given to participants prior the interviews to give them a clear idea about the research. Each interview will be audio recorded upon obtaining permission from participants and each tape recording will be fully transcribed for data analysis and coding.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES OR TREATMENTS, IF ANY, THAT MIGHT BE ADVANTAGEOUS TO SUBJECT:

The paper-pen approach will be used if a respondent does not wish to be audio recorded.

LENGTH OF STUDY: **Interview will take 60-90 minutes**

RISKS ANTICIPATED: **No foreseeable risks**

BENEFITS ANTICIPATED: **The particpant will help the researcher by participation in this project in developing an apparel merchandising track in the apparel and textiles discipline in Saudi Arabia**

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: The participant's information will be kept confidential; the researcher will use numbers to refer to participants, meaning that no names will be utilized. The researcher will refer to the participants as participant 1, participant 2, participant 3, etc.

IS COMPENSATION OR MEDICAL TREATMENT AVAILABLE IF INJURY OCCURS:

PARENTAL APPROVAL FOR MINORS:

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation, penalty, or loss of benefits, or academic standing to which I may otherwise be entitled.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

(Remember that it is a requirement for the P.I. to maintain a signed and dated copy of the same consent form signed and kept by the participant

Participant Name: _____

Date:

Participant Signature: _____ _____

Witness to Signature: (project staff) _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B - Interview Questions for Human Resource Managers

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age: _____	Years in Current Job : _____
Years in Business: _____	

1. Tell me about how you came to be in this position.
    a) What level of education did you receive? Did you attend college? What did you study in college?
    b) Tell me about your training that led you to be successful in this industry.
2. What knowledge do students need to be prepared for careers in the apparel retail industry?
    a) How important is it for students to learn about the apparel and textile industry (industry sector as well as social, economic, and political boundaries)?
    b) How important is it for students to learn about the theory of appearance and human behavior (the historic, sociocultural, and psychological aspect of dress)?
    c) To what extent do students need to learn about the design process?
    d) How important is it for students to learn about the impact of globalization on the apparel and textile industry?
    e) How important is it for students to learn about business (marketing, finance, accounting,etc.)?
    f) How important is it for students to learn about social sciences, natural sciences, and language?

g) Is there other knowledge that students need prior to entering the apparel retail industry?

3. What personal attributes and characteristics should students possess before entering the apparel retail industry?
    a) How important is it for students to possess the ability to communicate ideas in writing and speaking? What about skills related to team work, leadership, and critical thinking? What technology-related skills should students possess?
    b) How important is it for students to learn about social responsibility and ethical issues in individual and business decision making? What about the environmental issues specific to the apparel industry?
4. How can Saudi women be promoted within this industry?
    a) How can Saudi women compete in higher ranking positions within the apparel retail industry?
    b) What are the barriers adversely affecting Saudi women in the apparel retail industry? Explain.
    c) How can Saudi women overcome these barriers in the apparel retail industry?
    d) Tell me about the internship opportunities for apparel and textiles undergraduate students within your company. Is it important that students have an internship experience prior to completion of their degrees?

Appendix C - Interview Questions for Apparel Store Managers

Name: _____	Date: _____
Age: _____	Years in Current Job : _____
Years in Business: _____	

1. Tell me about how you came to be in this position.
    a) What level of education did you receive? Did you attend college? What did you study in college?
    b) Tell me about any training you had that helped you be successful in this industry.
    c) Tell me about the tasks that you do day-to-day, weekly, monthly, and annually.
2. What knowledge do students need to be prepared for careers in the apparel retail industry?
    a) How important is it for students to learn about apparel and textile industry (industry sector as well as social, economic, and political boundaries)?
    b) How important is it for students to learn about the theory of appearance and human behavior (the historic, sociocultural, and psychological aspect of dress)?
    c) To what extent do students need to learn about the design process?
    d) How important is it for students to learn about the impact of globalization on apparel and textile industry?
    e) How important is it for students to learn about business (marketing, finance, accounting, etc.)?
    f) How important is it for students to learn about social sciences, natural sciences, and language?

g) Is there other knowledge that students need prior to entering the apparel retail industry?

3. What personal attributes and characteristics should students possess before entering the apparel retail industry?
    a) How important is it for students to possess the ability to communicate ideas in writing and speaking? What about skills related to team work, leadership, and critical thinking? What technology-related skills should students possess?
    b) How important is it for students to learn about social responsibility and ethical issues in individual and business decision making? What about the environmental issues specific to the apparel industry?
4. How can Saudi women be promoted within this industry?
    a) How can Saudi women compete in higher ranking positions within the apparel retail industry?
    b) What are the barriers adversely affecting Saudi women in the apparel retail industry? Explain.
    c) How can Saudi women overcome these barriers in the apparel retail industry?

Appendix D - Interview Questions for Apparel and Textiles Students

Name: _____		Date: _____
Age: _____	Marital Status: _____	Children: _____
College: _____		Year of Academy: _____

5. Tell me about your experience in this program so far.
    a) Tell me about how you came to be in the Apparel and Textiles Program.
    b) When you first came here, what were your expectations/goals?
    c) How does being a woman affect or shape your life in general and your educational experience in particular?
6. How can the apparel and textiles program help you achieve your goal(s)?
    a) What knowledge are you seeking?
    b) What skills do you think are important for your growth and success in the future?
    c) What courses within the program do you think contribute to your growth? Why?
    d) What courses within the program do you think have less impact on your growth? Why?
    e) Describe how the aspects of the courses (content, assignments, and activities) help/hinder you learn?
    f) What other activities do you think are important for you during your educational program that are not currently available in the program?
    g) What is missing in the current program?
7. What are your thoughts/opinions about the employment opportunities for women in the private sector in Saudi Arabia, particularly for apparel and textiles students?

a) Talking about the employment opportunities for women in the apparel retail industry, how can the apparel and textile discipline better prepare you for career in this industry?