

Chapter 13

Higher Education in the Post–Pandemic Era: Implications and Future Prospects

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the educational changes and new trends that emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic with a brief review of how education looked like before it. The pandemic forced schools and educational institutions to adapt to new modes of teaching and learning, including online and remote learning. This chapter examines how these changes affected education, including curriculum, assessment, and pedagogy. It also explores the role of technology in education and the importance of digital literacy skills. Finally, it highlights the future trends that we need to watch for.

INTRODUCTION

The most recent Covid-19 outbreak affected several businesses, but education was notably affected. Academic institutions and external examination providers responded differently to the pandemic's shut-down. The widespread pandemic made it impossible for schools and universities to operate normally. Both teachers and students had to work from home to complete their academic tasks. In addition to its logistical complexity, evaluating such a system involves other challenges. Several organizations have developed opportunities for others to gain from their experiences (Itani et al., 2022). The world has been profoundly altered and challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic has impacted every aspect of society, but education has been particularly heavily struck, affecting student settings, attitudes, and skills. Governments worldwide had to pass legislation to stop in-person instruction in schools and colleges, which compelled the switch to online delivery techniques. Institutions and educators must develop

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more innovative teaching techniques due to the swift shift to online learning to help students adjust to these quick changes, particularly with online evaluation (Al-Karaki et al., 2021).

Interactive technology in education has increased student involvement by promoting constructivist methods for creating an active learning environment. A study found that incorporating technology into the classroom increased students' enthusiasm for studying and improved their retention of the material. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic forced all educational institutions to migrate online. Due to this adjustment, instructional tactics must be modified to fit the brand-new virtual environment. The instructor must go above and above to draw in and retain students in an online course. Therefore, new internet tools are being sought (Kaddoura & Al Hussein, 2021a). Tech-savvy students have access to on-demand life skills through online education. Developing an online learning model that can improve critical thinking skills in a virtual environment is challenging. The new teaching approaches must satisfy the needs of the 21st Century learner, whose abilities go beyond core competencies. There is a need to move away from traditional pedagogy and toward andragogy to develop self-directed learners who can compete in a global market for higher education graduates (Kaddoura & Al Hussein, 2021b).

BACKGROUND

Online Distance Education and Emergence of Remote Teaching

Given the rapid advancement of technology, prominent technology executives are creating unique ways to transform the Metaverse into a learning environment. People have become acclimated to teleworking, telemedicine, and various other remote kinds of engagement since the COVID-19 pandemic (Kaddoura & Al Hussein, 2023). In the age of technological innovation, we live in today, the trend of personalized learning is constantly growing. As a result, traditional schooling, social networking, and its connection to data collection are all rapidly developing. Importantly, our current educational environment strongly emphasizes the advantages of the growth mindset and the necessity of cognitive flexibility (Al Hussein & Youness, 2023).

Higher Education Before and After Covid-19

In December 2019, a brand-new type of virus, Coronavirus, was first identified in China, which set off a global pandemic in March 2020. Direct, indirect, or close contact with those with the illness will put any individual at risk of getting infected (Kabadayi et al., 2020). As a result, stringent policies like border closures, stay-at-home directives, travel restrictions, extensive quarantines, coerced social distancing, contact tracing, and self-quarantining are implemented globally (Tian et al. 2020).

The service sector, which depends heavily on human interaction, has been struck the hardest by these regulations (Carroll & Conboy, 2020). In response to these rules, and while running on a short timeline, service sector businesses have sprinted to implement technology-driven strategies as a means of damage control. And since the domain of services incorporates universities and higher education, the educational system experienced its “digital growing-up” way earlier than most researchers and educators anticipated.

But, while considering the beginnings of remote learning and computer-based learning, one will come to realize that discussions regarding electronic or digital education have been prevalent since at least the middle of the 1990s (Zawacki-Richter, 2020).

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