

# **Exploring the Impact of Single-Sex Education on Beninese Efl Advanced Students' Academic Achievement: Case Study of Lycee De Jeunes Filles Toffa 1<sup>er</sup>**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research work assesses the impact of single-sex education on EFL advanced students. It compares the performances of 20 A level graduate students from girl grammar school of Lycee des Jeunes Filles Toffa 1<sup>er</sup> with their peers from coeducation schools at the university centre of Adjarra during their first year of English studies. The investigation consists of comparing both categories of students' scores in individual work, group work and collective work. A mixed methodology design has been adopted. The instruments include questionnaires, classroom observations and a survey of students' productions. The results show that single-sex education leads to socialization challenges which affect group and collective productions. This study suggests that instead of closing the remaining single-sex schools, the school authorities should organise activities with coeducational schools to help their students be more accustomed to an environment different from the gender-segregated one.

**KEYWORDS:** Exploring, Impact, Single-sex education, Academic achievement.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Single-sex education (SSE) unlike coeducation or mixed-sex education refers to both classes and schools that have only one sex, defined by a biological classification. Many comparisons have been made to assess whether there is an advantage to single-gender context over mixed one, yet the conclusions remain uncertain. The recent developments in education lead many countries moved away from single-sex education as a predominant mode of education, particularly in the public sectors.

However, in Benin, after decades of mixed education single-sex approach has been re-adopted at girls' grammar school of Lycee Toffa 1<sup>er</sup>. The objective is to create an environment where students can thrive apart from challenges related to the biological and emotional turbulences of the puberty that can negatively affect the academic performance of teenagers. The issue with such a view is that it does not reflect real-life conditions where both genders coexist and the outcomes do not always lead to meaningful gains for students as it may generate extensive drawbacks. According to Cairns and Fraser (2015), division of gender makes to appear a gender stereotyping and discrimination.

This paper aims at pointing out how gender-segregated education affects EFL Advanced students' academic achievement and the challenges related to their integration in coeducation environment, especially at the university level. Three research questions have guided the current research

- ✓ What are the impacts of SSE system on students' academic achievement?
- ✓ Which academic environment do gender-segregated schools provide for EFL students?
- ✓ How can SSE interfere with students' future academic and professional achievement?

This paper has been structured into six sections. After the introductory section, a literature review is provided. The third section is about the target population and the sampling, the research instruments, the data collection procedures and the methods of data analysis. The fourth section shows the presentation and interpretation of the results, the fifth one is devoted to the discussions and suggestions and the last section is concerned with the conclusion.

## **II. THEORETICAL KEYSTONES**

### **2.1 The Single-Sex Education (SSE) and the Coeducation Model**

First, it should be considered that the academic achievement of students, who study in single-gender schools are noticeably high. As Malacova (2007) points out after checking out for achievements, that Both

gender students profited from single-gender schools, and as cited in Fergusson and Horwood (2008:302) "*it had more good effect to girls*". School Dash (2017) reported that results of exams, which passed in 2015, 75% of students in single-sex schools achieved excellent results in comparison with the results in McCabe (2017) with 55% at co-educational schools.

On the other hand, a natural habitat, where boys and girls can study together positively motivate each other to learn and get a high academic achievement. As Robertson (2016) points out, teenagers eventually take a great educational experience when they study together, because the zeal, studiousness and considerateness of girls and the vivacity of boys affect and inspire each other. Due to these factors, students of co-educational schools have a high passion to study hard and show good academic achievements. So, it means that diversity of gender in the classroom impact students' academic achievement. Also, there are other separate influences of gender to students during taking education at school. From a psycho-social point of view, there are yet more factors to consider due to the important developmental changes adolescents go through. Since psychological, social and cognitive changes take place in different ways in boys and girls, the classroom environment has an influence.

## 2.2 SSE Problem form the Socio-Constructivist Perspective

It has been claimed that having boys and girls in the same classrooms better socializes boys by curtailing their rowdy and rough behaviour. This argument has implications for boys and girls.

Regarding curbing boys' behaviour, it is possible that Co-Education (CE) would control boys' behaviour in the short term and make teaching them easier. SSE advocates argue that SSE schools are better for boys precisely because the schools can be run more loosely and with sensitivity to boys' naturally greater activity level and aggressiveness. For Salomone (2002:2) "*Others argue that only in SS schools can disadvantaged boys be exposed to a tougher form of discipline. However, this reverts to the bitter debate about whether intrinsic differences between boys and girls exist and can be acknowledged*".

Some Co-Education advocates claim that it is bad for girls to have their more aggressive male peers removed from their midst, thereby depriving them of learning how to compete with them. Advocates of SS for girls claim that removing boisterous boys allows girls to learn more in school and that separation should be judged primarily by what it does for academics or safety, not for the development of competitive coping skills. However, Campbell and Sanders (2002) view such a stance as essentially a capitulation to male bullying. Instead, they advocate having schools remain CE and making more aggressive boys accountable to shared behavioural norms, a view contrary to that of Sexton (1969). Thus, the issue revolves around more complex goals than simply observing whether boys are better or worse behaved in CE or SS schools.

## 2.3 SSE Problem from the Sexist Perspective

Co-Education schools reduce sexual stereotypes through familiarity. This argument stems from the so-called contact theory that has driven much work in the area of racial segregation. The theory states that simple regular contact will reduce outgroup stereotyping. However, Riordan wrote (1990) that after over 30 years of research on reducing racial stereotyping through contact, the theory remains largely unsupported. Even if the theory had been supported about race, there would be a crucial difference. Some postulate that youth by nature and from earliest ages tend to congregate with their race. For Maccoby (1990:514) "*By contrast, numerous studies show that from early ages, and in school and the workplace, members of both sexes at all ages prefer within-sex associations*".

The idea that CE can force children and youth to perceive each other as not differentiated by sex and gender is highly questionable. Lockheed and Klein's (1985:192) review of studies underscores that "*Even in CE schools, students predominantly sex-segregate themselves in their interactions*". Lockheed in Riordan (1990) has called sex-segregation in CE schools remarkably stable. If so, this critique possibly sacrifices other potential gains for an outcome with an unclear objective and a dubious means for achieving it. Single-sex schools reinforce traditional stereotypes. The claim that SS schooling for both boys and girls reinforces traditional stereotypes that are presumed to be false and destructive has been made by several authors. This is a value-based criticism, in the same way, that some advocates favour SS schools precisely because they reinforce what to them are natural male-female differences. Heather (2002:316) believes that "*Parents who chose SS schooling in her study were wary of their daughters' embracing feminism*". Although these parents wanted their daughters to learn fortitude and not be cowed by boys, they also wanted them to adopt certain traditional views about women's roles. Woody (2002) makes a different point, that in SS schools Girls tend to generalize about boys, even though they are able to make more nuanced distinctions between individual boys. This is not surprising, given that the heightened sense of community and cohesion that girls find appealing in SS schools will lead to some disdain for the outgroup (boys). The question is whether such attitudes translate to sexist prejudice later in life, or whether other factors might contribute more to anti-male attitudes throughout adulthood.

## 2.4 Attitudes toward Academic Subjects and the “Environment” Question

### 2.4.1 Attitudes toward Academic Subjects

There is something of a consensus that girls in single-sex schools tend to perceive subjects such as mathematics and physics as less “*masculine*” and may have stronger preferences for them than their coeducated peers. The consistency of this finding in a variety of single-sex schools suggests that it may be a factor intrinsic to the single-sex environment rather than a characteristic of educational practices or policies indirectly associated with these schools. However, more research is needed to ascertain such cause-and-effect relationships. None of the attitude studies reviewed here comments on single-sex classes.

Published studies that use subject preferences and girls’ attitudes toward mathematics and science as indicators have concluded uniformly that single-sex environments have a positive effect for girls. Girls in these environments rate fields such as physics as less masculine than do their coeducational counterparts. Foon (1988:52) notes that “*students attending single-sex schools seem to be less rigidly attached to traditional views about the appropriateness of subject areas by sex.*” Females, in particular, she found, were more likely to prefer science in single-sex than the coed schools. Vockell and Lobonc (1981: 213), in one of the first studies of coeducation and subject preference found that “*non-coed girls rated physical sciences as less masculine than the coed girls.*” Subsequent studies in other cultures have generated similar findings. Stables (1990) surveyed more than 2,300 British comprehensive (public) school students (ages 13-14), asking them to weigh the importance of school subjects and rank subjects by preference. Stables (1990: 227) found that Single-sex education, “*tends to reduce polarization of attitudes between the sexes generally, but especially regarding physics, where the polarization is particularly marked in the mixed-sex schools.*”

Two more recent studies have found single-sex schools exerting a significant effect on girls’ subject preferences, and have refined the factors that seem to influence positively girls’ attitudes toward the sciences: Mallam (1993) found that students in all-girls Nigerian schools favoured mathematics more than girls in coed Nigerian public boarding schools. She found the highest percentage of positive attitudes in all-girls’ schools where mathematics was taught by female teachers. Finally, Colley et al. (1994) in Britain administered a survey asking students to rank their school subject preferences. Their database included 648 students aged 11-12 years, and 485 students aged 15-16 from three single-sex girls’ schools, four single-sex boys’ schools, and four public coeducational schools. In the younger age group, girls from single-sex schools showed much stronger preferences than their coeducation peers for such stereotypically “*masculine*” subjects as mathematics and science. Young boys from single-sex schools similarly showed stronger preferences for such stereotypically “*feminine*” subjects as music and art. Among older pupils, however, gender rather than school type accounted for most differences.

### 2.4.2 The “Environment” Question

Three studies agree that single-sex environments are perceived by students to have higher levels of “*order,*” control, and “*organization.*” But the studies diverge in their assessments of whether students find single-sex settings to be more “*affiliative,*” “*involving,*” or pleasant than the coeducation environment. Two of the formative early works on school type Dale’s multi-volume *Mixed or Single-Sex School?* (1969) and Coleman’s *The Adolescent Society* (1961) examined coeducation and single-sex “*environments*” in terms of how well they satisfied students.

Dale’s work, which became a research basis for the shift toward coeducation in the late 1960s, administered a questionnaire to thousands of former British secondary school students. He found that students “*preferred*” a coeducation environment over single-sex schools, which in their perception overemphasized academic work and academic success. Arguing that schools should act as microcosms of society, Dale endorsed coeducation on the strength of its more “*natural*” environment for students. Coleman, in contrast, surveyed the American coeducational landscape and concluded that the schools constituted an “*adolescent subculture,*” a contained world of social interactions governed by “*cars and the cruel jungle of rating and dating*” rather than an interest in either academic achievement or social adjustment. Countering Dale’s study, Coleman speculated that single-sex schools provided a more effective environment for education because they diminished somewhat the “*competition for adolescent energies*” apparent in the coeducation “*subculture.*”

Two published studies by Trickett et al. and Schneider and Coutts (1982) revisited the debate over the relative merits of the school environment. Both studies agreed that students perceive the environments to be distinct. Trickett et al. used data from 456 randomly selected grade 10 and 12 students in 15 representative U.S. single-sex and coeducational boarding schools to gauge environmental differences between school type, as measured by a Classroom Environment Scale survey. Single-sex schools, Trickett concluded, enjoyed higher levels of student involvement, affiliation among students, task orientation, competition, organization, and teacher control than coeducation schools. Trickett did not analyse his data by sex. In the same year Schneider et al. surveyed 2029 grade 10 and 12 students in 13 Canadian private coeducational and single-sex schools using the “*High School Characteristics Index.*” In contrast to Trickett, et al. (1982:374-381) concluded that students perceive “*coeducational schools as placing greater emphasis than single-sex schools on affiliation and ... non-*

academic activities.” Schneider and Coutts, who analysed their data by school type, grade, and sex, found that girls and boys in single-sex schools both perceive their schools to place greater emphasis on discipline, but the researchers did not speculate on how this might affect achievement. The two studies concur that students perceive single-sex schools to have greater “*authority structure*” and “*order*”

(Trickett) and “*greater emphasis on control and discipline*” (Schneider and Coutts). Schneider et al. (1988) revisited the school environment issues, using the same student population, in a study that gleaned through an “*attitudes*” questionnaire that the majority of male and female students from both school types reported a preference for coeducation.

## 2.5 SSE from the Psychological Perspective

There’s no research to show that boys and girls learn differently in the classroom and we need to reconsider the impact of gender biases in single-sex education, an international expert will tell the Australian Psychological Society (APS) Congress, held in Melbourne, 13-16 September 2016.

A Psychology Professor, Emerita, at Claremont McKenna College, USA, and past president of the American Psychological Association, Halpern (2004:135) thinks that sex-segregated education lacks scientific support but evidence shows it leads to gender stereotyping and sexism. Halpern, 2016 advocates that meta-analysis and other reviews of hundreds of studies involving more than 1.5 million students have failed to find any advantages of single-sex education. However, she asserts that evidence shows people become more stereotyped in their beliefs about other groups when they are segregated. The assumption is - ‘I can’t go to the school with the girls because the girls don’t learn the way I do’ or ‘I can’t go to school with the boys because the boys don’t learn the way I do’, but the underlying biology, physiology and social psychology of learning are the same. “actually, children are going to live in a world that’s far more diverse than ever before - they are going to have to interact with females and males, they are going to have to understand that sometimes the girls are going to outscore the boys and that sometimes the boys will outscore the girls.

After graduation, virtually everyone will work for and with females and males - students need to learn mutual respect and the social skills of interacting. They need to learn how to interact cooperatively and competitively and these are important things that are learned in school - the school is the only place where certain kinds of interactions occur. “*We don’t have sex-segregated workplaces so why would we have sex-segregated schools?*” “*It’s all too easy to say ‘boys are like this and girls are like that’, but it’s simply not true. Our goal is to help each individual develop to her or his full potential,*” she says.

## 2.5 The Relevance of SSE in the Competency-Based Approach Context

Lasnier (2000:9) defines competency as “*a complex practical knowledge resulting from the integration and mobilization of a set of abilities and pieces of knowledge efficiently used in a correlated situation to solve more or less complex situations*”. With such a problem-solving objective, the Competency-Based Approach is, therefore, a curriculum aiming at developing in students, the competencies they need to successfully face real life-problems in the future. These competencies are classified into three main categories as follows: disciplinary competencies; transversal competencies and transdisciplinary competencies. According to the same author, the disciplinary competencies are related to the school subjects such as French, English, Mathematics, Physics and Biology etc.

Disciplinary competencies are the abilities each subject aims at developing the needed skills in every student, in the different fields of human knowledge. In English, they are: (1) communicating orally in English; (2) reacting to texts after reading or listening to them; and (3) producing texts of various types and functions.

The transversal competencies are the ones students need to develop throughout all the school subjects while carrying out the teaching/learning activities. They are the competencies that will help students face real-life situations better in their future life. They are eight: (1) exploiting available information; (2) solving problem-based situations; (3) using one’s critical sense; (4) displaying one’s critical sense; (5) managing one’s acquisitions to perform tasks; (6) working in cooperation; (7) displaying one’s sense of ethics; and (8) communicating in a precise and appropriate way.

From the CBA perspective, the problem with SSE is that it’s a discriminative approach to teaching provides a fake *only girls* world that does not reflect the real-life conditions and challenges. James (2018) contends that Although they may do better academically in single-sex schools, what they lose on the swings they gain on the roundabouts, as the pressure to perform socially can be too intense for many girls and so they ultimately end up under-performing in all spheres. If SSE still harbours a learner-centred feature and lead to consistent improvements of learners’ academic performance it fails to prepare them for real-life challenges with their male peers. This results in problems of integration and adaptation in authentic environments with challenging male peer. Patently, as corroborated by the investigations of the current paper, most SSE learners Struggle in mixed-sex groups for collaborative work. Hence, Little chance is given for authentic social constructivism, pillar of the CBA Competence that cannot prove efficient are vain and learner trained in such context are incline to conflict and socio-professional challenges.

### III. METHOD

The current study has been conducted in using a mixed methodology including both quantitative and qualitative types of research in 2 distinct stages. The first stage consists in collecting qualitative and quantitative data through questionnaire interviews and classroom observation and interviews. Stage 2 Is a quasi-experiment process. Consisting of assessing the performance of 20 SSE girls (experimental group) and 20 CE girls (control group) in individual work, group work, and collective work assignment for analysis and comparison. The objective is to assess the impact of SSE on academic performance and social integration.

#### 3.1 Evaluation process

Data of the experiment were collected in the first year English department lecture hall where the number of the students for the 2020 school year accounts for three hundred (300). Nonetheless, an average of two hundred (200) students regularly attend lectures. Students usually work in mixed genders groups of ten (10) students with at least two SSE girls and two 2 CE girls resulting in a total of 20 groups. This strategy is efficient for evaluation purposes. Typically, students are assessed for both individual and group work representing respectively 40% and 60% of their final examination grade. The same strategy was adopted for the experimental process.

The experimental group (EG) and control group (CG) learners have been assessed at the end of the first semester in English studies at the university of Adjarra using the purposely designed evaluation grids for individual work, group work and collective work. The individual work is an oral presentation of a research proposal related to the Benin context EFL teaching-learning challenges while the group work task is an article writing, the topic of which is related to environmental problems. The collective work is related to students' participation in the lecture hall activities, their interaction with lecturers and peers of both gender.

The students' performances were rated by the researcher using criteria/rubrics described in tables 2, 3 and 4. The total score of each rubric ranges from 1 to 5 pts resulting in a total from 5 to 20 pts per rubric.

**Table 1: individual work evaluation grid**

Items/rubrics	1	2	3	4	5
Oral presentation					
Stress management					
Originality Creativity					
Level of achievement in the assigned task					
Total					

**Table 2 Group work evaluation grip**

Items/rubrics	1	2	3	4	5
Group cohesion (organisation and responsibility, communication with group members, attitude, ambience)					
leadership & Conflict management					
Cooperation (Participation in group activities, contribution, motivation, willingness)					
Group performance/level of achievement					
Total					

**Table 3 Collective work evaluation grid**

Items/rubrics	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership & conflict management					
Motivation					
Cooperation/collaboration/interaction					
Communication					
Total					

The next section presents the target population, the sample, the instruments, the data collection procedures and the method of analysis.

#### 3.2 Target Population and Sampling

The sample for the current research is made of:

- five (5) teachers and thirty (30) randomly selected advanced learners (girls) from LycéeToffa 1<sup>er</sup> secondary school and five (5) lecturers from the campus of Adjarra have received questionnaires;

- forty (40) students in the first year of English studies from the University of Adjarra split into two (2) groups of twenty resulting in an Experimental group (EG) and a control group (CG) have been selected for the quasi-experimental process. The EG girls are of A-level graduated students schooled from 6eme (first form) to terminale (upper 6<sup>th</sup>) at the *Girl secondary School of LycéeToffa 1<sup>er</sup> of Porto-Novo*. The CG girls are A-level graduated students from traditional coeducation secondary of Porto-Novo.

Details of the sampling are summarised in Table 1

**Table 4: Sampling**

School /university	Teachers /lecturer	Learners
Girls Secondary School Toffa 1 <sup>er</sup> of Porto-Novo (Single-sex education)	5 EFL teachers having Single-sex education and Coeducation experience	Thirty (30) randomly selected advanced learners
University of Adjarra (Coeducation)	5 lecturers having both Secondary Schools and university teaching experience	20 former SSE student girls (Experimental Group) + 20 CE Girls (Control Group)

### 3.3 Research Instruments

The main instruments used for this paper are:

- Questionnaires to EFL teachers/lecturer and learners,
- Interviews with LycéeToffa 1<sup>er</sup> authorities and other teachers,
- Classroom observations at LycéeToffa 1<sup>er</sup>
- Assessment of students' performance at the campus of Adjarra for individual group work and collective work.

#### 3.3.1 Questionnaires for Teachers, Lecturers and Learners

Questionnaires are addressed both to EFL teachers and learners.

- six (06) questions to teachers about the impact of SSE and learners' performance
- seven (07) questions to learners about challenges and benefit of SSE

#### 3.3.2 Classroom Observation

This instrument aims at checking in classroom situation how SSE impact students' academic achievement. Through it, concrete and reliable data were collected.

#### 3.3.3 Procedures of Data Collection and Methods of Data Analysis

The *English Subject* head of teachers helped the researcher in carrying out his investigations. All the teachers' questionnaires were collected on spot in less than 10mn. With the help of teachers in visited classrooms after required clarifications made, 100% of the questionnaire were collected from learner as well. The Classroom observations were scheduled and carried out with the collaboration of the teachers previously selected with the head of teachers.

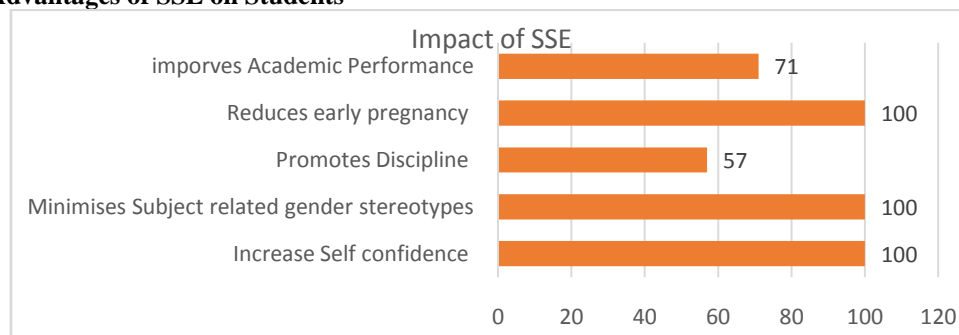
At the campus of Adjarra, the Vice-deputy head of English department provided the researcher with the first-year time table and lecturers' contact of the investigation purposes.

## IV. RESULTS

Findings are displayed according to the questions of the questionnaire addressed to teachers and learners.

### Teachers' Responses

#### 4.1 Advantages of SSE on Students



**Figure1 : Advantages of SSE on Students**

LycéeToffa 1<sup>er</sup> teachers all agree that SSE reduces early pregnancies, increases Girls Self-confidence and minimises curriculum/subject related stereotypes. 71% of them allege that it also Improves Academic Performance and promote discipline (57%).

#### 4.1.1 Challenges related to Single-Sex Education

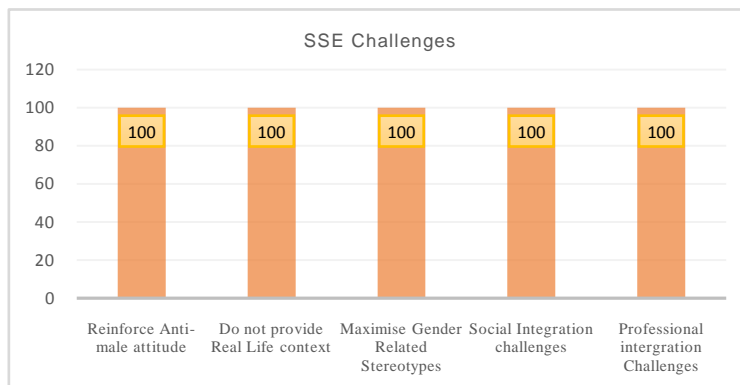


Figure 2: Single-sex education influence on students.

Figure 2 illustrates the single-sex education influence on students' unanimously, the respondents acknowledge that SSE does not provide real-life context; thus, it Maximises gender-related Stereotypes and Reinforces Anti-male attitude leading to Social and professional Integration challenges

#### 4.2 Lecturers' Responses Challenges with Males Peers in CE environments.

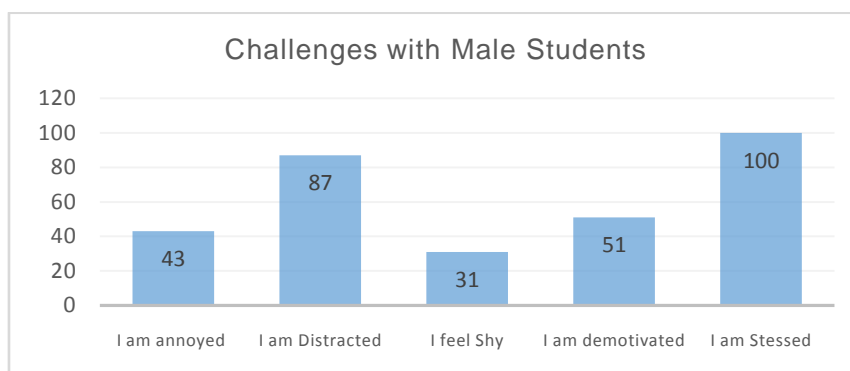


Figure 3 sheds light on the challenge of SSE girls in CE context. Their main inhibitions are the stress (100%) and the distraction (87%). The Other impediments acknowledged are related to shyness (31%) annoyance (43%) and demotivation 51(%) they experience in CE settings.

#### 4.2.1 Female Students' Feelings during Exams at University

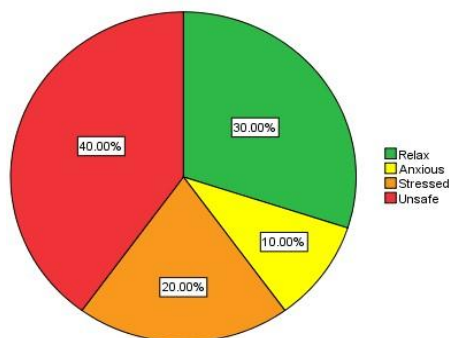


Figure 4: Female students' feelings during exams at University

Figure 4 presents the female students' feelings during exams at university. From this figure, 30% of the students feel Relax, while others feel Anxious (10%), Stressed (20%) and Unsafe (40%). It means that very few female students in gender-segregated education system feel relax in a normal classroom.

#### 4.3 Report of the experimentation

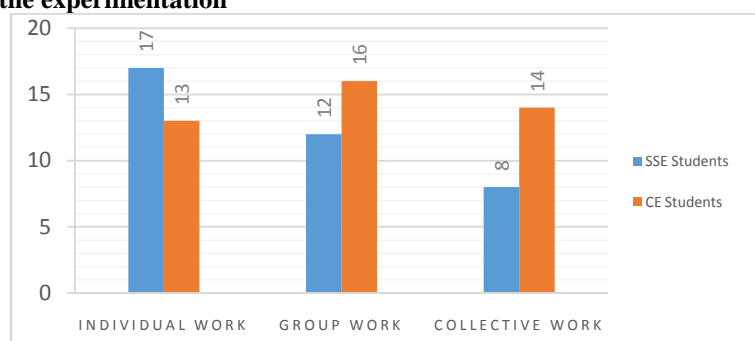


Figure 5: report of the experimentation

Compared to CE girls, although SSE girls can do better in individual work (17 against 13), they significantly regress in group work (12 against 16) and marginally perform in collective work (only 8 against 18). It is believed that there is more pressure to perform socially for girls in SSE school," she says.

#### - Interview with the Grammar Schools' Authorities

##### o Discipline

LyceeToffa 1<sup>er</sup> prefect acknowledged the fact that discipline is not related to the gender "*Both girls and boys can be undisciplined*" she said. Learners behaviours mostly depend on the education they received from their parents. This primary education is completed by teachers and the school authority's effort. The difference here is theoretically no "*girl and boy*" related issue occurs within the school, which is good.

One of the main arguments of *Girls only* approach is the early unsafe sexual behaviour with males stemming from the biological changes and the correlated emotional turbulences of the puberty is supposedly solved in the absence of male students. In such a utopic environment there should not be any pregnancy or abortion, etc. The reality is quite surprising for "*there are still cases of pregnancy, even among boarding school girls because LyceeToffa1<sup>er</sup> is not a jail*" as assumed by the headmaster, girl students meet boys out of the Lycée settings. Some Boarding school girls succeed in sneaking out nightly or corrupt they watchers to meet boys "*you can see boys in front of the school waiting for their Girlfriends*".

Another problem is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even if most African countries alleged not to be concerned, one should not overlook the homosexual attraction problem in girls-only schools. Some girls are sexually attracted to their peers; ironically resulting in atypical *coeducation* within a presumed single-sex education system. School authorities did not elaborate on this aspect.

##### o Academic achievement

There are real advantages in classroom settings because teachers focus only on girls' psychology and adapt their teaching accordingly. Girls self-esteem and autonomy is improved and *school subject* related *gender stereotypes* are side-stepped girl can do well in all academic subjects. Most importantly, SSE overcomes the attraction to the opposite sex and the specific distraction it causes at least during classes. The interviews also reveal that parents' responsibilities are engaged and should balance educational staff effort.

#### 4.4 Classroom Observation Reports

The classroom observation has taken place in lyceeToffa 1<sup>er</sup>. Five teachers (05) were sampled and all of them have been observed. Even if the buildings are a little bit older, the rooms are well built, winded and lit. The aim of making the observation was to see how the SSE system works. Unfortunately, although there are some positive impacts, negative impacts are predominant. Since the classroom is girls-only, it cannot reflect real-life situations. For most interactive activities, boys are needed as the materials used and official documents are designed for coeducation. Even if most of the visited teachers planned the lessons, the materials used and the official documents seem boring for learners who were visibly not interested and focus on their discussion during group activities. Visited classes are fairly communicative with the participation of students, but the overall teaching-learning process is teacher-centred.



## V. DISCUSSION

One reason justifying SSE education of LyceeToffa 1er is the pressure of parents looking ideal conditions for their daughters' education in a trustworthy environment free from puberty related boys' negative influences mainly unsafe sexual behaviours, early pregnancy, poor academic performance, etc. They believe that single-sex empowers girls to take responsibility for their future. Fraser and Cairns (2015), boys in a co-ed classroom enjoy taking the role of dominators in discussions and try to be leaders, because of this girl able to take a center stage only at single-sex school (Fraser and Cairns, 2015). From a purely academic perspective, SSE somehow works! The results of the experimentation (Fig 5) indicate that studying with same-sex peers can positively impact academic performance. Compared to CE girls, SSE girls can do better in individual work (17 against 13). As Hartman (2010) reports single-sex school lets girls be successful and confident on areas, where males dominated traditionally. Moreover, SSE students spend more time to study than students of CE schools and show more enthusiasm and emphasis on education (Hartman, 2010). The problem is that this system does not provide a real-life situation context. Instead, students of both genders are separated during the learning stage but are still expected to successfully work together in professional life.

According to Cairns and Fraser (2015), division of gender makes to appear a gender stereotyping and discrimination prejudicing successful collaboration. Defensibly, Although SSE girls can do better in individual work, they significantly regress in group work (12 against 16) and marginally perform in collective work (only 8 against 18). SSE creates a cocoon for girls' students, a 'bubble' in which they live away from the real world, and, once in the contact with the real society, they struggle. As corroborated by the current research, SSE girls cannot feel comfortable in a context outside their fake world, once at university, they are unable to focus and work in a collaborative mixed environment; their performance is drastically affected.

In contrast, co-educational schools prepare a strong individuality, who can easily adapt to society Robertson (2016) points out, teenagers eventually take a great educational experience when they study together because the zeal, studiousness and considerateness of girls and the vivacity of boys affect each other to inspire each other. Due to these factors, students of the CE schools have a high passion to study hard and show good academic achievements. According to Leighton (2015) coeducation school gives a more practical method for preparing to real life and gives a fantastic establishment to the enduring connections in later life and teach to feel comfortable in the workplace. Of course, the *bubble* created by the SSE can improve academic achievement, minimize gender stereotypes and increase self-confidence and self-esteem, but at the expense of social integration and future professional development.

The 21<sup>st</sup>-century education framework learners' fundamental skills around what is known as the 4cs namely communication, creativity, critical thinking and collaboration. These skills also promoted in the context of the CBA should reflect the real-world challenges and determine successful teaching-learning processes in today's education as professional achievement is projected. Students prefer coeducation environment over single-sex schools, which in their perception overemphasized academic work and academic success. Today's education requires that schools should act as microcosms of society.

The main coeducation' strength is to offer a more "natural" environment for students reflecting authentic challenges. This confirms the results in table 1 which reveals that single-sex education creates an artificial "girls-only society" which is a threat to students' social integration by reinforcing anti-male attitudes. SSE system biases authentic collaboration and communication by creating a 'fake' world. Predictably, the majority of SSE girls, when they immerse in coeducational environment are distracted and stressed because they are not used to managing emotions and feelings triggered by their 'male' peers.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study explored the impacts of gender-segregated education on Beninese EFL advanced students intending to help EFL students and parents have a clear view of whether the SSE system is beneficial or not for students. The objective is to point out how SSE affects EFL Advanced students' academic achievement.

The current study carried out through a mixed methodology reveals that the balance between gender-segregated education's negative and positive impacts is bending on the negative side. The first aim of the single-sex education was to create a safe environment away from the society, a bubble where students can feel more confident and improve academic achievement but this creates a boomerang effect which is now affecting the students' academic achievement. The results of this study also lead to the conclusion that the bubble created by the gender segregation minimize gender stereotypes and increase self-confidence and self-esteem at the expense of social integration and academic achievement. Furthermore, it becomes a threat to students', social integration by reinforcing anti-male attitudes.

Regarding the problems, some suggestions have been formulated. This study suggests that instead of closing the remaining single-sex schools the school authorities should organize more often activities with coeducational schools to help their students be more accustomed to an environment different from the gender-segregated one.

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