The Impact Of The Coronavirus Pandemic On Education In The Gulf Region

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Abstract
The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education system in the Gulf region after educational institutions were forced to shut down. This study aimed at studying the impact of Covid 19 on the education sector within the Gulf countries. The methodology used in this research is a qualitative analysis of secondary data. The data consists of news articles, reports, and academic papers relevant to the topic. The main findings of this research were that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the education system in the Gulf region where students had to adapt to a new way of learning. After the outbreak of the corona virus, most of the learning institutions which were in the progress of their academic year rapidly changed to the new trend by embracing digital learning programs and availing learning materials in the internet. The COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity for governments in the Middle East to build on their robust measures by addressing challenges and embracing innovative solutions to build a student-centric ecosystem that substantially transforms learning. The pandemic has challenged the way education is delivered in the region and has forced students and teachers to adapt to a new reality. With most learning institutions going online, there was a major challenge to the students from middle and low income families who could not afford a computer or a stable internet connection. The Covid 19 pandemic provided a new reality on some of the inefficacies within the education sector and the need to address these inefficacies to avoid such challenges in the future.

1. Introduction

Choices to close schools across the Gulf area had adverse results for students and the entire community. The ongoing COVID-19 emergency has impacted studies in the Gulf world, particularly those from the least fortunate communities. In the midst of the new circumstance forced by COVID-19, teachers have needed to adjust to new getting teaching techniques to continue disseminating knowledge to the students. Embracing these elective strategies was important to keep up with informative congruity, particularly during lockdown periods. Studies show that in 2019, around 51% of the world populace had no Internet access. The figure remained at 45% in the Arab world, which is close to 200 million people. It is quite important that in many non-industrial nations where on the web or PC helped learning isn't accessible for most students, radio and TV

have been instrumental in contacting a huge number of individuals and keeping up with some type of guidance in learning. It ought to be reviewed that in 2019, preceding the flare-up of the pandemic, the world was at that point confronting illiteracy issue with 256 million students having had dropped out of school with 15.6 million from the Arab world. These figures were recorded before the Covid period, which shows the adverse effect on education that the pandemic had on education levels within the Gulf region. The aim of this study is to evaluate the impact of COVID 19 on education in Gulf region.

The first COVID-19 case to be confirmed in the laboratory was on first December in the year 2019 in Wuhan in China. After that it spread to entire Hubei area from Wuhan. Accordingly, major urban areas and territories were gone after

by this spread and the cause may be due to the rise of the public activity in the Chinese Lunar period of the new year. The first case outside of China was reported in Thailand on 13th January in the year. The infection spread faster across Thailand and into other regions of the world. As of 6th February in the year 2020, a sum of 28,276 confirmed individuals with 565 deaths worldwide were noted by the WHO, bringing together not less than 25 nations. The WHO gave a generalized pandemic caution on 30th of January in the year 2020. Large, tough quarantine strategies and fever containment measures were continuing. The evident death rates in the emergency clinic were confirmed to be 11%-15%. The world was in confusion as more people continued to die and the rate of infections kept on increasing.
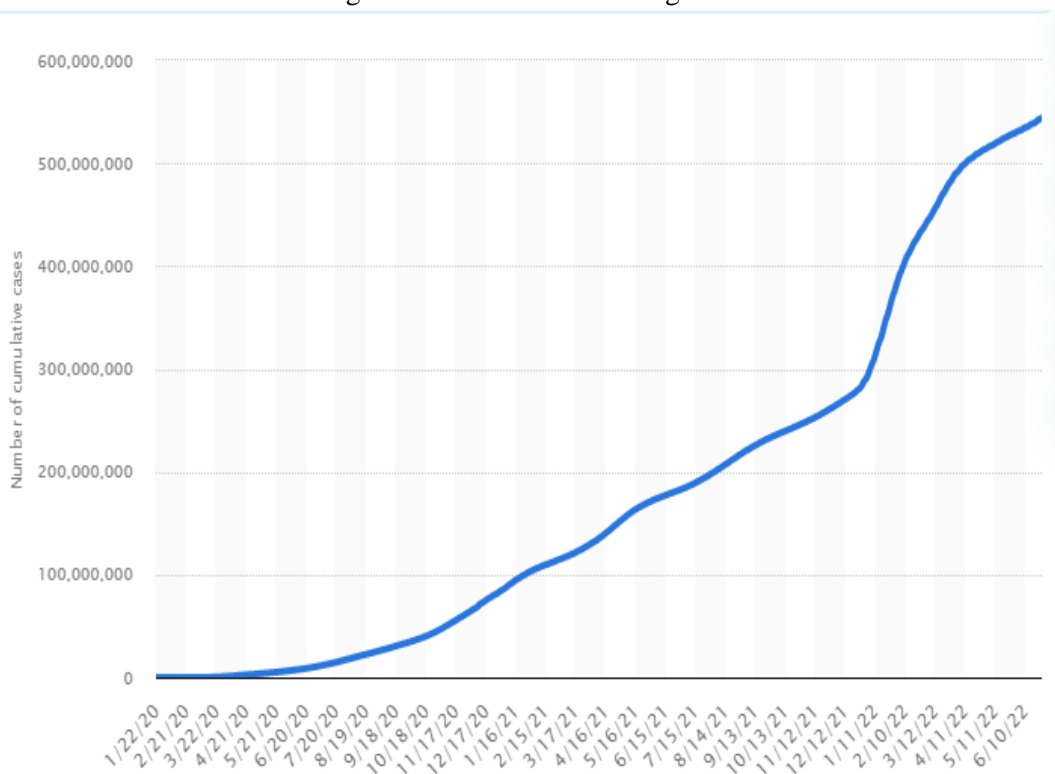

Figure1: Number of infection rates of covid 19

2. Covid Outlook in Gulf countries

As of July 31, 2020, combined COVID-19 cases arrived at 668,002 in the six Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC) nations, with Saudi Arabia having by a wide margin the most (291,468). Every one of the six nations are, however, showing a straightening everything out, except with slight

late increases in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Testing for COVID-19 in the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain has arrived at more than half - a considerable portion of the world's most noteworthy testing rates. Interestingly, on the latest Global Health Security Index, for 2021, which covered 195 nations, the GCC nations scored below the normal for the developed nations. The most pressing wellbeing challenges are the intermixed dangers of COVID-19 and no communicable sicknesses (NCDs), close by wellbeing disparities among low-pursued transient specialists, especially as the GCC nations have worldwide high paces of NCDs and NCD risk factors, prominently diabetes, which compound the effects of COVID-19 on generally wellbeing status: individuals with NCDs and NCD risk factors are bound to turn out to be fundamentally sick or face death from COVID-19. However, the GCC legislatures have gone to frequently severe lengths to safeguard their populaces' wellbeing and their economies, they need to confront the scourge of COVID-19 with contracting economic activity due to the staggering oil prices. This report provides an insight on the negative impact of Covid on the education sector. The gulf countries are now channeling their funds into the healthcare sector while overlooking the pressing needs in the education sector. As it stands, the healthcare sector remains top priority in funding to ensure that mortality rates due to Covid are at their lowest and that any required resources have been provided for to improve the quality of healthcare. This observation implies that the existing challenges in education at all levels will have to be overlooked at the expense of healthcare.

As the spread of Covid 19 became more intense, governments were implementing measures that ensured that the disease did not spread. Given that the disease was airborne, these measures aimed at ensuring that people stayed at home and that there was minimal public interaction. These measures included closure of schools, restaurants, public parks, libraries, and other public places where people would gather. The players in these sectors had to find ways in which they would sustain their business. For example, restaurants introduced home delivery services while schools started online classes. The aim of these measures was to ensure   minimal infection rates so as to contain the disease.

3. Impact of Covid 19 on schools

As a way of continuing education, many educational institutions resulted to embrace online teaching. Online learning did not start as a result of Covid 19 since some universities and colleges were still using online teaching methods for educational programs were students were either busy working or in different epigraphical location where they could not commute to school. However, the implementation of the lockdown measures necessitated many institutions at all levels to introduce online teaching. Online teaching took different forms. The most common one was where teachers would design an online course where students would log in in the online learning portals to access learning material and submit assignments. For some institutions, learning would occur over zoom or skype where the teacher would meet with the students virtually and provide educational instruction. For this teaching method to work, the students and the teachers needed to have an internet enabled device such as a mobile phone, a tablet, or a personal computer and a reliable high speed internet. From the description of the requirements for online learning, it is evident that only the students from well off families benefitted from the online teaching strategies adopted (Al-Rawi, Subhi Al-Dayyeni, & Reda, 2021). More than 15% of the people living in gulf countries are poor and cannot afford basic commodities leave alone affording a computer or a stable internet connection. Such numbers prove that some of the students were completely left out of the education system once the schools were closed. Notably, the

online system of education only worked for the students living in the urban areas with access to internet and electricity.

Although these measures were implemented in different dates, almost 100% of schools were all affected by the closure of schools across the gulf countries. In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, different states decided to resort to different types of distance education as shown in the figure below:
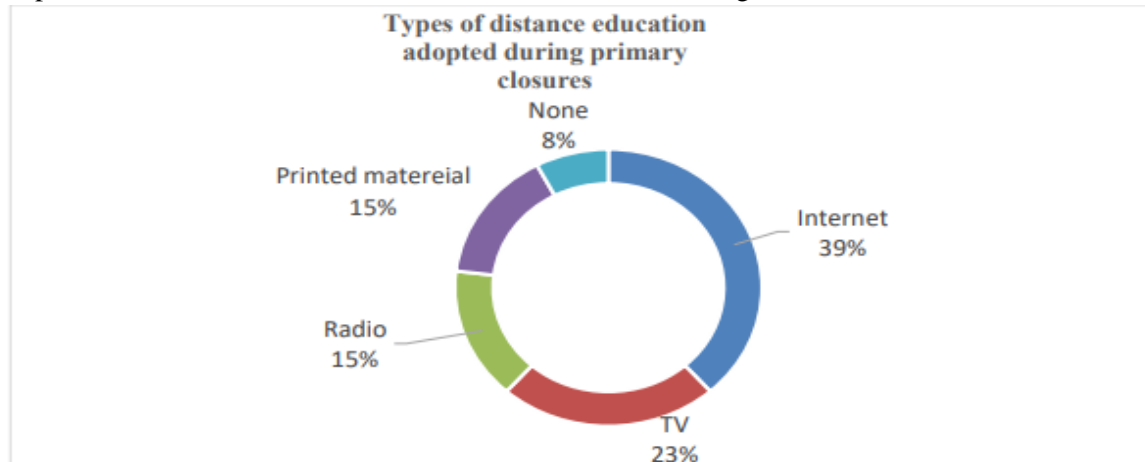

Figure 2: Types of distance education adopted during primary school closures

The first option that the schools had was to go for online education. With the online education, students had to use internet connected devices such as tablets, personal computers, and tablets to acquire knowledge. Other institutions opted for radio, Television, or printed material. Notably, there was a considerable 8% of students who never received any instruction largely due to lack of resources. Regardless any measures that each institution undertook to ensure that instruction continued, one thing was certain, the education system would not be the same again and that the stakeholders needed to come up with strategies that ensured that the new measures did not have a major negative impact on the education system in their respective countries (Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Bimba, 2021).

4. Intensifying inequality in online Education across Gulf Countries

The effort of shifting the higher education online during the pandemic increased the levels of differences in the availability of the educational equipment in the Gulf regions. In enhancing the differences between those learners who can reach the internet and devices and those who are not in a position to reach, such as the poor, refugees residents of the rural areas and the rest there is the invention of the "digital divide" that some professors called to provide the online lectures (Amarneh, et al., 2021). The online change to education online showed a significant economic spread in the world of Arab from able countries like quasar which had 100% internet coverage the internet coverage is better in urban as compared to rural areas. The effort to move college schooling web based during the COVID-19 pandemic has enhanced imbalance in admittance to education across the Gulf, honing the differentiation between those students with access to smartphones, internet, tablets, and workstations and the students who don't. The people who frequently have weak admittance to schooling such as the poor, girls in conservative societies, are currently getting weak access to education (Al-Rawi, Subhi Al-Dayyeni, & Reda, 2021). So sharp was the divide that a number of teachers advised that the efforts to introduce online education would not be effective. The change to online training as a result of the

pandemic featured the economic imbalance in the Gulf region, from little, rich nations like Qatar, which has 100% Internet inclusion, to other striving nations like Oman. Notably, internet access is usually better when comparing the urban and rural areas (Crawford, et al., 2020).

At the learner's level, the exposure of online training is differing across regions. Dima Mohammed, a learner in Bahrain, commented, "electronic learning is a brilliant and valuable open door. We are protected in our homes and the scholastic substance is in our grasp constantly and there are numerous applications that have the ability to be utilized to speak with educators and students" (Murphy, 2020). She owns her laptop and is not concerned about the cost of the internet. In Oman, Zainab Al-Hawari, a student, had an alternate point of view. Oman has routine blackouts and the Internet is terrible, the power is unreliable, and some students do not possess a personal laptop" (Murphy, 2020). Web based learning is seen as a helpful methodology that was seen as an effective methodology that would work towards improving the literacy levels despite the closure of schools as a measure to counter the spread of Covid.
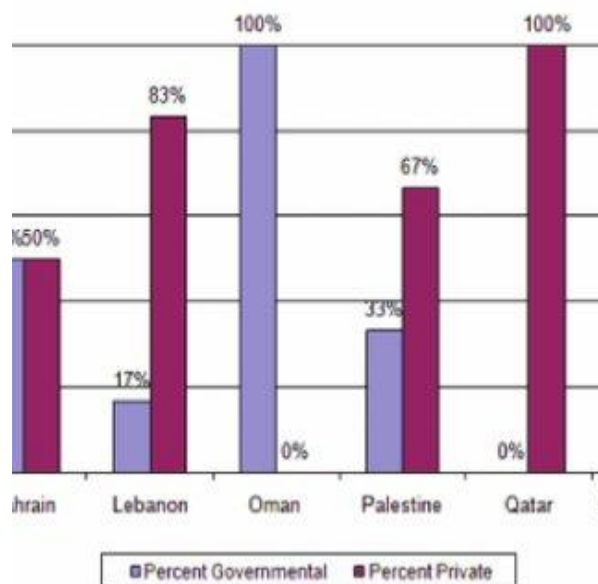

Figure 3: Government versus Private Education in Gulf countries

The truth is that in many learning institutions in Gulf and in the entire world, the progress to web based learning is shaky. Even in the most advanced countries, the progress to web based learning is unsteady. At those institutions where web based learning has been implemented, with a couple of world class exemptions such as the United States, majority number of students have been left out (Malkawi, Bawaneh, & Bawa'aneh, 2020). Some training specialists consider what is happening to be an opportunity to utilize online instruction for a huge scope and at different school and college schooling levels, and to improve its picture for potential utilize later as a fundamental instructive strategy as opposed to a response to crisis such as Covid 19. In any case, the review results show that numerous Arab youth actually have misguided judgments about web based discovering that appear to restrict their receptiveness to signing up for it, and the sorts of courses they would involve it for, contrasted with conventional projects. These confusions agree with the way that course testaments and preparing on the Internet are not perceived by Arab state run administrations, nor are they generally acknowledged by businesses. A majority of students revealed that their favored model for learning would be a "mixed" structure that consolidates physical interaction and online teaching (Moussa & Ali, 2022).

5. The challenges faced by the learning online: Comparisons

However, there are challenges to overcome. A few of the learners who don't have access to internet and technology are challenged in participating on the digital learning. this challenge is experienced in many nations and allying income groups in-between nations. Like for instance, while 95% of learners in Norway, Austria and Switzerland possess a device for their learning, only 34% in Indonesia possess, which is according to organization for economic

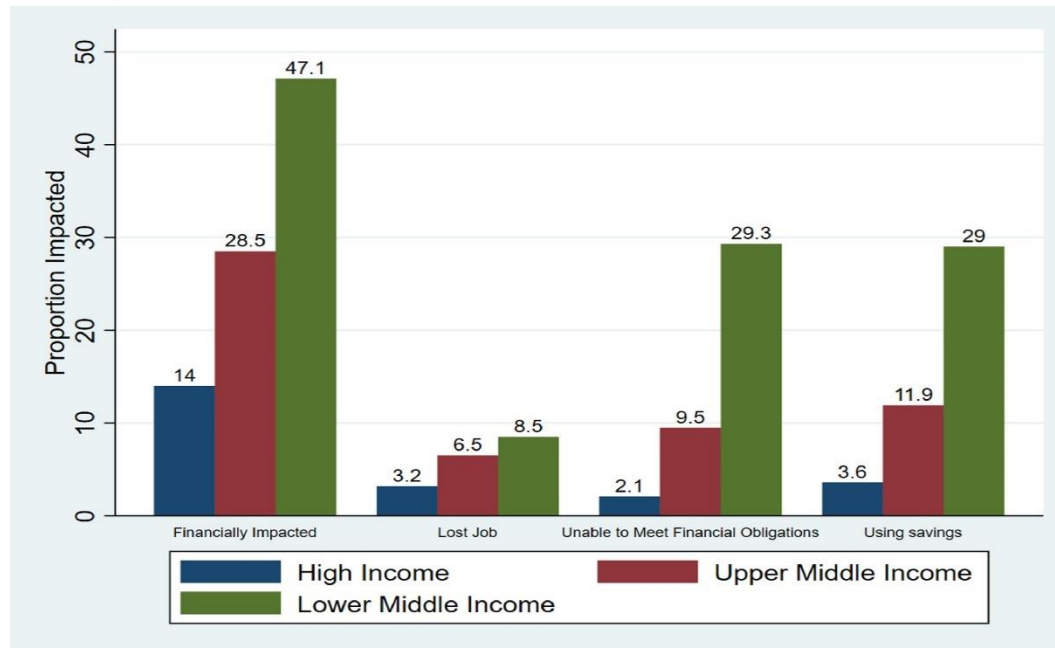cooperation and development data (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020).

Figure 4: Impact of Covid on Households with different income

In United States, there is a noticeable crack between those from disadvantaged and prerogative environments while almost all individuals aged 15 from advantaged individuals said they possessed a computer in which they worked on, nearly a quarter of those from disadvantaged situations didn't possess (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). Some learning institutions and governments had supplied digital equipment to needy learners like in Australia and the New South Wales while many others are nevertheless altered that the pandemic will broaden the technological trend (Ahbabi, 2021).

6. Effectiveness of learning online

Those not having the appropriate technology prove that learning electronically can be more efficient in some ways. A number of researches show that; an average number of students keep 25% to 60% extra material while studying online as compared to classroom which is only 8-10%. This is primarily because the learners have the ability to learn quickly online. Electronic learning saves 40% to 60% learning time than in a classroom because learners have the ability to learn with their own speed, reviewing and re-reading, skipping, or skimming through the ideas while doing their choice (Crawford, et al., 2020). However, the successfulness of electronic learning differs between age groups. The common concord on children mostly the young ones, is that an organized surrounding is essential since the children are easily distracted. To experience the advantages of online learning, there is need to have a concerted input to furnish this setting and go past copying a corporal class between the capabilities of the video instead, making the use of collaboration-range tools and methods of engaging which foster "intelligence, personalization and inclusion", according to Dowson Tong, Tencent's Chief Executive Deputy President and President of its Cloud and the group of smart industries (Ahbabi, 2021). Studies have portrayed crucially that learners largely use their awareness to learn by making learning to be fun and efficient through use of technology. According to BYJU's Mrinal Mohit.

On a timeline, it is shown that smart combination of games has displayed engagement which is more high and grown stimulation in studying mostly among young learners, making them to purely like the learning (Al-Rawi, Subhi Al-Dayyeni, & Reda, 2021).

It is evident that this pandemic has acted as a disruption tool to the education system that individuals declare that it was losing it meaning. In his records, twenty-one Lessons for the 21st Century, scholar Yuval Noah Harari describes how learning institutions still major on educational skills that are outdated and rote studying, instead of focusing on skills like adaptability and critical thinking, which will have more importance towards success in the coming days. Learning online could be considered the incentive to formulate a new and efficient method of teaching the learners (Alshaikh, et al., 2020) While some are concerned that the rapid kind of change can affect the goal, others foresee on making the electronic learning part of them after encountering the advantages first-hand. What is evident throughout this pandemic is the benefits of distributing awareness overseas, industries, and across the community. If the studying online is significant, it is advisable for all of the stakeholders to adjust and fit to its capabilities.

7. Recommendations

Following the rise to the challenge of the pandemic at the starting of the past year, learning institutions in the Gulf have been developing to their digital plans as a portion of bigger strategies for coming days. After the outbreak of the corona virus, most of the learning institutions which were in the progress of their academic year rapidly changed to the new trend by embracing digital learning programs and availing learning materials in the internet (Amarneh, et al., 2021). An example of the main change was the United Arab Emirates' top Colleges dealing with Technology, the largest institution of higher education in the country. Over March 4th and

5th, just days after all classes and programs were called off on March 1st, HCT invented a two-day effective learning program of the pilots, which recorded 20,000 students who took part in 272 online learning meetings and 3000 online classes. In ensuring that assignments could be efficiently done, HCT partnered with firms like zoom and blackboard in setting up online academic programs for the learners. In other areas where Bahrain had the position pf regional leader in the field of online learning adaptation. The education ministry and the Bahrain information and electronic government head together with Amazon an international cloud computing program faster formulated a devoted e-learning platform which allowed learners to proceed with their learning incidentally (Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Bimba, 2021).

The additional online platform that gave the teachers the ability to connect with their learners complemented the service. By the use of the Microsoft office and teams365 programs, there was the ability of the teachers to provide lectures while the chosen support staff were there in answering the student's delicate questions. The success' signs of these capabilities in one month led to the ability of 150,000 learners to proceed with their studies in their primitive ways (Bensaid & Brahimi, 2020).

8. Temporary solutions permanent and essentiality of investment infrastructure

Many learning institutions adapted the digital methods and made them to be permanent as responding to the demand of keeping the classes going during the previous levels of the pandemic. Michael Trick the dean of the Qatar Carnegie Melon University said that "The pandemic emphasized on the major role that technological trends can take part in tertiary education." Evident at the initial stages of the pandemic, HCT had been leading in the matters of adopting the digital creativity. The institutions are in a mission

of establishing a system which can be referred to as the 'uber-like' service (shifting key educational systems which include: lectures, exams and tests online). HCT also has the aim of creating effective college experience via its DIGI campus program which offers the online electronic counselling and life skills support, electronic health, fitness and nutrition platforms, electronic reading platforms that try to imitate the library vicinity with book review spaces through the blackboard and the electronic learners club and the electronic competitions (Kharbat & Abu Daabes, 2021).

Most of the learning institutions in the areas have luckily changed to the electronic learning structure which was enhanced by the robust strong ICT integration had already been set in place. In April the past year Tara Waudby the captain of the Riffa Views International school said that the virtual learning has shown evident to be powerful but providing the learning requirements requires considerable and encouraged investment over a period of time (Erfurth & Ridge, 2020). The fast distribution of effective equipment for the virtual learning for most of the private schools is mainly the outcome the cause of the large efforts of the learning institutions to invest in the ICT infrastructure, creative studying instructions and planning of the crisis management In Bahrain (Leo, et al., 2021). The HCTs benchmark transformation to the digital learning was able to be done on the back of the noticeable speculation in the ICT infrastructure. Since the year 2018, the learning institutions were planning to create a more digital solution to assist in meeting the needs of the fourth industrial revolution but moved towards the responding to the pandemic.

9. Future of Learning in Gulf Countries

With individuals believing that the unexpected and the faster growth of online studying having no experience, unavailable bandwidth and inappropriate training will lead to poor experiences of using which will lead to drawback in the endured widening; other individuals have the belief that the new hybrid structure of learning will come about with noticeable advantages. Although the education delivery will have unchangeable effects of the digital solutions, it is evident that that it is not all areas are convenient to a remote structure (Alfiras, Bojiah, & Yassin, 2020). However, a range of limitations will keep their place. Many tertiary learning facilities are built on the latest experience of the electronic learning and followed a blended learning approach which brings together online learning with restricted interaction.

HCT has led to an introduction of a structure whereby courses that need technicality on learning like the applied research, entrepreneurship and lab work which can be done on the learning institution while the rest of the courses which are theoretical can be completed online. This has also made the learning institutions to concentrate on the demand areas and progressively widen the person's voluntary service for food security, applied research, computer science and the health sciences. Hybrid ways have equally been used in other health and practical purposes (Cleland, et al., 2020). Like for example, in July the past year the highest council of universities in Egypt reported that a hybrid education system is to be implemented which had the aim of reducing the number of learners in the learning institutions. In October, the education administration in Abu Dhabi introduced a pilot project for its effective Charter learning institution, a hybrid learning choice for expatriate learners with families that are faced by the economic disadvantages of the COVID-19 fallout of Covid-19.

10. Conclusion

As the COVID-19 Pandemic comes closer, higher learning institutions are forced to consider the extent of their part and mission which were affected during the pandemic and now should

decide on the level of which they will embark on their initial teaching ways. As department individuals go back to the bricks and mortar classroom it is possible to think if there had been a durable deforms to their duties and specifications. However, as the experience of the online teaching got from the pandemic it gives a difference in efficient methods from more put online teaching experiences. How is the applicability of the awareness and experience that is got from the teaching online on the pandemic era to learner and expert online mentors and the post-pandemic teaching experience? Is there any possibility that the learners during the pandemic recover their experience or the experts? Will academics apertures during the Pandemic gain their expertise identities within the institution once physical courses resume? Have the attempts of the higher learning institutions attempt to work together in sharing and mentoring between the novice and the expert teachers led to agreement between themselves?

The above pending questions are saved for the coming researches immediately the pandemic is over. Nevertheless, the available study portrays the effects of a higher learning institution foreshadow in dealing with online emergency mentoring in the pandemic and its respective consequence on the institution and its capability members. It is advised that the test of differences that comes about between the institution and the online teaching activity platforms can be used with other learning institutions' organizers in the future upcoming that may lead to bigger reforms in the field of education within the Gulf region.

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