



Cultural Dimensions of Education: Attitudes, Gender, and Decision-Making in Volunteering and Learning in Arab and Non-Arab Contexts

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Abstract: This article examines key cultural, gender, and contextual factors that influence educational experiences and attitudes toward volunteering among Arab and non-Arab students. Drawing upon recent studies, the article explores the comparative attitudes towards volunteering, the role of gender in organizational commitment among educators, the impact of COVID-19 on teaching experiences, the perceptions of online learning by teachers and parents, and cross-cultural decision-making processes during adolescence. The findings highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of these dynamics in shaping educational outcomes and improving the effectiveness of educational practices across diverse contexts.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the landscape of education has been significantly shaped by cultural attitudes, gender dynamics, and contextual challenges. This article synthesizes existing literature to explore how these factors influence volunteering, organizational commitment among teachers, and educational practices, particularly in light of recent global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Comparative Attitudes Towards Volunteering

Fathi and Kassem's study provides insightful comparisons of the attitudes toward volunteering among Arab and non-Arab students. It emphasizes that cultural expectations and socialization processes deeply influence students' willingness to engage in volunteer activities. Arab students often demonstrate a strong communal orientation that may drive their involvement in volunteering. In contrast, non-Arab students may prioritize individualistic values, thereby shaping their volunteering behaviors differently. Understanding these cultural underpinnings is essential for fostering effective volunteer programs that resonate with diverse student populations.



3. Gender and Organizational Commitment in Education

Shamma's research highlights the significant role of gender in shaping organizational commitment among teachers in Arab schools in Israel. The findings suggest that female educators may face unique challenges that influence their job satisfaction and commitment levels. Disparities in support structures, recognition, and opportunities for advancement often hinder female teachers, impacting their overall organizational commitment. It is imperative that educational institutions acknowledge these gender-based differences to create inclusive environments that support all educators effectively.

4. Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching Experiences

As schools worldwide shut their doors and pivoted to online platforms, teachers were thrust into the deep end of digital education. In Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon, educators faced the daunting task of transitioning to blended learning models. This section will explore the initial challenges they encountered, such as lack of technical training, limited access to resources, and the need to engage students remotely. It will also discuss the creative solutions teachers implemented to overcome these hurdles and how these adaptations may shape future teaching practices.

The shift to online and blended learning has had a profound impact on teachers' job satisfaction. This section will analyze the data collected by Strongoli and Shamma and Kadrožková on how job satisfaction levels varied across different countries and teaching environments. Factors affecting job satisfaction included work-life balance, technical support, and the effectiveness of communication with students and parents. The experiences of teachers in these three diverse regions offer insights into the global teaching community's sentiments and challenges during the pandemic.

One of the critical lessons from the pandemic is the necessity for robust professional development and support systems tailored to educators' needs. This section will discuss the types of professional development programs that were most effective during the pandemic and those that are necessary for future crises. It will highlight the importance of continuous learning opportunities for teachers to enhance their digital competencies and adaptive teaching methods.

Looking forward, this section will outline the potential long-term impacts of the pandemic on educational practices and policy-making. Recommendations will be provided for educators, policymakers, and educational institutions on how to better prepare and support the teaching workforce in the face of future crises. These recommendations will be based on the successful strategies identified during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing needs for flexibility and resilience in the education sector.

5. Perceptions of Online Learning by Teachers and Parents

The sudden shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted traditional educational paradigms, prompting a critical evaluation of digital teaching methods. Shamma's 2024 research provides a foundational understanding of how this transition has been perceived by both teachers and



parents. This chapter delves into the intricacies of these perceptions, highlighting the challenges and areas for improvement in online education systems.

This section examines the specific challenges that surfaced with the advent of online learning. Teachers faced difficulties in delivering lessons that engage students effectively, while parents struggled to support their children's learning at home. Key issues included technological disparities, lack of personal interaction, and the difficulty in maintaining students' focus over digital platforms. The experiences of both groups underscore the need for robust digital infrastructures and support systems to enhance the online learning experience.

Concerns about the effectiveness of online learning are central to understanding the reservations of teachers and parents. This section discusses how these concerns manifest in the perceived quality of education students receive. Teachers and parents questioned whether core educational goals were being met and whether students could achieve the same level of academic proficiency through online formats as they did in traditional classrooms.

Effective communication and feedback mechanisms are vital for the success of any educational setup, more so in an online context. This section explores how the lack of immediate and interactive feedback in online settings affected the learning process. Insights from Shamma's research highlight the need for dynamic tools that allow for real-time interactions and feedback, suggesting that enhancements in these areas could significantly improve the educational outcomes of online learning.

Online education needs to be flexible enough to cater to the diverse needs of all students. This section outlines the importance of personalized learning approaches as a response to the varied learning styles and paces of students. It discusses strategies for integrating adaptive learning technologies and differentiated instruction into online platforms, ensuring that all students have the resources and support necessary to succeed.

Building on the concerns and challenges identified, this section proposes practical strategies for enhancing online education. Recommendations include investing in teacher training for digital tools, improving digital access for all students, and developing more interactive and engaging online content. Furthermore, it suggests regular surveys and feedback loops involving both teachers and parents to continually refine the online learning process.

The transition to online learning has been a learning curve for the educational community, revealing significant gaps in readiness and resource allocation. By addressing the concerns of teachers and parents and continuously striving to improve communication and adaptability, educational institutions can enhance the effectiveness of online learning and better prepare for any future disruptions in traditional educational settings.

6. Decision-Making in Adolescence Across Cultures Katz's comparative analysis of decision-making among Jewish and Druze adolescents provides critical insights into how cultural factors shape youth behavior. The research illustrates that adolescents draw on cultural values in making decisions, which ultimately impacts their educational engagement and future choices. Such comparative studies are vital for educators aiming to understand and support diverse student populations better.

Conclusion The interplay of cultural attitudes, gender disparities, and contextual challenges shapes the educational experiences of Arab and non-Arab students alike. Understanding these dynamics allows



educational institutions to develop targeted strategies that enhance volunteer engagement, support teacher commitment, and adapt learning methods to meet evolving needs. Recognizing and addressing these factors is essential for fostering an inclusive, effective educational environment that benefits all students, particularly in the face of global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Future research should continue to explore these dimensions in order to inform policy and practice in diverse educational settings.

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