

## Kuwait University Students' Awareness and Perception of Archaeology

### “科威特大学学生对考古学的意识和看法”

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#### الملخص:

عادة ما يبني الأفراد وجهة نظرهم ومفاهيمهم حول علم الآثار بناء على ما تصوره وسائل الإعلام. تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى قياس مستوى وعي الطلبة الكويتيين بتخصص علم الآثار والمفاهيم المرتبطة به. كما تم تصميم البحث بطريقة يمكن من خلالها استنتاج نهج يهدف إلى زيادة مستوى انخراط الطلبة في مجال علم الآثار. تم تصميم استبانة لتصنيف مستويات المشاركة في ثلاثة مجالات رئيسية: (١) الوعي، والإدراك، والمعرفة، ثم (٢) الاهتمام والمشاركة؛ ثم (٣) الأهمية والقيمة. تم إجراء مسح لطلبة جامعة الكويت (عدد = ٥٢٩ طالب/ة). أسفرت الدراسة عن علاقة إيجابية بين الطلاب الذين يأخذون مقرراً في الأنثروبولوجيا ومستوى الوعي بعلم الآثار. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أوضحت الدراسة أهمية جنس الطالب ومصادر المعلومات حول علم الآثار.

**الكلمات الدالّة:** علم الآثار، الوعي، الأنثروبولوجيا، المواقع الأثرية، جامعة الكويت

#### Abstract:

Archaeology is commonly perceived by layman and students by mass media depictions. The aim of this study is to determine what level of awareness and knowledge Kuwaiti students have about the field of archaeology. Furthermore, this approach is designed to assess what level of public engagement is necessary to attract students to engage in the field of archaeological research. A questionnaire was designed to sort levels of engagement into three main domains: 1) awareness, perceptions, and knowledge; 2) interest and participation; and 3) importance and value. A survey of Kuwait University students (n=529 students) was conducted. The study resulted in a positive relation

between students taking an anthropology course and a level archaeology awareness. Additionally, the study demonstrated the significance of the student's gender and the sources of information about archaeology.

**Key words:** Archaeology, Awareness, Anthropology, Archaeological sites, Kuwait University.

## **Introduction**

Archaeology has an image problem. Presently, the perception of the field of archaeology is largely influenced by mass media. Frequently, individuals refer to movies and television programs when asked to define what archaeology is. Unfortunately, the prevailing image of an archaeologist is an adventurer that travels the world collecting rare items from other cultures under grave circumstances. Additionally, archaeology is depicted by popular culture as a scholarly endeavor that eccentric people in the distant past engaged in.

Furthermore, colonialism, war, and looting more often than not have colored the public view of archaeology as well. It is not uncommon for laymen to have a negative view of archeologists because of its historical roots<sup>1</sup>. Repatriation efforts by various nations have brought archaeology's unfortunate colonial roots to global public attention. In the U.S., disputes over the collection of Indigenous peoples' remains and artifacts have lent to the view of archaeologists being looters instead of scientists. Additionally, Americans have demanded more and more accountability regarding the holdings of universities and museums as well as how cultural materials are acquired; particularly, those that receive public funding. Laws designed to address repatriation, penalties for looting, and best practices have been passed to rectify past grievances over how archaeology has been practice<sup>2</sup>.

Archaeology has taken another turn over the years to become synonymous with economic development and tourism. Countries around the world advertise their heritage sites as tourist destinations. Archaeological sites have become the foundation of economic life, in countries like Egypt, and support national tourism. Employment in public sectors, ranging from hospitality to

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<sup>1</sup> Stiebing, W. H. (1994). *Uncovering the Past: A History of Archaeology*. Oxford University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Stiebing, W. H. (1994). *Uncovering the Past: A History of Archaeology*. Oxford University Press.

public education, depends on the discovery and the maintenance of these archaeological sites<sup>3</sup>. For many nations, tourism has become the very life-blood of their national economy. Governments have become guarantors of archaeological sites to promote this economic reality. Thus, there is an investment to produce indigenous experts to further and to maintain the cultural heritage of the nation.

The intersection between archaeology's economic and cultural value to society has become obvious and significant. Cultural heritage cannot be fostered and maintained without investment. Governments as well as private entities have found that to be true. Governments cannot promote tourism without a labor force that is qualified in research, preservation, and public education. The private sector relies on laborers who specialize in hospitality as well as public education. The need to generate indigenous expertise to support the economic value of archaeological sites has become more pronounced over the years.

The maintenance and promotion of cultural heritage could be considered a primary responsibility of governmental entities. To engage, train, and employ the public in the preservation of historical and archaeological sites requires financial support and political will. Governments have the challenge of making the public aware of the cultural value of their national heritage and creating incentives for its citizens in the maintenance of their heritage.

'Awareness' is a term that has been used to discuss the necessity for educators to become more culturally responsive to their students<sup>4</sup>. The researchers discuss awareness as the highest capacity of a community to own their cultural values and beliefs. Furthermore, the students' own cultural background can become their strength within the learning environment rather than a hindrance. Cultural awareness can become a good measurement to study the level of a society members' willingness to participate in the study of their own heritage.

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<sup>3</sup> Solieman, Nashwa, Marwa Farouk Hafez, and Ahmed Mohamed Khattab. (2019). Reconstructing the Ancient Caravan Route of Darb Al-Arbain in Greco-Roman Egypt: Heritage Value and Tourism Potential. *Journal of Association of Arab Universities for Tourism and Hospitality* 16 (2) 202-224.

<sup>4</sup> Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2002). *Educating culturally responsive teachers*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Ahmed's study<sup>5</sup> found that cultural awareness outreach can successfully promote public engagement as effectively as mass media does. Awareness includes an individual's perceptions and cultural knowledge. The degree an individual participates in cultural heritage related activities seems to be based upon the latter. Individuals assign value to their culture and decide to commit to activities on the basis of that value.

This survey is designed to ascertain the level of awareness and knowledge Kuwait University students have regarding their cultural heritage. Additionally, this inquiry will explore their views related to the field of archaeology. In general, the survey seeks to identify the basis of the students' awareness and their perceptions about the value of the field of archaeology. The results of awareness could be used to guide public educational models. Kuwaiti students' interest in their cultural heritage is vital. Ultimately, the results are meant to improve student participation in archaeological research, public education, and conservation efforts. Kuwait University has the potential to generate their own scholars in the field of archaeology.

### **Literature Review**

Several studies have explored public awareness and the perception of archaeology. While education and tourism have had a positive impact on the perception of archaeology, mass media still appears to be influential on what individuals understand archaeology to be. Researchers have surveyed students, educators, and laymen to explore the factors that impact levels of awareness.

Ramos and Duganne<sup>6</sup> explored public perception and attitudes about archeology. They concluded that most of the American public has a misconception about what the study of archaeology encompasses. For example, respondents associated archaeology with "digging"; rather than the technical jargon associated with the field such as, excavating, findings, analyzing, researching, and culture. Public understanding appeared to be driven by mass media, primarily television. Furthermore, American respondents believed that improving the future was dependent upon learning from the past. The importance and value of archaeology was tied to this belief. Finally,

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmed, T. (2017). Assessment of students' awareness of the national heritage (Case study: The preparatory year students at the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia). *Cogent Social Sciences* 3 (1), 1-25.

<sup>6</sup> Ramos, M., & Duganne, D. (2000). *Exploring public perceptions and attitudes about archaeology*. Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

there were positive correlations between the education level, interest in archaeology, and the importance placed on the field of archaeology.

Rakestraw and Reynolds<sup>7</sup> explored public misconception of archaeology. They surveyed high school and college students in Arkansas using prepared questionnaires and open-ended conversation. There were several trends in the public's perception of archaeology. Respondents commonly associated dinosaurs with archaeology. Secondly, the assumption that an archaeologist is a man revealed a gender bias. Also, there was confusion about looting and laws that protect cultural heritages. It was also concluded that these responses were learned from film, television, and fictional media.

Recently, Ahmed<sup>8</sup> conducted a study to explore levels of national heritage awareness in an academic setting. Ahmed's survey included a sample of students in the college preparatory year as well as the teaching staff (n=178). The questionnaire was designed to identify the degree of awareness of the national heritage, to investigate the role of the school in promoting awareness of the national heritage, and the impact of the family in predicting the personal interest in the local heritage. Only 28% of the respondents scored at the 'average' level of awareness and thereby assigned importance to national heritage. Less than one quarter scored 'low', while 5% of the sample scored as 'very high'. The researcher did not find statistically significant differences between males and females in term of the perception and awareness of their national heritage.

Näser<sup>9</sup> explored participants' attitudes toward archaeology in Sudan, with an emphasis on archaeology's importance and public knowledge. The sample consisted of 32 Sudanese interviewees from both genders and different age groups. The researcher notes several times that the interviewees were very interested in participating in the study and were willing to discuss their views on archaeological and historical sites. Respondents, 28%, reported that they were interested in the subject to learn about the past. Another 28% indicated that they want to teach their children or family members about the past. The interviewees considered that knowledge and educational

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<sup>7</sup> Rakestraw, T. & Reynolds, A. (2001) Archaeology and the public: exploring popular misconception. The University of Arkansas Undergraduate Research Journal, 2 (1), 25-29.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmed, T. (2017). Assessment of students' awareness of the national heritage (Case study: The preparatory year students at the University of Hail, Saudi Arabia). Cogent Social Sciences 3 (1), 1-25.

<sup>9</sup> Näser, C. (2019). Exploring attitudes towards the archaeological past: Two case studies from majority Muslim communities in the Nile valley. Journal of Social Archaeology 19 (3), 379-402.

resources should be acquired. Additionally, the interviewees rated their knowledge in the archaeology of Sudan as 'good' to 'high'. A total of 56% indicated a 'good standing' and 25% indicated they had 'some knowledge'; while 19% thought they had 'no good knowledge' about these issues. Regarding the source of archaeological knowledge, most interviewees mentioned school and family; other sources were books and tertiary education. Moreover, a total 97% of the interviewees strongly agreed that the past was important to them – the entire past not a particular era. Interestingly, respondents defined their national identity in terms of the distant past, when they were asked, 'why is the past important?' A total 33% connected to their national identity and citizenship to the past. Finally, a total 60% said that knowledge of the past would help the future. Karadeniz<sup>10</sup> sought to assess the level of cultural heritage awareness amongst undergraduate students in Turkey. Karadeniz administered a survey to students (n=204) that consisted of 35 open and close-ended questions. The results indicated that the perception and awareness of the value of cultural heritage and cultural assets were found to be 'moderate'. It was concluded that a higher level of awareness was achieved when students majored in geography and hospitality. The researcher discovered that cultural values were learned through education; specifically, certain majors.

According to Pedroso's study<sup>11</sup> the level of student awareness was 'moderate' and shifted to 'high' when multimedia instruction was introduced. Students (n=60) answered a questionnaire regarding their knowledge and awareness of their cultural background and their historical knowledge of local cultural heritage sites. Significantly, there was a difference between the knowledge students' possessed about historical events and the knowledge about architectural features of local cultural heritage sites. Ultimately, the researcher aimed to raise the student's level of awareness to promote cultural heritage conservation and preservation with the survey.

The later studies have demonstrated that there is a relationship between education and a high level of cultural awareness. In order to achieve a high level of importance and value, archaeology has to become an integral part of the educational paradigm.

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<sup>10</sup> Karadeniz, C. P. (2020). Assessment for Awareness and Perception of the Cultural Heritage of Geography Students. *Review of International Geographical Education* 10(1), (Special Issue), 40-64.

<sup>11</sup> Pedroso, J. (2021) School On Wheels and Multimedia-Aided Instructions as Mediators of Students' Local Cultural Heritage Awareness. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities Studies* 1(1) 63-69.

## **Methodology**

### **The questionnaire:**

The primary tool for measuring the students' awareness and perception of archaeology is a questionnaire consisting of 33 questions. The questionnaire was designed to establish a benchmark for cultural awareness and perception of archaeology and to evaluate the participants knowledge and attitudes towards archaeology. The sampling method is a non-probability convince sampling of Kuwait University students (n=529). In general, the participants were derived from general courses and introductory-level classes of different majors from across the academic community.

For this study, the questionnaire employed by Ramos and Duganne<sup>12</sup> was modified. First, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic. Furthermore, it was modified to address some specific aspects of Kuwaiti culture. Then, the modified version was reviewed by five anthropologists and sociologists of the Department of Sociology and Social Work in Kuwait University. These faculty members provided input and reviews on the Arabic construction of the items.

The questionnaire consists of two main sections. The first part was designed to collect demographic information about the sample group. The second part was designed to assess levels of cultural awareness of the participants. The demography portion of the survey includes 15 items that were aimed at determining aspect of the educational background of the students. The second portion has 18 items that are divided into of three areas aimed at setting a benchmark for awareness. First, there are nine questions that measure the awareness background of the concept of archeology, the nature of its fields, and the sources of knowledge building. Secondly, there are six questions that measure students' interest and participation in archeological fieldwork and activities. Finally, there are three questions that focus on the use of archaeological values and principles to reenforce other cultural elements, such as social networks, identity, and meanings within contemporary culture.

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<sup>12</sup> Ramos, M., & Duganne, D. (2000). Exploring public perceptions and attitudes about archaeology. Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The data was entered and analyzed by the statistical program IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version (19)<sup>13</sup>. The descriptive statistics of percentages, mathematical averages, standard deviations, and quantitative order have been relied upon to discuss outcomes. Specifically, the program performs the following: 1- the t-test to detect differences in the norms and mathematics averages between the various variables; 2- the Chi-Square test to test the differences between males and females and different age groups in their archaeological information; and 3- the Pearson Correlation test to detect the strength and degree of the relationship between variables.

### **Results and Discussion**

The demography of the participants yields some very interesting aspects. The results have revealed that gender, personal educational goals, and socio-economic status are important factors that impact awareness. Interestingly, more women were willing to participate than men. Those students whose major fell under the umbrella of humanities were also the majority of the participants. Also, the majority of the students reported that personal travel involved well known archaeological sites in the region.

The demographics were used as segmentation variables to determine differences or similarities within the data. Testing for significant correlations among demographics was performed using appropriate chi-square statistical tests. The segment with significant difference in the results as tested at the 95% level of confidence (depending on sample size).

**Table 1: Characteristics of the sample (n=529)**

CHARACTERISTICS	N	%
<b>AGE (IN YEAR)</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>(100)</b>
<b>&lt; 21</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>(38.4)</b>
<b>21- 25</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>(50.8)</b>

<sup>13</sup> IBM Corp., Armok, N.Y., USA.

>25	57 (10.7)
<b>COLLEGE</b>	
<b>HUMANITIES</b>	425 (79.9)
<b>SCIENCES</b>	104 (19.5)
<b>GENDER</b>	
<b>MALE</b>	194 (36.7)
<b>FEMALE</b>	335 (63.3)
<b>ANTHROPOLOGY CLASS</b>	
<b>YES</b>	230 (43.5)
<b>NO</b>	294 (55.6)
<b>MISSING</b>	5 (0.9)

Table 1 illustrates the frequency of age group as the following: 38.4% were less than 21, 50.8% were between 21 to 25, and 10.7% were more than 25-year-old. According to the participation report, the majority of the respondents, 425 (79.9%) were from humanities colleges, as opposed to 104 (19.5%) were from sciences colleges. Out of a total of 529 students, 194 were males (36.7%), and females were 335 females (63.3%). A little over half of the participants were not taking an anthropology course at Kuwait University (55.6%) at the time of the survey.

- Gender and interest in archaeology

To evaluate the respondents' interest in archaeology, they were asked about their level of interest on a 10-point scale, in which 0 means they are "not at all interested" and 10 means they are "very interested". The t-test was applied to examine gender's role in the respondents' answers. The results show a significant difference where males have higher scores ( $M=5.02$ ,  $SD=2.86$ ), and females ( $M=4.34$ ,  $SD=2.79$ ),  $P=0.009$ ' (Table 2) with an overall low interest in archaeology.

Table 2: Gender and interest in archaeology

How interested are you in archeology?				
gender				P value
	M	SD	T-test	
male	5.02	2.86		
			2.66	0.009
female	4.34	2.79		

- Studying Introduction to Anthropology and knowledge of the oldest time period that archaeologist's study

To examine the effect of studying anthropology on students' knowledge of the time period anthropologists' study, the respondents were asked, 'what the oldest time period is you expect archaeologists' study. The answers were: 'less than 1,000 years'; 'between 1,000 and 10,000 years'; '10,000 years'; 'more than 100,000 years'; and 'I don't know'. The right answer was 'more than 100,000 years'. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare students' answers with studying anthropology. A significant difference was found between students who studied took an introduction to anthropology course (M=5.8, SD=3.6), and those who did not (M=3.8, SD=2.8);  $t = 2.09$  and  $p = 0.016$ . An introductory course to anthropology improved students' knowledge. Of the respondents, 44.8% of those who had taken such a course got the right answer; as oppose to 26.4% who had not (Table 3).

**Table 3: Studying Introduction to Anthropology and Knowledge of the oldest time period that archaeologist's study.**

Studying introduction to anthropology	What's the oldest time period archaeologist study?		P value
	Right answer	Wrong answer	
Yes	103 44.8%	127 55.2%	0.000
No	79 26.4%	220 73.6%	

- Studying Introduction to Anthropology and considering digging dinosaurs as archaeologist specialty

One of the biggest misconceptions about archaeology is that archaeologists study dinosaurs (paleontology). To determine if taking an introductory course in anthropology has an impact on this misconception, respondents were asked, 'Is digging dinosaurs considered as archaeologist specialty?' In which 'yes' is the wrong answer. Correlations were found between getting the right answer and taking an introductory course in anthropology. Only 9.4% of the students who have studied introduction to anthropology answered 'wrong'; while 14.8% of students who did not, answered 'wrong' ( $p < 0.038$ ) (Table 4).

**Table 4: Studying Introduction to Anthropology and considering digging dinosaurs as archaeologist specialty.**

Studying introduction to anthropology	Is digging dinosaurs considered as archaeologist specialty? (Answering yes/wrong answer)	P value
Yes	28 9.4%	0.038
No	34 14.8%	

- Studying Introduction to Anthropology and considering studying rocks/stones as archaeologist's specialty

Another misconception that the public has is that archaeologists study earth sciences, such as geology. Participants were asked, 'Is studying rocks/stones considered an archaeologist's specialty?' A response of 'yes' is the wrong answer. Significant correlations were found between the respondents having taken an introduction to anthropology course and answering correctly. Of those who answered wrongly, 30.4% had not taken an introduction to anthropology course ( $p < 0.007$ ) (Table 5).

**Table 5: Studying Introduction to Anthropology and considering studying rocks/stones as archaeologist specialty.**

Studying introduction to anthropology	Is studying rocks/stones considered an archaeologist's specialty? (Answering yes/wrong answer)	P value
Yes	62 20.7%	0.007
No	70 30.4%	

- Awareness, Perceptions, and Knowledge Respondents were asked, “What comes to mind when you hear the word ‘archaeology’?” Additionally, another question was asked about what the respondents think archaeologists do in their work.

When the respondents were asked the first question, the answer ‘artifacts’ was given by 55%, the highest mention or ‘top of the mind’; secondarily, another 73% mentioned ‘past civilization’. Other responses that were mentioned ‘most often’ were ‘old buildings’ (35%), ‘heritage and history’ (33%), ‘rocks or stones’ (25%), and ‘excavation and digging’ (23%). Interestingly, ‘pottery’, ‘treasure’ and ‘Ancient Egypt’ had a similar frequency, between 14% and 16%. The terms that were ‘least’ given were ‘analyze human remains’ (7%) and ‘Indiana Jones’ (4%).

The answer on this question reflected a high degree of knowledge in terms of understanding the word ‘archaeology’. The highest four answers were more aligned

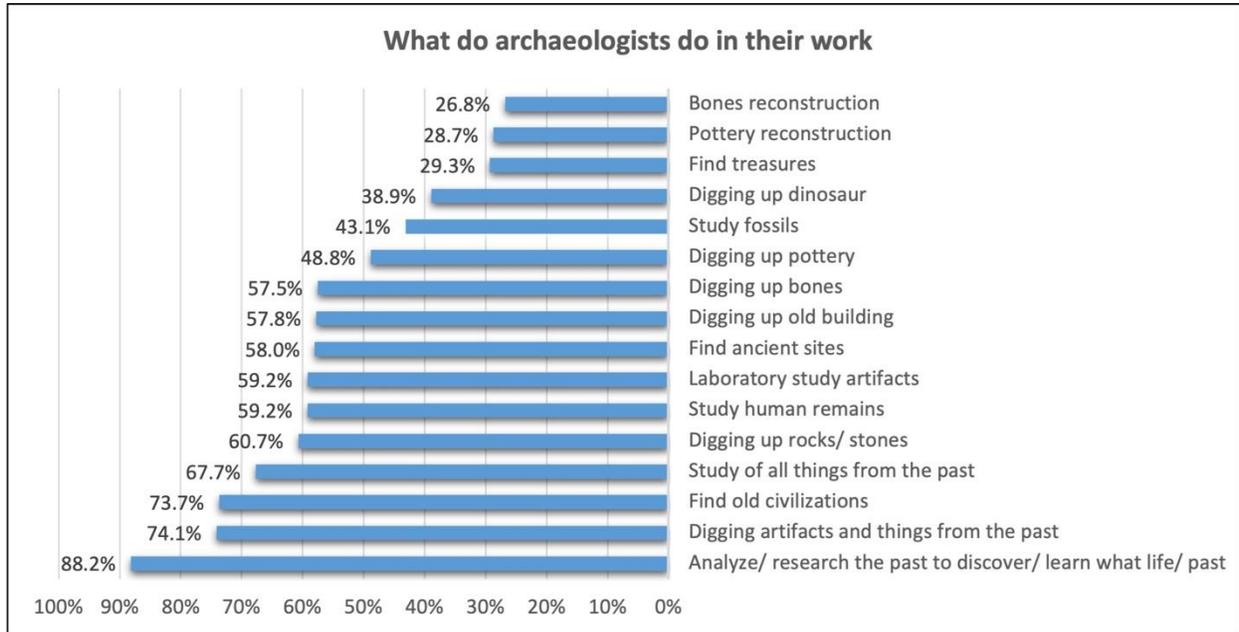
with the field of archaeology. While the answers, such as the fifth ‘rocks and stones’, was not unexpected. It is not uncommon for students to connect archaeology with geology. Geology and archaeology overlap in terms of using similar methodology and equipment, particularly excavation.

**Table 6: the frequency and percentage of the answers to the question 1.**

Ser. No.	What comes to mind when you hear the word ‘archaeology’	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Artifacts	290	55
2	Past civilization	196	73
3	Old buildings	183	35
4	Heritage and history	175	33
5	Rocks/stones	132	25
6	Excavation and digging	120	23
7	Ancient Egypt	86	16
8	Pottery	83	16
9	Gold and treasure	75	14
10	Digging human bones	70	13
11	Digging dinosaurs	62	12
12	Analyze human remains	37	7
13	Indiana Jones	22	4

The majority of the respondents, 88%, answered the second question, pertaining to archaeologists’ work as ‘analyzed/research the past to discover, learn about life/past’; another 74% answered ‘digging the artifacts and things from past’; others responded ‘find old civilization’, 73%; and 67% said, ‘study of all things from the past’. The latter indicates a very high level of knowledge about archaeological practices. In the previous correlation result, it was understood that studying

anthropology enhanced the respondents' awareness and perception in terms of understanding archaeologists' specialty (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: the percentage of the answer to question 2.**

Furthermore, respondents were asked, 'What happens to the things that are dug up or found by an archaeologist?' The respondents' answers show a high level of awareness.

'Studied/documents by researchers' was the most frequent response given, 77.1%.

Approximately, 44% answered 'given to the government' and another 44% answered 'given to labs' - which is accurate (Figure 2). Inaccurate answers, such as 'sold to private individuals' and 'given to the people of area discovered', were chosen by less than 10% of respondents, which is

accurate (Figure 2). Inaccurate answers, such as ‘sold to private individuals’ and ‘given to the people of area discovered’, were chosen by less than 10% of respondents.

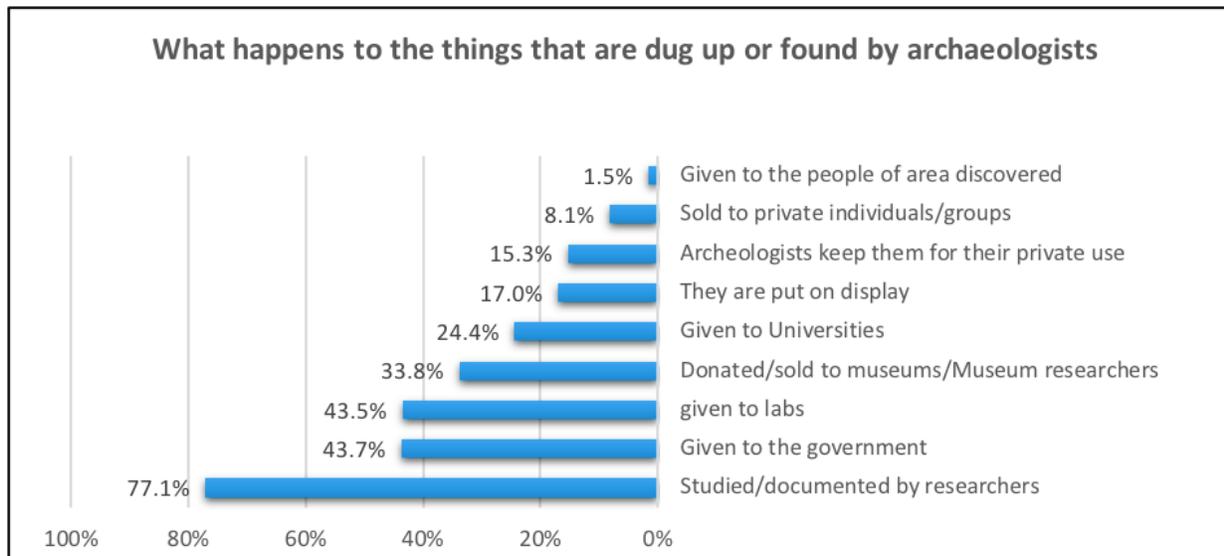


Figure 2: the percentage of the answer to question 3.

People learn about archaeology in a variety of ways. Significantly, 79% of respondents reported visiting ‘museums’ as the main source of information. According to the survey, another major source of information about archaeology is popular media: ‘internet’ (66%); ‘television’ (60%); and ‘national geographic channel’ (52%). Half of all the respondents reported learning about archaeology while ‘traveling’ and visiting sites. Very few respondents learned about archaeology through ‘friends’ (16%), and ‘social gatherings’ (10%). The latter implies a low interest in archaeology within casual social settings.

Table 2 shows the source of information through which you have learned/known about archaeology.

Ser. No.	Source of information about archaeology	frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Museums	416	78.6
2	Internet	347	65.6
3	Television	269	60.0

4	National Geographic channel	274	51.8
5	Travel	264	50.0
6	Movies	238	45.0
7	university/college	218	41.2
8	Social media	171	32.3
9	Newspapers/magazines	168	31.8
10	Public lectures	158	30.0
11	Novels	121	30.0
12	School (pre university)	125	23.6
13	Participation in a dig	108	20.4
14	History channel	95	18.0
15	Friends	87	16.4
16	Radio	75	14.2
17	Social gathering (Diwaniya/Café)	51	9.6

- Interest and Participation

A total of six questions were asked to determine the respondents' interest in archaeology and to what level they have participated/visited archaeological sites. The responses suggest (see Table 3) that students were more likely to visit archaeological sites within the Persian Gulf Region than outside of the region.

More than 80% of respondents visited archaeological sites in Egypt, including the Giza pyramids, Khufu's ship, and Tutankhamun's chamber. Further still, 50% of Kuwaiti students have visited archaeological sites on Failaka Island, Kuwait. Students reported having visited other well-known

archaeological sites in the region, included the Jericho site, Jordan (15%); Luxor, Egypt (15%); the Byzantine wall, Turkey (14%); and Barbar Temple, Bahrain (11%). It is noteworthy to mention that these most visited sites are not only within the geographic region but are affordable; in terms of traveling and accommodation expenses and ease accessibility to these archaeological sites. The least visited sites were in Nineveh, Mosel, north Iraq (4%), Inca civilization site, Peru (2%), and Takht Jamshid, Iran (2%). Accessibility and the distance from their residence suggests a reluctance to engage in long-distance travel.

**Table 3 The most visited archaeological respondents visited.**

Ser. No.	What are the archaeological sites you visited?	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Egypt (pyramids, Khufu ship, Tutankhamun chamber)	446	84
2	Failaka Island, Kuwait	266	50
3	Jericho, Jordan	80	15
4	Luxor, Egypt	79	15
5	Byzantine wall, Turkey	73	14
6	Barbar temple, Bahrain	59	11
7	Zebra, Qatar	50	10
8	Mexico pyramids	49	9
9	Colosseum, Italy	33	6
10	Native American sites	25	5
11	Lauxes Cave, France	22	4
12	Nineveh, Mosel, N. Iraq	17	3
13	Inca civilization site, Peru	9	2
14	Takht Jamshid, Iran	8	2

- Importance and Value

Respondents were asked two questions to explore their opinions towards the importance and value of archaeology: specifically, in relationship to different aspects of society and to their own personal lives. Second, students were asked about the value of archaeological objects and sites in relationship to scientific, educational, political, financial, and personal aims. The respondents were asked to juxtapose the importance of archaeology, using a 5-point scale (Table 4), to the following: ‘to the economy’, ‘politics’, ‘in shaping societies values’, ‘in international affairs’, ‘to your own life and knowledge’, ‘to understand history and the modern world’.

Respondents felt that archaeology was most important to ‘understanding history and the modern world’. A total of 61% of them rated this aspect as ‘most important’ or a five. This result is consistent with previous studies<sup>14</sup> and it reflects the public’s attitude that the importance of understanding the past to improve the future. Secondly, 31% of respondents viewed archaeology as important to their life, in term of generating memories of their ancestors and reaffirming the cultural root of their family, tribe, and kinship. Respondents had a positive view of archaeology and associated it with their history and origin.

Economic and societies values were ranked third in importance according to the respondents, both 26%. This percentage of respondents did seem to associate the importance of understanding archaeology with the maintenance of heritage as a source of tourism and economic gain.

Only 24% of respondents thought of archaeology as less important to ‘international affairs’. This outcome suggests that respondents do not know the role archaeology plays in enhancing global relationships. Respondents also thought archaeology was ‘least important to politics’, which may reflect the publics’ low estimation of archaeology as a bridge between governments and politicians.

**Table 4 The importance of archaeology to the following aspects.**

Ser. No.	the importance of archaeology to the following aspects (rating 5)	Freq.	Percentage (%)
1	To understand history and the modern world	322	61%
2	To your own life and knowledge	163	31%
3	Shaping societies values	138	26%
4	To the economy	138	26%
5	In international affairs	125	24%
6	Politics	88	17%

<sup>14</sup> Ramos, M., & Duganne, D. (2000). Exploring public perceptions and attitudes about archaeology. Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

- The majority of respondents, 65%, reported that archeological objects and sites have value in regards to their general knowledge and to science (Table 4). Around 29% of respondents related the value archeological objects and sites to the value of their personal heritage; others, education (23%); and religious/spiritual (22%). Smaller percentages tied the value of the archaeological objects and sites to the financial arena (20%) and political aspects (14%).
- In comparison to the importance and value of archaeology, archaeological objects and sites were less valued by the respondents. On the other hand, the highest value of archaeological objects and sites was linked with education and scientific endeavors; rated first and second, both 65%. The second highest valued was related to personal heritage (29%) and spiritual values (22%); while the financial and political categories were last.

**Table 5 What is the value of archaeological objects and sites.**

Ser. No.	The value of archaeological objects and sites to the following	Freq.	Percentage (%)
1	General knowledge	344	65%
2	Scientific	342	65%
3	Personal heritage	155	29%
4	Educational	123	23%
5	Spiritual/religious	116	22%
5	Financial	105	20%
6	Political	74	14%

## Conclusion

Archaeology is the scientific study that focuses on human past and culture through material remains of human action. This survey had similar results to a previous study<sup>15</sup>. Based on the survey, Kuwait University students are aware of archaeology in terms of the definition, objectives, and processes, fields related to archaeology, archaeological discoveries, information sources, participation, and values. The majority associated the word archaeology with 'analyze' and 'digging'. Also, 'human remains, the 'past', 'research', 'civilization' and 'old buildings' were frequently reported by Kuwaiti students. Importantly, the survey revealed that the students' exposure to popular, their ability to take advantage of travel opportunities, visiting museums, and their personal educational pursuits have an impact of their awareness and knowledge about archaeology.

The study showed that the student's gender in understanding archaeology is also significant. Women were more willing to participate in the survey and majored in a course of study under the humanities umbrella. Furthermore, males scored higher in the category of being interested in archaeology, which may reflect aspects of Kuwaiti culture. Men are more likely to travel to remote, public locales than women; especially, remote archaeological sites, such as those on Kuwaiti islands and in the desert. Overall, Kuwaiti students had exposure to archaeological sites, with 84% of the respondents reporting that they had travelled to Egypt's pyramids; and another 50%, the Kuwaiti site of Failaka Island. The government could encourage female access to these archaeological sites by establishing secure travel routes and local learning centers at cultural heritage sites; thus, encouraging a strategy that promotes local heritage sites and tourism.

The main misconception that was found in students' answers was the connection between studying archaeology and studying rocks or stones, which is the field of geology. To a lesser degree, some students thought that archaeologists are 'digging for dinosaurs'. Furthermore, there was a correlation between the latter misconception and not taking an introduction to anthropology course.

This study showed that the primary source of information about archaeology were museums and popular media, like the internet. This result demonstrates how important museums are as an educational institution. Evidently, the Kuwaiti government should continue to include the maintenance of museums in the allocation of government resources. Museums are vital institutions that educate the public and require consistent development and expansion.

Results from this survey have the potential to influence the aims of the government and Kuwait University alike. The outcome of this survey suggests that Kuwait University's administration can play a crucial role in educating and promoting the scientific principles of archaeology. Specifically, outreach planning needs to include a mass media component that will engage the public across media platforms. Developing anthropology programs, workshops and activities at the national level can strengthen the students as well as the public awareness and perception towards archaeological sites and objects.

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<sup>15</sup> Ramos, M., & Duganne, D. (2000). Exploring public perceptions and attitudes about archaeology. Rochester, NY: Harris Interactive.

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