

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Dichotomy of Education: Public vs. Private.

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### Abstract

This study explores the rationale behind educational gender segregation and its psychological outcomes. An online survey in 2006 was conducted by the Student Government Association-- SGA (student government at a private English language university in Kuwait) aimed at understanding if gender separation was manifested as the result of religious or cultural views and what psychological effects it is going to have on present and future interaction between the sexes. The results were interpreted using Albert Ellis' model of Cognitive Rational-Emotive Therapy and were correlated to the 2006 SGA study that was issued in response to the Kuwait law imposing gender segregation in private universities. This study is an updated version of the previous survey (Dinkha, 2010), which compares data from two universities (private vs public) in Kuwait. Its aimed at understanding if gender separation was manifested as the result of religious or cultural views and what psychological effects it is going to have on present and future interaction between the sexes.

### Keywords

Educational gender segregation, public and private education, Middle East, non-segregated, gender equality, Arab culture, Kuwait

### Introduction

The idea of gender segregation is very controversial. Gender segregation is the result of a traditionally patriarchal societies the world over. In Western society, gender segregation started when the false objectification of women dominated the Victorian era, as that culture, specifically, painted a false image of women's roles and sexuality (Showalter, 1980). This fallacy assigned women to roles in the domestic spheres and in rudimentary positions in the workforce such as secretarial work. Women were denied leadership positions because of this perception of what work required feminine or masculine qualities. Even though women were not welcome in the world of literature some more intrepid women were able to break through. One of the most famous writers during the Restoration era was Aphra Behn. Behn published astonishing work in a genre that was meant specifically for men, namely sexuality. (Anderson, 2005). Her seminal publication, the Imperfect Enjoinment, was meant for male readers only as its subject matter related to male impotence. Behn, being a pioneering woman of her time, dominated the discourse when she published her controversial poem called, *The Disappointment* (Anderson, 2005). Her accomplishments as a woman were not only based on her literary milestones, but because she worked as a spy during a time when women were not even allowed to leave the house with their husband's or father's consent (Anderson, 2005).

In modern times, in developed countries, denying women equality is seen as a violation of human rights. On the other hand, in the pre-Islamic era of the Muslim world, women had positions equal to men as the prophet Mohammad's wife was depicted as a businesswoman who proposed marriage to him. Despite the portrayal of female independence in Islam, the Arab culture divided both genders into areas of education, prayers, and business (Saad, 1995). It has been argued that gender segregation is a principle preached by Islam; however,



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some scholars would postulate that this is the result of misunderstandings surrounding the role of women in a Muslim society. Islam did not force gender segregation they would assert. The division of roles and responsibilities for both genders may have evolved in Arab societies as it served an important purpose being to encourage woman to stay at home and rear children. (D., 2010). Moreover, many hadiths contain numerous female scholars who taught both men and women. One of those is Aisha, the Prophet Mohammad's wife, who has narrated more than one thousand hadiths (D., 2010). Although there were no more other women narrating following Aisha, male narrators were told the hadiths they shared were descended directly from Aisha herself (D., 2010).

The countries in the Arabian Gulf are some of the most prominent countries that enforce gender segregation in public and private education in the modern world. Eleanor Abdullah Doumato, a specialist in gender and history of the Gulf region, explains that religion is the reason preventing coeducation in schools of the Middle East. She states that living in Saudi Arabia demonstrates how eager their society is to create segregation between males and females (Doumato, 2002). Saudi Arabia is not the only country that promotes and enforces gender segregation. Kuwait passed two laws that imposed gender segregation in which the state's public system was to be segregated in 1996 and subsequently implemented in 2001. However, in 2013, when this was proposed in the Legislative and Legal Affairs Committee, they approved the proposed implementation of the Gender Segregation Law in private schools but the panel rejected this proposal. Currently, gender segregation is not implemented in private schools in Kuwait (Al-Khaled, 2008).

### Literature Review

In 2007 the research of Dr. Giedd showed there was "no overlap in the trajectories of the brain development of boy and girls" (Giedd, 2007). This indicated the different regions of the brain develop in a different sequence in girls compared to that of boys. This was utilized to claim separate classes should be offered as a tool for the separate genders to excel (Single-sex classes, n.d.). In some parts of the world, whether students attend segregated or non-segregated schools has no impact on their academic success and development. Alan Smithers, a professor of education at Buckingham University, explains that although ten percent of the schools in Hong Kong are single-sex schools, the girls outperform the males. In Belgium however, the effects were divergent: it is the co-educational schools that have demonstrated the best academic results. With conflicting results throughout the world, Smithers concludes that the advantages of segregated schools are embellished (Asthana, 2006).

Gender segregation remains an urgent debatable issue in the Arab countries in general, and in the territory of Kuwait in particular. The introduction and dissemination of this phenomenon in society is a consequence of the policy of radical Islamists who regard gender segregation as an integral part of the traditions of Islam. Therefore, the implementation of this policy was accompanied at the legislative level. However, criticism of opponents promoted the revision of the law on gender segregation in Kuwait to help promote progress and avoid other consequences for the region.

Gender segregation was regarded by the authorities as a way to prevent integration, which could lead to a distortion of the values of Islam. However, the active imposition of this policy has led to a contradiction between traditional social norms and modern needs (Buisson, 2013). In other words, Kuwait as a promising and developing country faced the problem of regression because of the lack of interaction skills between the sexes in the work process, which negatively affected the productivity of the regional industries. Moreover, the current study has shown a decline in the academic productivity of students who belong to educational institutions with a policy of same-sex education (Tfaily & Samarah, 2018). According to this study, gender segregation not only requires high costs for implementation but also creates a false perception of gender, where men and women regard each other as sexual objects and not interacting members of society.

The negative effect for the regional economy of Kuwait is explained by the constant costs of building premises and establishments on the basis of gender. Sexual segregation in the labor market, in turn, significantly reduces the competitiveness of potential employees, which impedes the economic development of industries (Al-Sabah, 2013). Moreover, the segregation policy contributes to the strengthening of gender stereotypes, which are progressing because of the separation of curricula, which makes the false perception of sex

inheritable. It is important to note that despite the religious basis, gender segregation is being criticized in Kuwait. The reason for reviewing the laws and its negative consequences not only for the regional economy but also for the development of social interaction as an important part of progress. Thus, modern perception does not identify the interaction of the sexes with the violation of the traditions of Islam, and the negative effects of gender segregation prove the outdated concept of this policy.

Moreover, through the effort to understand gender segregation among science disciplines, in 2012, Ecklund et al. examined the reasons academic scientists segregate or allow differences in pedagogy between gender in both biology and physics. In doing so, they suggest that the reason for gender disparities between disciplines is nothing but a reflexive phenomenon that shapes the scientists' experience rather than real differences in gender. Through qualitative interviews, it is confirmed that this action reveals that scientists also perceive mentoring, natural differences, discrimination, and the history of the disciplines to be important factors. Ecklund et al. (2012) states, "the demand-side argument that women face more discrimination in physics is least supported by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows but gradually gains traction among faculty, particularly with women" (p. 702). As a result, there seems to be a relationship between emotional labor and occupational gender segregation that is often endemic in professions such as law and nursing.

The college and university environments perform as agents of socialization, and the administration and faculty recognize students bring with them, upon matriculation, different character traits that have been shaped by their parents, their communities, and their religions. These differences in students assist with their growth and development throughout their undergraduate careers (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederston, & Allen, 1998). In the most recent studies conducted by the National Association for Single Sex Public Education, it appears that co-educational schools had an adverse effect on participants; mainly because these schools reinforce gender stereotypes rather than diminishing them.

Research as early as 1944 demonstrated that men experienced "status contradictions" when working with females as equals; gender equality at work potentially threatened the other patriarchal social structures that benefit them (Hughes, 1944). As a result, men possessed an interest in segregation at work that reflects their desires to preserve dominance in society (Sokoloff, 1980). Patterns of gender segregation are sustained by tradition as much as by rational strategies of individual employers and employees (Connolly & Townshend-Smith, 2004). "Behavior that brings physical and psychological gains is notoriously easy to rationalize as being not only justified but quite logical, natural and perhaps even righteous" (Coleman, 1976). Further more, *The Significance of Sex Segregation in the Workplace*, argues that sex segregation in the workplace is beneficial for women in particular. It is beneficial because (1) contributes to women's low wages, (2) employment-related benefits. It precisely tackles women's earnings and sexual harassment. Moreover, in 2015 Sara Rizvi Jafree, Rubeena Zakar, Muhammad Zakaria Zakar, explore the ways in which gender segregation in the field of nursing benefits the female staff in the work in Pakistan. Their study was carried out over a period of 6 weeks, and in that time the authors gathered data using a qualitative research methodology, which was to conduct semi-structural interviews with the nurses. The findings show that introducing male nurses into the field would not be beneficial due to the strong demand for female nurses, resilience for female nurses, and because females are socially constructed to be the more caring and comforting gender of the two. In addition, male nurses are forbidden from interacting with female patients and vice versa as it goes against all religious, cultural and societal reasons. Jafree et al (2015) conclude:

"there is need for long-term fostering of gender solidarity among nurses and mobilization of unions to convert the gender segregation into a positive benefit and an advantage for professional advancement, work benefits, nurse identity, constitutional rights and workplace safety" (p. 990).

Conversely, in her article 2013, *Unpacking the causes of segregation across workplaces*, Magnus Bygren examines the ways in which gender segregation in workplace defines or fails to define the homosociality's relation to gender segregation. It aims to enlighten the public on how gender segregation is not beneficial for (1) society as it increases prejudice, stereotypes, and unequal access to sources. (2) Labor market rewards, as it does not equalize between potential workers in specific disciplines. Therefore, reducing segregation is a valued goal in

society to enhance work ethics.

Gender segregation's position in the Arab culture has particular effects in the education system due to the influence of fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. In 2013, noted author and academic, Johanna Buisson discussed gender segregation in Islam and why it is considered an essential component of the Islamic religion since segregation is considered necessary to prevent sin and immorality. However, Buisson believes this to be a fallacy. In her view, segregation in education:

“Increases mutual ignorance about the other gender, maintains and promotes inequality and reinforces discriminations in societies that are already culturally patriarchal... create a dividing atmosphere of suspicion and distrust between genders, and fosters gender disharmony and discord” (p. 99).

She argues that gender segregation promotes females as a target of temptation as “womanhood prevails over personhood in the sight of society and woman's sexual identity prevails over their human identity” (p. 106). Which creates the wrong image that any kind of man-woman relationship will end in adultery. Thirdly, Buisson discusses how that gender segregation makes women evil in eyes of men, which is interpreted from the story of Adam and Eve because Eve was coerced by the rhetoric of Satan. Buisson discusses gender segregation as an element of fear of change. She argues that in societies that suffer from problems such as unemployment, crimes, and drug use, that these issues are invariably linked to women's independence and liberation. Conservative Islamists draw correlations with these societal ills to an arcane notion of Islam that was practiced (600 CE). Therefore, any change is that image is perceived to have deleterious effects on society. Finally, she discusses gender segregation and the negation of religious ethics. Buisson argues that when we segregate people based on their gender this will make them ethically weak, because they are not using free will to resist sins and temptation, but are instead being mandated through doctrine to conform to cultural mores. Therefore, this undervalues one's ability to choose a path void of sin or other desires. In her summation, the author posits that instead of enforcing homogeneity and division, as popularly understood, Islam instead actually encourages diversity and acceptance.

## Methodology

The sequence of the study was conducted in this order: First, the review of the 2006 study on gender segregation and then reviews the results of the 2008 study we conducted using the Albert Ellis Cognitive Rational Emotive Therapy model. After reviewing the results of the previous study, we used survey monkey to administer the survey to students at a private university in Kuwait in 2017 for updated survey results. Furthermore, an additional dimension was added to this study, we solicited students from Kuwait University – a public institution to compare private vs. public opinions regarding gender segregation. Similar procedures were used in an attempt to study the effects of segregation. Adding a public university to the study was vital as it was pertinent to see whether students who attended segregated class lectures but not a segregated campus were for or against segregation.

### Comparison Study

The 2006 study was conducted by a student government at a private university in Kuwait in response to the Kuwaiti parliament passing a law that imposed gender segregation on private universities in Kuwait; 525 students participated in the survey: 248 were female and 277 were male. Both groups consisted of numerous students with different nationalities. They were asked to identify themselves as Kuwaitis or non-Kuwaitis. Of the females, 190 were Kuwaitis and 58 were non-Kuwaitis; of the males, 204 were Kuwaitis and 73 were non-Kuwaitis. The survey was distributed by hand to fill out and return to the student government. There were fourteen questions that dealt with gender segregation. Out of these fourteen, six questions were selected as relevant and applicable for comparisons to this survey. The six questions were as follows: 1) co-educational classrooms violate Islamic beliefs; 2) co-educational classrooms violate Kuwaiti moral values; 3) co-educational classrooms improve communication between people of opposite genders; 4) co-educational classrooms help to prepare students for mixed-gender employment environments; 5) segregated classrooms hinder the learning process; and 6) the partition placed between male and female students in AUK classrooms inhibits the learning environment. The results of this study were then placed

in the Albert Ellis Cognitive Rational Emotive Behavior Model.

### The Model

Albert Ellis considered the father of the Cognitive Emotive Rational Theory of behavior and acclaimed for the ABC model representative of human thoughts and feelings, defined his model as A being representative of external environmental events, B being representative of cognition, and C being representative of the resulting action or emotion displayed (Ellis & Dryden, 2007). His theory demonstrates how beliefs about an event can help to determine the response and therefore the outcome. If beliefs are rational they lead to moderate emotions that allow people to act constructively. On the other hand, irrational beliefs can lead to dysfunctional emotions such as anger, anxiety, or depression, which stop people from achieving their goals (Opre & Opre, 2006).

According to Ellis, humans experience activating events (A) every day that prompt them to think about what is occurring. The interpretation of these events results in specific beliefs (B) about the event and the individual's role in the events. Once the belief is developed, the emotional consequence (C) is experienced based on the belief (B). An example of this would be a student is placed in a co-educational classroom. This would be the activating event (A). The student might believe that co-education is wrong and it defies his moral and cultural values. This would be the cognition or thought occurring (B). The consequence of this is the student will feel uncomfortable in the co-educational classroom and acts in an irrational manner. This would be the experience (C) based on the belief.

This model is used to explain the results of the survey and their implications for the students and society in general. The model fits well with the exception of the activating event (A) which does not cause the belief (B) but instead is the trigger for a belief already present. This, of course, produces the consequence (C) evident in the results of the survey.

As stated in the literature, the underlying cause of the segregation debate in Kuwait, as well as other Islamic countries, is the teaching that gender integration is wrong, or somehow un-Islamic. The interpretation of the activating event is based on a belief already present. If the event correlates positively (congruence) with the interpretation, then the response will be positive. If the event correlates negatively (contradicts), then the emotional response is negative.

## The Study

Originally, this study was conducted in response to the discussion of the law that imposed gender segregation in private universities. The segregation law triggered a response among the students of those universities. The student government at a private university in Kuwait conducted the survey with the researchers choosing the student body within the university as test subjects. These students have experienced the benefit of co-educational classrooms at the university level, thereby making them optimal for this research. At first, the survey was divided into Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti nationalities, however, this yielded no significant differences between these groups. Therefore, the groups were combined for the purpose of this inquiry. In the recent continuation of this investigation, the search has been expanded to different fields including respondents from Kuwait University, which is a public institution with segregated classrooms, thereby allowing us to view the perspectives of students who aren't exposed to a co-educational environment. It is important to note that the survey was handed out only in English, which is the language of instruction at both universities.

Due to the sensitive nature and possible repercussions of participation in such a study, an electronic survey was sent out to protect the anonymity of the respondents. The total number of participants was 935. The survey consisted of the following eighteen questions:

Q1: What is your gender?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

Q2: Are you a current student at AUK or KU

- 1) University A
- 2) University B

Q3: What kind of school did you attend as a child?

- 1) Segregated school
  - 2) Mixed school
- Q4: Was segregation enforced at home during your childhood and/ or teenage years?
- 1) Yes, highly enforced.
  - 2) Neutral.
  - 3) No, not at all.
- Q5: What type of classroom do you feel best supports learning?
- 1) Fully segregated - separate classrooms for each gender
  - 2) Partially segregated genders - separated by use of dividers
  - 3) Coeducational - fully mixed-gender classrooms
  - 4) No preference
- Q6: What type of environment do you prefer for common areas on campus (i.e. library, seating areas, eating areas, coffee shops, etc.)?
- 1) Fully segregated - separate space for each gender
  - 2) Partially Segregated - genders separated by use of dividers
  - 3) Coeducational - fully mixed gender common areas
  - 4) No preference
- Q7: How do you feel fully segregated classrooms will impact the quality of your education?
- 1) Improve the quality of my education
  - 2) Lower the quality of my education
  - 3) Have no effect
  - 4) No opinion
- Q8: How do you feel a fully segregated campus environment will impact your social skills?
- 1) Improve the development of my social skills
  - 2) Restrict the development of my social skills
  - 3) Have no effect
  - 4) No opinion
- Q9: Does interacting with the opposite gender on campus affect your reputation in the society?
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No
  - 3) Other (please specify)
- Q10: Does a fully segregated school perpetuate cultural values?
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No
- Q11: Does being in a gender-mixed environment go against your cultural values?
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No
  - 3) Other (please specify)
- Q12: Does being in a mixed gender environment go against your religious beliefs?
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No
- Q13: Would you rather work in mixed or with a segregated group (Regardless of your religious beliefs, thinking only of your preparation for the future)
- 1) Mixed
  - 2) Segregated

3) Other (please specify)

Q14: What type of environment do you prefer for university activities/events?

- 1) Fully segregated - separate activity/event for each gender
- 2) Partially Segregated - genders separated by use of dividers
- 3) Coeducational - fully mixed activities/events
- 4) No preference

Q15: How do you feel a fully segregated campus environment will impact interaction between the genders in the workplace?

- 1) Improve interaction in the workplace
- 2) Lower interaction in the workplace
- 3) Have no effect
- 4) No opinion

Q16: Should a person residing in Kuwait be given the option to choose from a coeducational (mixed) educational environment or a segregated educational environment?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) No opinion

Q17: Would you be willing to participate in activities if they were fully segregated (i.e. clubs, organizations, and trips)?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No
- 3) Yes, but I prefer mixed activities
- 4) No opinion

Q18: If Kuwait were to be a fully segregated society, how will this affect its relationship with other countries?

- 1) Have a positive effect
- 2) Have a negative effect
- 3) Have no effect

### Results and Discussion (Appendix A)

In the 2017 survey, the total number of respondents amounted to 800. Male participants consist of 28.5 percent (228 participants) while 71.5 were female (572 participants) (Table 1). Those respondents attended the private English language university were 49.8%, while 50.2% attended Kuwait University (KU) (Table 2). It is especially important to note that 62.5% of respondents attended segregated primary and secondary schools, which greatly outnumbers the number respondents who were exposed to a mixed gender environment (Table 3). When asked if the respondents had segregation enforced at home, 85% expressed neutral to no segregation in their upbringing (Table 4). This indicates that segregation was not learned at home as much as it was enforced in the educational environment of those who attended segregated universities. The respondents were asked what type of classroom they felt best supports their learning 46.1% agreed that classrooms should be completely mixed, while 15% preferred classrooms being segregated using dividers (Table 5). When asked about the type of environment they preferred for common areas on campus (i.e. library, seating areas, eating areas, coffee shops, etc.) 53.3% preferred the environment fully mixed when 17.3% said they prefer it partially segregated (Table 6). Does a fully segregated classroom impact the quality of their education, 42.6% said it has no impact on them, while 21.1% said it will improve their education, but 25.6% said it will lower the quality of their education (Table 7).

When asked how segregation impacted their social skills, 51% of respondents agreed that it restricted the development of their social skills (Table 8). When asked about whether interaction with the opposite gender affected their reputation in the society, 45% of the respondents answered yes whereas the remaining 55% answered no (Table 9). When asked

if segregation perpetuated cultural values, 53% of respondents disagreed while 47% agreed (Table 10). Interestingly, when asked whether being in a mixed gender environment went against their cultural values, 69% disagreed (Table 11). A similar result was found when asked whether the respondents believed a mixed gender environment went against their religious beliefs, 67% disagreed (Table 12).

In response to the workplace, 82% of respondents preferred non-segregated environment (Table 13). This question focused more on the future of the workplace and specifically asked the respondents to set aside their religious beliefs. In the most recent 2017 survey, respondents were once again asked what environments they preferred for university activities and events, 61% preferred coeducational fully mixed activities and events. Another question regarding how a segregated environment had an impact on interactions between the genders, 52% believed that it would lower interaction in the workplace (Table 14). The survey ended with a question that targeted the respondents' thoughts on how segregation on a larger scale affected Kuwait's relationship with other countries, 66% thought that it would have a negative impact on the country (Table 17).

According to our recent results, 82.4% of respondents would rather work in a mixed workplace than in segregated one (Table 13). Because they believe segregation lowers the interaction between genders in the workplace (Table 14). In addition, both males and females believe that a fully segregated society would negatively impact Kuwait's relationships with other countries (Table 17).

When asked whether people residing in Kuwait should be given the option to choose from a coeducational environment or segregated educational environment, 66.5% agreed with this statement (Table 15). And when asked if they would be willing to participate in fully segregated activities, 41.9% agreed and 36.8% agreed but said they preferred mixed activities (Table 16)

These beliefs are indicative of Albert Ellis' ABC Model "based on the assumption emotional problems come from a dysfunctional thinking style about certain events and not the events themselves" (p. 42). Males are supportive of gender segregation because the Activating Event (A) is male and female together in class, Belief (B) is co-education is wrong. Emotional or behavioral Consequences (C) is to feel uncomfortable in co-educational classes, hence the support for gender segregation. Females are very supportive of co-education and regard gender segregation as a barrier that hinders the learning process. Women feel co-educational classrooms help prepare them for mixed-gender employment and help improve their communication and interaction with the opposite sex.

In the 2008 survey, results indicated 78 % of the students were in favor of co-education. They felt it not only supported their learning process, but gender segregation would have an impact on the quality of their education and social skills and would have a negative effect on Kuwait's relationship with other countries. Using Ellis' model, it can be surmised (A) students placed in segregated classrooms; (B) feel is detrimental to their present learning and future social processes and (C) will create anxiety, anger, and depression which are not conducive to learning. This was found true also in the 2017 survey results.

Most of the respondents had an opportunity to give additional comments (the comment section) provided in the survey. Of the respondents mentioned that they are open-minded people, but their families and/or their peers are not. As a result, the majority of those respondents worry about what other people think of them when they interact with the opposite sex even although personally this is not an issue. Overall, both genders worry about society judging them, namely, creating rumors and innuendo and making assumptions about them that are not necessarily true.

There were comments in which the respondents touched on the topic of having close-minded people in the society and how this is largely emblematic of older generations. They drew contrasts with the younger generations, which they reason are more progressive. Also, a majority of the respondents think that segregated schools harm their interactions with the opposite sex in the long run. Furthermore, respondents said that gender mixed environments do not go against their cultural beliefs, but they go against their families' and society's cultural beliefs. There seems to worry about what people think of them again, depends on the people, their background, and the environment.

In response to work, feedback was divided into two groups. One group of respondents was

indifferent about the type of environment they would rather work in and said that it should not matter as long as it is respectful and the people work hard. However, the other group of respondents said that due to not having communication with the opposite gender, it makes them lack social skills and prefer segregated environments. This fear seems to play a big part with those who came from segregated schools and are unprepared to deal with the opposite sex specifically, with upper management. Conflict arises and often tension is left unresolved due to the difference in gender styles of communication and expression.

According to these current results (Appendix B), several conclusions can be drawn using the detailed male and female division. Male and female students from private and public sector think about gender segregation. Although a higher percentage came from segregated schools (62.5%), and segregation was enforced at home during childhood years, the majority of females want a coeducational learning environment while more men prefer the traditional segregated classroom. Similarly in 2010, when this research was first published, women were more interested in coeducation and men were more consistent with their need to stay segregated.

Also as highlighted in Appendix B, males are oriented towards gender segregation for several reasons. In the past, it may seem that males regarded co-education as a violation of Islamic beliefs and a violation of Kuwaiti moral values. Although gender segregation is embedded within the Kuwaiti culture and value system, it is not a violation of Islamic beliefs. Islam regulates gender integration but does not forbid it (Al Fadli, 2008). Males in this survey do not believe that segregation will impact the quality of education, and it does not restrict development. They also believed co-education does not improve communication between the sexes and that it does not prepare students for mixed-gender employment. They feel gender segregation does not hinder the learning process and the partitions placed between male and female students do not inhibit their ability to learn.

Females in this study were more flexible, wanted to have more coeducational exposure, feel gender segregation does not go against their cultural values, or religious beliefs and are more prepared for the workforce. They are very supportive of co-education and regard gender segregation as a means that hinders the learning process and inhibits it. Women have long been oppressed and denied their rights to a proper education within this region. Previously, it was prohibited for a female to go to college or even work. Today women are competing with men for degrees and within the workforce. Women feel co-educational classrooms help prepare them for mixed-gender employment and help improve their communication with the opposite sex. This is regarded as a beneficial tool to aid them in their newly granted right to work.

These beliefs are indicative of Albert Ellis' ABC Model "based on the assumption emotional problems come from a dysfunctional thinking style about certain events and not the events themselves" (p. 42). Males are supportive of gender segregation because the Activating Event (A) is male and female together in class, Belief (B) is co-education is wrong. Emotional or behavioral Consequences (C) is to feel uncomfortable in co-educational classes, hence the support for gender segregation. Although this is also true for female participants, the idea of restructuring the cognitive thoughts allow them to be more flexible and change their cognitive beliefs. Kuwait is a collectivist society and traditional beliefs are the way to hold on to traditions. Although Kuwait has been impacted greatly by the Western influence including; music, movies and Social Media platforms. This explains why the newer generations are more flexible in their view of segregation which fits more with the individualistic society's view of the world. However, public schools are more attended and house more of the new generation than the private academic institutions in Kuwait. As long as the public education enforces the segregated coeducational belief, students will continue to have limited understanding on how gender segregation can impact the overall gender bias on an academic and social basis. Single-sex schooling also limits the socialization between sexes that co-educational schools provide. Coeducational school settings have been shown to foster less anxiety, have happier classrooms, and enable students to participate in a simulated social environment with the tools to maneuver, network, and succeed in the world.

Another interpretation, as previously evidenced, is male employment in a mixed or female-dominated work setting (whether it is in a job or university) may threaten men's masculine identities and lower their perceived self-esteem and well-being (Wharton & Baron, 1987). Therefore, the majority of male students were in favor of gender segregation. This can be tied

to what Sokoloff stated, as cited earlier in this paper; that working with females as equals, and gender equality at work, threaten other patriarchal social structures and therefore men possessing an interest in segregation at work reflect their desires to preserve dominance in the larger society (Sokoloff, 1980).

In the 2008 survey, results indicated the majority of the students were in favor of co-education. They feel it not only supports their learning process, but gender segregation will have an impact on the quality of their education and social skills and will have a negative effect on Kuwait's relationship with other countries. Using Ellis' model, it can be surmised (A) students placed in segregated classrooms; (B) feel is detrimental to their present learning and future social processes and (C) will create anxiety, anger, and depression which are not conducive to learning. Although it has been ten years since the last results, the ABC model of cognition continues to produce similar anxiety within the students of public and private sectors.

## Conclusion

Gender segregation has been in the Arabian Gulf for many years. Much research has been done in support of segregation all over the world, yet gender segregation is becoming a serious issue given the attention the Gulf countries are receiving from the human rights groups and other human activists. As a result, Saudi women just recently were granted the rights to vote and to travel alone without a male companion. The results of this research also defend the idea that segregation has a negative impact on interactions between genders in the workplace, university life, and, on a larger scale, interactions between other countries. Nations are growing, and through continued research and development are becoming more aware of the impact different cultural variables have on a society, such as a gender segregation. Only through positive educational experience of the youth can a society sustain or achieve a favorable quality of life and the general sense of well-being.

Gender segregation in the Gulf is being adopted for reasons with which children and young adults of the next generation disagree. Females are more often opposed to segregation than males, mainly because males will benefit from segregation and maintain superiority in society over females. Though some have purported gender segregation has been effective in terms of schooling, the opposing research shows its detriment.

## Limitation and implication for future research

Due to the lack research on gender segregation in the Gulf, it has been difficult to gather information and previous research on this topic. Furthermore, the affluent nature of the sample affects the outcomes. Is it possible students are traveling and being exposed to cultures that do not have segregation. The surveys were not translated from English to Arabic, and this could have affected the results, due to misunderstandings of the questions. Furthermore, future research should look at other schools in the Arabian Gulf region such as Saudi Arabia, where the majority are living in a segregated environment and therefore, may not understand the impact of segregation on their daily lives. This would allow for a comparison of the results to this research and to get a broader look at the issue of segregation in the entire region. Also, it is possible the sample of students may feel the need to provide answers that opposed segregation because in the university environment such views may be perceived as more progressive and more in line with attitudes expected of their generation.

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**Appendix A**

Table 1. What is your gender?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Female	572	71.5	71.5	71.5
Male	228	28.5	28.5	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 2. Are you a current student at AUK or KU?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
AUK	398	49.8	49.8	49.8
KU	402	50.3	50.3	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 3. What kind of school did you attend as a child?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Mixed school	300	37.5	37.5	37.5
Segregated school	500	62.5	62.5	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 4. Was segregation enforced at home during your childhood and/ or teenage years?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Neutral	359	44.9	44.9	44.9
No, not at all	327	40.9	40.9	85.8
Yes, highly enforced	114	14.3	14.3	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 5. What type of classroom do you feel best supports learning?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Coeducational - fully mixed gender classrooms	369	46.1	46.1	46.1
Fully segregated - separate classrooms for each gender	116	14.5	14.5	60.6
No preference	195	24.4	24.4	85
Partially segregated - separated by use of dividers	120	15	15	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 6. What type of environment do you prefer for common areas on campus (i.e. library, seating areas, eating areas, coffee shops, etc.)?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Coeducational - fully mixed gender common areas	426	53.3	53.3	53.3
Fully segregated - separate spaces for each gender	80	10	10	63.3
No preference	156	19.5	19.5	82.8
Partially segregated - genders separated by use of dividers	138	17.3	17.3	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 7. How do you feel a fully segregated classroom will impact the quality of your education?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Have no effect	341	42.6	42.6	42.6
Improve the quality of my education	169	21.1	21.1	63.8
Lower the quality of my education	205	25.6	25.6	89.4
No opinion	85	10.6	10.6	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 8. How do you feel a fully segregated campus environment will impact your social skills?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Have no effect	163	20.4	20.4	20.4
Improve the development of my social skills	179	22.4	22.4	42.8
No opinion	47	5.9	5.9	48.6
Restrict the development of my social skills	411	51.4	51.4	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 9. Does interacting with the opposite gender on campus affect your reputation in the society?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
No	436	54.5	54.5	54.5
Yes	364	45.5	45.5	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 10. Does a fully segregated school perpetuate cultural values?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
No	428	53.5	53.5	53.5
Yes	372	46.5	46.5	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 11. Does being in a gender mixed environment go against your cultural values?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
No	555	69.4	69.4	69.4
Yes	245	30.6	30.6	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 12. Does being in a mixed gender environment go against your religious beliefs?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
No	530	66.3	66.3	66.3
Yes	270	33.8	33.8	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 13. Would you rather work in mixed or with a segregated group? (regardless of your religious beliefs, thinking only of your preparation for the future)

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Mixed	659	82.4	82.4	82.4
Segregated	141	17.6	17.6	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 14. How do you feel a fully segregated environment will impact interactions between the genders in the work place?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Have no effect	141	17.6	17.6	17.6
Improve interactions in the workplace	155	19.4	19.4	37
Lower interaction in the workplace	416	52	52	89
No opinion	88	11	11	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 15. Should a person residing in Kuwait be given the option to choose from a coeducational (mixed) educational environment or a segregated educational environment?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
No	122	15.3	15.3	15.3
No opinion	146	18.3	18.3	33.5
Yes	532	66.5	66.5	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 16. Would you be willing to participate in activities if they were fully segregated (i.e. clubs, organizations, and trips)?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
No	80	10	10	10
No opinion	91	11.4	11.4	21.4
Yes	335	41.9	41.9	63.3
Yes, but I prefer mixed activities	294	36.8	36.8	100
Total	800	100	100	

Table 17. If Kuwait were to be a fully segregated society, how will this affect its relationship with other countries?

Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Have a negative effect	530	66.3	66.3	66.3
Have a positive effect	96	12	12	78.3
Have no effect	174	21.8	21.8	100
Total	800	100	100	

## Appendix B

Table 1.  
Are you a current student at AUK or KU?

	Are you a current student at AUK or KU?		Total
	AUK	KU	
Female	274	298	572
Male	124	104	228
Total	398	402	800

Table 2.  
Was segregation enforced at home during your childhood and/ or teenage years?

	Was segregation enforced at home during your childhood and/ or teenage years?			Total
	Neutral	No, not at all	Yes, highly enforced	
Female	258	235	79	572
Male	101	92	35	228
Total	359	327	114	800

Table 3.  
**What type of classroom do you feel best supports Learning?**

	What type of classroom do you feel best supports learning?				Total
	Coeducational - fully mixed gender classrooms	Fully segregated - separate classrooms for each gender	No preference	Partially segregated - separated by use of dividers	
Female	259	80	148	85	572
Male	110	36	47	35	228
Total	369	116	195	120	800

Table 4.  
**What type of environment do you prefer for common areas on campus (i.e. library, seating areas, eating areas, coffee shops, etc.)?**

	What type of environment do you prefer for common areas on campus (i.e. library, seating areas, eating areas, coffee shops, etc.)?				Total
	Coeducational - fully mixed gender common areas	Fully segregated - separate spaces for each gender	No preference	Partially segregated - genders separated by use of dividers	
Female	296	59	116	101	572
Male	130	21	40	37	228
Total	426	80	156	138	800

Table 5.  
**How do you feel a fully segregated classroom will impact the quality of your education?**

	How do you feel a fully segregated classroom will impact the quality of your education?				Total
	Have no effect	Improve the quality of my education	Lower the quality of my education	No opinion	
Female	267	114	124	67	572
Male	74	55	81	18	228
Total	341	169	205	85	800

Table 6.  
**How do you feel a fully segregated campus environment will impact your social skills?**

	How do you feel a fully segregated campus environment will impact your social skills?				Total
	Have no effect	Improve the development of my social skills	No opinion	Restrict the development of my social skills	
Female	122	131	35	284	572
Male	41	48	12	127	228
Total	163	179	47	411	800

Table 7.  
**Does interacting with the opposite gender on campus affect your reputation in the society?**

	Does interacting with the opposite gender on campus affect your reputation in the society?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	315	257	572
Male	121	107	228
Total	436	364	800

Table 8.  
**Does a fully segregated school perpetuate cultural values?**

	Does a fully segregated school perpetuate cultural values?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	307	265	572
Male	121	107	228
Total	428	372	800

Table 10.  
Does being in a mixed gender environment go against your religious beliefs?

	Does being in a mixed gender environment go against your religious beliefs?		Total
	No	Yes	
Female	391	181	572
Male	139	89	228
Total	530	270	800

Table 11.  
Would you rather work in mixed or with a segregated group? (regardless of your religious beliefs, thinking only of your preparation for the future)

	Would you rather work in mixed or with a segregated group? (regardless of your religious beliefs, thinking only of your preparation for the future)		Total
	Mixed	Segregated	
Female	470	102	572
Male	189	39	228
Total	659	141	800

Table 12.  
What type of environment do you prefer for university Activities/events?

	What type of environment do you prefer for university activities/events?				Total
	Coeducational - fully mixed activities/events	Fully segregated - separate activity/event for each gender	No preference	Partially segregated - genders separated by use of dividers	
Female	345	41	81	105	572
Male	144	23	23	38	228
Total	489	64	104	143	800

Table 13.  
How do you feel a fully segregated environment will impact interactions between the genders in the work place?

	How do you feel a fully segregated environment will impact interactions between the genders in the work place?				Total
	Have no effect	Improve interactions in the workplace	Lower interaction in the workplace	No opinion	
Female	95	109	304	64	572
Male	46	46	112	24	228
Total	141	155	416	88	800

Table 14.  
Should a person residing in Kuwait be given the option to choose from a coeducational (mixed) educational environment or a segregated educational environment?

	Should a person residing in Kuwait be given the option to choose from a coeducational (mixed) educational environment or a segregated educational environment?			Total
	No	No opinion	Yes	
Female	78	104	390	572
Male	44	42	142	228
Total	122	146	532	800

Table 15.  
Would you be willing to participate in activities if they were fully segregated (i.e. clubs, organizations, and trips)?

	Would you be willing to participate in activities if they were fully segregated (i.e. clubs, organizations, and trips)?				Total
	No	No opinion	Yes	Yes, but I prefer mixed activities	
Female	50	61	268	193	572
Male	30	30	67	101	228
Total	80	91	335	294	800

Table 16.  
If Kuwait were to be a fully segregated society, how will this affect its relationship with other countries?

	If Kuwait were to be a fully segregated society, how will this affect its relationship with other countries?			Total
	Have a negative effect	Have a positive effect	Have no effect	
Female	396	61	115	572
Male	134	35	59	228
Total	530	96	174	800

Table 17.  
Are you a current student at AUK or KU? \* What kind of school did you attend as a child?

	What kind of school did you attend as a child?		Total
	Mixed school	Segregated school	
AUK	211	187	398
KU	89	313	402
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>800</b>

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