

The development of educational relations between Kuwait and Lebanon

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Abstract

The present study tackles the development of relations between the two countries in the educational aspect. Lebanon is considered a destination for Kuwaiti students in all branches and scientific and educational disciplines. The Kuwaiti educational missions in Lebanon date back to the forties of the past century. The educational role of the Lebanese in opening a number of private schools in Kuwait and practicing the teaching profession there attracted the Kuwaiti students in government al schools to study in them, especially after the independence of Kuwait in 1961. The number of Lebanese teachers and students in Kuwait's schools increased. Kuwait also provided many social aids in the educational aspect to Lebanon during the crises and the civil war in 1975. Kuwait also contributed to collecting a number of donations and sending them to Lebanon for rebuilding several schools and providing students with school supplies such as books, clothes, stationery, and buses. Kuwaiti educational associations urged Kuwaitis to provide educational aid to Lebanon.

Keywords: *Kuwait, Lebanon, relations, educational, students, schools, study.*

Introduction

The study of educational relations between countries is one of the topics that are of great importance, especially Arab-Arab relations. Such studies often require knowledge and comprehensiveness of educational development. Kuwaiti students were sent to study in Lebanon and Kuwaiti missions were also sent to study in universities and schools in Lebanon. Lebanese also had a role in opening a number of private schools in Kuwait. The number of Lebanese teachers and students in Kuwait increased. The present study focuses on Kuwaiti educational aid and donations to Lebanon during the 1975-1990 civil war.

Problem of the Study

The problem of the present study revolves around the role of the educational aspect in the development of Kuwaiti-Lebanese relations and vice versa.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to identify the influence of education and student missions on relations between countries.

Significance of the Study

The present study is significant as it is an attempt to identify the important stages in the educational aspect between the two countries and the role of Kuwait in providing aid and educational support to Lebanon during the civil war.

Kuwaiti-Lebanese educational relations

Cultural relations between the two countries have been active, especially at the educational level. Lebanon has been a destination for Kuwaiti students. The American University in Beirut began receiving Kuwaiti students since the twenties of the twentieth century to study in all branches and majors. At that time, Kuwait appointed a supervisor for its students in Lebanon. The Kuwaiti prince Ahmed Al-Jabir Al-Sabah sent his sons, Sheikh Fahd Al-Salim and Sheikh Muhammad Al-Ahmed Al-Jabir to study in Lebanon to prepare them for leadership positions in Kuwait (Al-Qabas, 2006).

As a result of the increase in the number of Kuwaiti students in Lebanon, the government of Kuwait sent scholarships there in 1939 (Al-Sabah, 2014). After that, the number of Kuwaiti scholarship students has increased since the forties to study at the American University and at the Jesuit University, which witnessed the graduation of large numbers in various disciplines. They obtained High positions in the state. Kuwaitis joined a number of Lebanese schools, such as the Berman and Al-Ghazir French School in Lebanon (Alayan, 2016).

In 1953, the Department of Knowledge sent a group of students to study in Lebanon and provided them with a monthly salary of 300 Lebanese pounds. Most of them assumed important positions in the state after their return from Lebanon (Alayan, 2016).

As a result of the increase in the number of Kuwaiti students in Lebanon, the Kuwaiti Education Department established an office to supervise missions. Hood HabeebKourani assumed the task of supervising in Lebanon (Kuwait Education Council, 2002).

After Kuwait had opened schools in their country, the total number of Lebanese students in Kuwait until 1960 reached (1121) Lebanese. The Kuwaiti government taught them at its expense and provided them with food, drink, clothes, and books for free, in addition to appointing a number of Lebanese male and female teachers to teach in Kuwaiti schools (Al-Farhan, 1960). Among the first Lebanese teachers was Sami Mustafa, who entered Kuwait in 1956, followed by a large number of those who worked in teaching, including Mrs. TammamWael Al-Khateeb and Zahir Khalid Al-Basha. Lebanese established private schools in Kuwait such as Al-Jameel National School and Teresianschool, and the New Testament (Arzuni, 1991).

When the Kuwaiti Education Council decided to impose the uniform for Kuwaiti students, Mulla Muhammad Husseini was assigned to go to Lebanon and make contacts with various factories and sewing houses. It was agreed to import the uniform for Lebanese students (Kuwait Knowledge Council, 2002).

After the independence of Kuwait in 1961, educational relations developed. In 1963, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education sent a delegation headed by Abdullah Al-Mufarrej, director of scholarships, to Beirut to study educational planning in it (Al-Hadaf, 1963). In addition, instructions were issued to increase the allowances for Kuwaiti mission students in Lebanon to 25 Lebanese pounds per month, in addition to the previous allocations based on the recommendation of the Kuwaiti Cultural Attaché in Lebanon (ibid).

Lebanon had a role in Kuwaiti schools. The Kuwaiti government sent an educational delegation headed by Minister of Education to Lebanon and other Arab countries in order to contract with teachers. Lebanese teachers were contracted to teach in their schools (Al-Siyasa, 1965). In the late sixties and early seventies, Elias Tannouri, Ali Hassan Harb, ZuhairSubra, and Rafeeq Al-Taqqsh entered Kuwait and practiced education at the secondary level. The number of Lebanese teachers in Kuwaiti public schools reached 53, including 27 female teachers in 1975. The Lebanese teachers contributed to opening several schools, such as the High School in 1966, the pioneer in 1967, and the American International in 1975. The presence of university professors at Kuwait University was delayed until 1972, with the arrival of the first Lebanese professor, Dr. AbdulrahmanYounus, to teach at the Department of Mathematics (Arzouni, 1991).

In order to strengthen these relations, the President of the Lebanese Republic, Charles Al-Hilou, visited the Faculty of Women at Kuwait University during his visit to Kuwait in 1967. He was accompanied by Sheikh Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah, the Emir of Kuwait, the Kuwaiti Minister of Education AbdulmalikSalih, and the Secretary of the University, Mr. Abdullah Nouri. President Charles Al-Hilou was greatly welcomed (Abdulmughni, 2003).

In 1969, the Kuwaiti Minister of Education, SalihAbdulmalik, visited Lebanon, where he received a wide reception. He held a meeting with the Lebanese Minister of Education, Joseph Abu Khater. They discussed cultural relations between the two countries. They also agreed to hold talks between the two sides at the beginning of 1970 to consult on educational and cultural issues between the two countries (Al-Anwar, 1969). After that, the Lebanese Minister of Education Joseph Abu Khater traveled to Kuwait at the invitation of the Kuwaiti Minister of Education accompanied by the Head of the Joint Administrative Department of the Ministry of Education, Antoine Hobeika. The Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah and Crown Prince Jabir Al-Sabah received the Lebanese ambassador to Kuwait Samih Al-Baba and the Lebanese educational delegation. The delegation visited Kuwaiti institutes and schools. This visit aimed to strengthen cultural and economic ties between them (Arab World Record, 1970-1971). In 1966, a Lebanese educational delegation, at the invitation of the Kuwaiti Minister of Education, made up of the Chancellor of Beirut Faculty for Women, SalwaN Sar, Mary Sabri, and HabeebAmeen Al-Kouranifrom the American University in Beirut to discuss the educational situation of the two countries (Al-Siyasa, 1966).

Kuwait continued to provide educational support to Lebanon. The Kuwaiti People's Committee collected donations for the establishment of several schools in Tripoli and Sidon in Lebanon (Alyan, 2011). Cooperation between the two countries also took place on the educational level. The Lebanese educational delegation visited Kuwait headed by the President of the Council of the Educational Center for Research and Parliamentary News, George Murr and Head of the English Language Unit at the Hani Khair El-Din Center, on January 25, 1979. They discussed ways of joint cooperation between the two countries. George Murr expressed his desire for educational cooperation between the two countries, at all levels, in order to support the educational plans in both countries. After that, the Educational Center for Research and Educational Curricula received a set of textbooks for the primary stages from the Lebanese delegation, which contained exemplary lessons in modern educational education that depends on the crossing in the development of information and knowledge in the child (Al-Rai Al-Aam, 1979).

Likewise, the number of Lebanese studying in Kuwait's public schools started to increase from 1975 to 1980 (Al-Husseini, 1984).

Table (1) The number of Lebanese students in Kuwait.

The number	The year
2849	1975
3163	1976
3640	1977
3902	1978
4272	1979
4655	1980

The Lebanese community in Kuwait established several schools during that period, such as the American International School in 1975 and opened a number of branches in different residential areas of Kuwait. University professors began teaching at Kuwait University, including Ghassan Ghandour, Sami Hojeij, Farouk Badrakhan, Yahya Salam, Jihad Sawan, Waleed Mark, and Hassan Mahmoud. The Lebanese university professors in Kuwait are among the Lebanese category that possesses good economic and social conditions (Arzouni, 1991). During 1975-1980, their numbers reached 3,2% of the faculty members at Kuwait University (Al-Husseini, 1984).

Kuwait also participated in a symposium of educational institutions for science and mathematics in the Arab world at the end of June 1979. That symposium was called for by the Center of Education for Science and Mathematics at the American University in Beirut. Projects of exchange of information among them were agreed upon (Al-Rai Al-Aam, 1979). The businessman Issa Hussein Al-Yousifi contributed to the establishment of a vocational school for girls' education in Lebanon on the road to Beirut International Airport, to teach the types of professions and crafts that were destroyed during the war. It was converted into a charitable body. After he was taken to a hospital, Al-Yousifi donated a fully equipped ambulance (Al-Awadi, 2019).

The Association of Economics and Political Science at Kuwait University also held a symposium on the Popular Relief Society on June 5, 1975 in Lebanon, in the presence of both doctor Hikma Al-Amin and Muhammad Hanino, who explained the situation in southern Lebanon. They were provided with assistance so that they can continue steadfast against the continuous Zionist bombardment (Al-Qabas, 1981). The Kuwaiti Students' Union appealed the Kuwaiti people and the Kuwaiti Red Crescent to send aid to Lebanon after the Zionist attacks on Lebanon 1981. Therefore, the Red Crescent Society, in cooperation with the Kuwaiti people, sent material and moral aid to Lebanon (Al-Shatti, 2018).

Kuwait continued to support Lebanon after the continuation of the civil war. The Kuwaiti government and popular organizations contributed to the advancement of situation and the lifting of the suffering of the Lebanese people. The Kuwaiti Teachers Association set up a charity market on the tenth of August 1982 at the association's headquarters for the benefit of the victims of Lebanon, and sent its donations to the competent authorities in Lebanon. The revenues of the charitable market amounted to 68,564 thousand Kuwaiti dinars (Al-Kharafi, 2007). In 1982, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education donated 164 thousand Kuwaiti dinars to contribute to alleviating the scourge of the crisis on the Lebanese people (ibid).

University students in Kuwait began working to spread the Lebanese cause and contribute to the collection of aid and donations for it. The Association of Economics and Political Science organized a symposium entitled "Lebanon and the Arab Silence" in the presence of teachers in Kuwait such as Omar Al-Khateeb, Hisham Al-Behbehani, and Suleiman Al-Fleihan. They discussed the Lebanese events and their point of view regarding the escalation of events. They stressed that what is happening in Lebanon is nothing but an extension of what is going on at the center of the Arab-Zionist conflict, and that the crisis in Lebanon is in fact a crisis of conflict that multiple powers are waging to impose the American-Zionist peace and herald the end of the war of attrition in 1971 and Egypt's exit from the circle of national conflict (Al-Qabas, 1985).

Kuwaiti students in the United States of America followed up the Lebanese events. In a statement issued on the 3rd of April 1985, the Student Union called on the Arab and Islamic countries to stand against the force that wants Lebanon to be divided on a sectarianism basis. They collected donations and aid and sent them to the Lebanese people (Al-Qabas, 1985). Students of Kuwaiti public and private schools, facilitated by the Minister of Education, Anwar Abdullah Al-Nouri, the assistant undersecretaries, and the School Activities Department, collected donations to the Joint Committee for Supporting Lebanon and Palestine. They included the Kuwaiti public benefit associations. The association received about 24,000 Kuwaiti dinars, sent to the competent authorities in Lebanon to distribute it among the needy (ibid). The Kuwaiti Ministry of Education issued a decision to collect donations for the Lebanese and Palestinians. A leaflet was distributed in the schools of the Ministry of Education urging students to donate one hundred fils to instill the spirit of The initiative and

feeling the suffering of Lebanon. Donations were collected from students and transferred to the Joint Committee to Support Lebanon and Palestine (Al-Shatti, 2018).

Kuwait and Lebanon participated in the General Conference of the Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science in its regular session, which was held in Tunisia from the nineteenth to the twenty-second of December 1987. The Kuwaiti side was represented by the Minister of Education Anwar Abdullah Al-Nouri. After discussing the educational and cultural situation in the Arab world, the conference recommended Arab governments to provide all support to educational and cultural institutions in Lebanon. It also called on Lebanese to preserve their educational and cultural institutions (Arab Affairs Magazine, 1989).

In order to strengthen the educational ties between Kuwait and Lebanon, the Faculty of Information at the Lebanese University decided, at the request of the Lebanese President's office, to teach the issues of the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Qabas to its students, to be the first Gulf publication to be included in the curricula of the Arab League (Al-Qabas, 1987). After that, Duaij Jabir was elected a member of the Board of Trustees of the American University of Beirut. He was chosen by the Board of Trustees of the American University in New York on the seventeenth of July 1987 (ibid). On the seventh of April 1987, the Ministry of Education established charitable markets in Kuwait schools in order to support Residents of Shatila Camps and the Lebanese (Al-Shatti, 2018).

The Kuwaiti government contributed to supplying the needs of the American University of Beirut. University officials thanked the Kuwaiti government for providing about one million dollars, equivalent to five hundred million Lebanese pounds, in order to improve and supply educational supplies at the university (Al-Qabas, 1988). Kuwaiti businessmen contributed to providing aid to Lebanon. Yahya Zakaria al-Ansari participated in Reconstruction of many schools in Lebanon, taking care of them, and providing assistance to families for the education of their children, by paying the costs of their studies in Kuwait or abroad.

The Emir of Kuwait Jabir Al-Ahmed issued his directives that the Lebanese people should not be left alone in their suffering so that they can recover from their crisis. Therefore, he ordered sending of a large batch of humanitarian aid at the beginning of February 1989 (Alyan, 2016). The educational side had a share in that aid. The first batch contained clothes for school students, thirty buses to transport students, and 67 trucks. They were distributed to the 500 students and their families (Al-Qabas, 1988). The second batch included school aids under the supervision of the Director of the Prime Minister's Office Mubarak Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah. This batch included equipment for 900,000 Lebanese students. The central body formed by the Lebanese Prime Minister Salim El-Hoss requested the help for 500,000 students. The batch also contained 224 shipments and 60 Kuwaiti buses to transport passengers, which were distributed by the Rafic Hariri Foundation and the UNICEF Office to all Lebanese (ibid).

The results

1. The educational side had a role in strengthening relations through visits that were held between the two sides to discuss and keep pace with the development of education and to agree on cooperation in educational issues, the most important of which was the visit of the President of the Lebanese Republic, Charles Helou, to Kuwait University in 1967 to view the development of education in Kuwait.
2. Lebanon was a good destination for Kuwaiti students and student missions sent by the Kuwaiti government, at its own expense, to educate them in Lebanon. They held important positions in the country. When the Kuwaiti Education Council decided to impose the official dress for Kuwaiti students, Mullah Muhammad Husseini was assigned to go to Lebanon and rely on factories and Lebanese dress.
3. Relations were strengthened after the decision of the Presidency of the Republic to include the issues of the Kuwaiti Al-Qabas newspaper within the curricula of the Lebanese University.
4. The Kuwaiti government, the scientific committees, the Teachers Association, and the Kuwait Students Union contributed to sending donations and educational and humanitarian aid to Lebanon during the 1975 civil war.
5. A number of Lebanese teachers were appointed in Kuwait schools after the independence of Kuwait in 1961, whose number increased with the Lebanese students who were at the expense of the Kuwaiti government during the civil war in 1975. The Lebanese were also able to open a number of private schools.

Conclusion

1. Lebanon was a heartland for Kuwaiti students to study there. After their numbers increased after sending missions, the Department of Education established an office to supervise Kuwaiti students.
2. Kuwait and Lebanon participated in the conferences of the Arab Organization for Education, Culture, and Science.
3. The Kuwait Students Union held several seminars and appeals to the Kuwaiti people and the Red Crescent to collect and send material and moral aid to Lebanon and spread the Lebanese cause.
4. The Kuwaiti Teachers Association has launched several initiatives to collect donations for Lebanon. The Ministry of Education issued a decision in 1987 to collect donations for the Lebanese people.

5. Kuwait participated in all Arab conferences urging the provision of educational aid to Lebanon during the civil war in 1975.
6. The educational side had a share of the aid sent by Kuwait in 1989. This aid included school equipment and buses to transport students, preceded by an initiative to complete the needs of the American University in Beirut. It provided an amount of one million US dollars.

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