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THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS ON TEACHERS' PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN
KUWAIT

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has changed the world we know, especially our educational system. This study explores the impact of schools' lockdown during COVID-19 on teachers' preparation programs in Kuwait. This qualitative research explores the adjustments that higher education institutes in Kuwait adopted to fulfill their teachers' preparation programs. Two public higher education institutes were the focus of this study by investigating the available syllabi and curricula of their teachers' preparation programs. The reviewed data revealed in-school learning stopped as institutions adhered to the government's closure directive. This study also revealed that higher learning institutions introduced changes to their training curriculum to prepare teachers for new teaching models. The findings established in this project accentuate the need for all higher learning institutions to modify their teacher-training curriculum to make technology integration a fundamental learning component.

Keywords: Virtual learning, teachers' preparation, Kuwait, COVID-19, schools' lockdown, training, online teaching

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1 CHAPTER

1.1 Introduction

Teachers and schools were under the spotlight after the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus in 2019. Many countries began shutting down schools in an attempt to control the spread of COVID-19. The effects of the global health crisis that forced governments in about 180 countries to close their schools left nearly 85% of students out of school (World Bank, 2020). Most countries shifted their school systems to virtual learning, with the main goal to ensure the continuity of the learning process.

Because the Ministry of Education in Kuwait employs teachers, they were obligated to undertake various adjustments regarding required teaching methods and curriculum. However, as intern students are under the supervision of their universities, these institutions were responsible for any pedagogical changes to their courses. However, as higher education institutes are under the umbrella of the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kuwait, their policy changes may vary between educational institutions.

1.2 Research Problem

Due to the spread of COVID-19, schools worldwide were under lockdown to comply with World Health Organization recommendations (WHO, 2020). School administrators shifted their activities to remote learning using online platforms (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020), and educational institutes shifted their instructional delivery to online teaching. Schools were also overwhelmed in preparing their in-service teachers to ensure that they were ready to effectively use online platforms with their students. Many studies have explored the impact of transitioning from face-to-face to online teaching and have summarized the positive and negative effects on both students and teachers (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020).

One of the core components of teachers' education is internship training; it consists of placing student teachers in schools to reinforce basic instructional skills from observing and helping in-service teachers (Tsai et

al., 2021). Due to Covid-19, higher education institutes were under pressure to initiate an alternative path for their student teachers to enable them to graduate from their programs during school lockdowns. Because of these school lockdowns, most higher education institutes had to shift to online learning to accommodate the current situation.

Within the Kuwait context, the concept of e-learning is relatively new compared to developed countries. Broadly speaking, e-learning entails the adoption and utilization of knowledge disseminated and facilitated chiefly by electronic means (Alkharang, 2013). Presently, this methodology relies on networks and computers for content dissemination and instruction, however other systems and platforms are likely to be adopted in the foreseeable future. E-learning may involve synchronous or asynchronous access and may be disseminated geographically with varied time limits (Alkharang, 2013). In higher education circles, e-learning has gained traction in many institutions globally as colleges and universities adapt to the changing environment and learners' needs. Kuwait is one of the countries that has considered e-learning as a viable alternative to the face-to-face learning model.

The Kuwait e-learning strategy of educational development emphasizes the efficient use of electronic technologies to offer students a flexible and interactive learning experience. Such technologies foster an interactive learning environment in multiple ways, notably textual and voice recognition, adaptive tutorials, simulations, and virtual frameworks (Al-Sharhan, 2018). Besides other fields, e-learning is considered critical in preparing teachers to create a highly interactive learning environment using emerging technologies.

To prepare teachers for e-learning, the MOE launched the "Computer for every Individual" program. One of the principal objectives of this initiative was to promote the integration of technology into education by offering tutors and students Microsoft Windows based on pre-determined teaching materials and applications to enhance adoption. Several teachers from six learning zones have received special training as part of this program. Specifically, they were equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to train other educators on the efficient use of technology to effectively reach students within classrooms (Al-Sharhan, 2018). Thus, this

strategy has ensured that more teachers acquired the tools required to succeed in e-learning contexts. Besides, e-learning in Kuwait is facilitated by providing education students in higher academic institutions, such as Kuwait University, Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), and the Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), with special training on the application of technology tools for teaching (Al-Sharhan, 2018). Overall, this preparation ensures that teachers have the prerequisite e-learning skills and knowledge before joining the workforce.

1.3 Purpose for Research

This study investigated the changes that higher education institutes in Kuwait adopted to fulfill their teachers' preparation programs during school lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many teacher education institutes made a rapid adjustment to overcome the situation by shifting their practices to online platforms (la Velle et al., 2020). This study explored the approaches universities in Kuwait followed to address the pandemic and has identified key challenges that these institutions had to address.

1.4 Significance of Research

The current pandemic has changed the schools we used to know and is shaping a new era of change and innovation. This study may assist policymakers in thinking about new policies while making plans for any future obstacles that might prevent teachers from doing their jobs effectively. Furthermore, this research sheds light on the potential and use of virtual training in the preparation of teachers to work in the field.

This study contributes to the body of research already available about the current changes in our educational system, while helping higher education institutes understand the effects of changes due to the pandemic while evaluating the quality and outcomes of their current training programs. It also contributes to the design of future programs to overcome challenges imbedded within teacher training programs.

1.5 Research Question

The following main question guided this study:

What changes were made by Kuwaiti higher education institutions to their practical training requirement for their teacher preparation programs due to school lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Sub-questions:

- i. How has COVID-19 impacted this in-school internship program?
- ii. How have Kuwaiti higher education institutions adapted their in-school internship programs during the pandemic when schools were closed?

2 CHAPTER

2.1 Literature Analysis/Review

The pandemic affected many industries globally due to the eventual mitigation measures. Schools, colleges, and universities shifted their learning to online platforms to continue offering instruction services amid lockdowns and social distancing measures (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). As in other countries, learning institutions in Kuwait were closed indefinitely due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 infections. This phenomenon attracted the attention of multiple scholars worldwide, with many researchers investigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teacher education programs. This chapter reviews the available literature to understand the effect of closing learning institutions on teacher preparation programs in Kuwait. The chapter is organized into four main sections. The first section presents the conceptual framework that the study employed to examine the effect of the pandemic on teachers' preparation program. The second section presents a brief introduction of Kuwait as a developing country. The third section explores the Kuwaiti educational system and teacher preparation programs in Kuwait. Finally, the fourth section discusses COVID-19 precautions and changes in the Kuwaiti educational system.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Researchers use theoretical models to explore research problems systematically. The effect of COVID-19 on teacher preparation programs can be examined using multiple theories. However, a critical analysis of the existing models revealed structural functionalism and conflict theory, from a sociology of education perspective, as the most fitting for the current study. Structural functionalism is closely associated with Talcott Parsons, who discussed the process through which humans living in a society undergo to survive. Parsons conceptualized society as a global social entity based on an integrated value system. According to him, individual persons participate in a particular social system by interacting with others in conjunction with various roles and positions they occupy in that system (Hooper, 2013). Parsons identified three functional prerequisites that any social system must meet to survive: fixing boundaries, defining relations to the external environment, and recruiting

and managing members (Hooper, 2013). These preconditions have practical implications on contemporary social organizations. Notably, learning institutions must undergo continuous modifications to remain relevant and thrive in the competitive world. Consistent with this theory, schools, colleges, and universities were forced to redefine their relations with the external environment to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many learning institutions across the globe shifted to online learning in response to the movement restrictions imposed by various governments to curb the spread of the pandemic.

Conflict theory was also incorporated into the study to situate the research topic more comprehensively. Initially conceptualized by Karl Max, the framework views society as a state of continuous conflict due to stiff competition for inadequate resources (Bartos & Wehr 2002). Practically, the theory implies that individuals with power or wealth maintain their positions through suppression. The theory's basic premise is that individuals and groups within society try to optimize their wealth and power to hold onto their positions. When applied in real-life, conflict theory provides a valuable lens to explore the effect of COVID-19 on teachers' preparation. Particularly, the model underscores the extent to which socioeconomic factors influenced COVID-19 response mechanisms among various learning institutions. To a large extent, colleges' and universities' response to the pandemic differed significantly. For example, private institutions switched to online learning more swiftly than public schools. Private learning institutions also took advantage of their extensive digital infrastructure to switch from face-to-face to online learning soon after the imposition of social distancing and lockdown regulations (Al Mulla, 2021). This example emphasizes the principles of conflict theory whereby institutions attempt to use their material strength to outperform others.

The sociology of education also provides a valuable lens to examine the effect of COVID-19 on teachers' preparation. Closely linked with the work of Emile Durkheim, the theory revolves around the impact of public institutions and individual experiences on education and its outcomes for schools (Ballantine & Hammack 2015). Professionals and scholars interested in the nexus between education and society typically incorporate theoretical perspectives based on the sociology of education. This perspective also entails education policy

issues emanating from the social context of schools (Ballantine & Hammack 2015). The proponents of the model conceptualize education as a process influenced by multiple socioeconomic and individual factors. For instance, policymakers played an instrumental role in determining the extent to which learning institutions responded to the pandemic. Thus, a swift shift to online learning was a significant indicator of an effective policy. In contrast, the sluggish adoption of digital learning signaled the inefficacy of the existing policy. Overall, sociology in education provides an elaborate framework to examine the role of individual experiences in Kuwaiti MOE's response to the pandemic.

2.3 Brief Introduction to Kuwait

Kuwait is a relatively small country situated in the Arabian Gulf Region, with about 4.420 million people, out of which about 3.04 million are foreigners, and 1.3 million are citizens (Central Statistical Bureau, 2019). The country gained independence from the British colonial rule on 19 June 1961 with Shaikh Abdallah Salim as its political leader (Crystal, 2016). Though he had a short reign until he died, Salim is credited with introducing more representative institutions in Kuwait. He successfully initiated a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution in 1962, paving the way for the country's inaugural national assembly elections in 1963 (Crystal, 2016). This more representative government system has enabled the country to make a significant socioeconomic transformation in five decades. Due to enormous revenues from the oil industry, Kuwait is considered a high-income country, and in 2019 the World Bank approximated its gross domestic product (GDP) to be \$134.761 billion (World Bank, 2020). Kuwait has a quasi-democratic system with an elected legislature and a constitution. Nevertheless, the ruling family appointed the executive government, hence providing it with the power to make major decisions (Davidson, 2011). The existence of an executive arm of government created a conducive environment for Kuwait to thrive economically.

The current economic prosperity in Kuwait is attributed to the discovery of oil in 1946. This discovery changed the country's economic fortunes by transforming it from a small economy to one of the major financial states in the world (Alonaizi, 2016). Moreover, this economic prosperity attracted many foreigners to Kuwait to

take advantage of the expansive opportunities emanating from the oil industry. Since its discovery, petroleum revenue accounts for the largest revenues for Kuwait. For example, oil represented 94% of all exports from the country in 2013 (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2013). Thus, this trend depicts Kuwait as a country that relies heavily on petroleum revenue to maintain its national budget. This revenue has also made the government the largest employer in Kuwait, providing jobs to hundreds of thousands of citizens (Alonaizi, 2016). Many people who previously worked for the private sector have migrated into public agencies to enjoy the relatively higher wages provided by the government. Kuwait is founded on a welfare state government system where citizens receive financial assistance and free access to education and healthcare (Alhouti, 2020). This system makes the country an ideal place for children to receive an education.

2.4 The Kuwaiti Educational System

Kuwait was among the first countries to introduce a formal education system in 1911 in the Arabian Gulf region (Ridge, 2014). Education is compulsory and free of charge in all public schools for children between 6 and 14 years (Alhouti & Male, 2017; Burney et al., 2013). Kuwait has many private schools, but they mainly enroll international students. About 87.5% of Kuwaiti children attend public schools, with only a few parents sending their children to private institutions to improve English language proficiency (MOE, 2015). Besides being highly centralized, the educational decision-making process in Kuwait assumes a top-down approach. Notably, the Minister of Education has exclusive authority to make major decisions in the sector (MOE, 2015). The Minister of Education chairs all activities of the Ministry's Undersecretary Council, the highest decision-making authority, with the secretary and assistants as members. Therefore, the minister has the discretion to oversee educational transformation in Kuwait.

Additionally, the minister has the power to determine the individuals who meet the criteria for being members of the Undersecretary Council (Alhouti, 2020). The ministry's top-down leadership approach is also reflected in the function of the Supreme Education Council (SEC). Established in the 1970s, the SEC is headed by the minister and comprises fifteen representatives from key stakeholders (Alhouti, 2020). The body develops

general policies related to educational affairs and approves relevant programs (Alhouti, 2020). However, the SEC has not discharged these responsibilities as envisaged due to the minister's overall power in the educational decision-making process. The minister's reluctance to call for a meeting has ensured that the council has not contributed to educational reforms in Kuwait in recent years. Similarly, other major stakeholders, such as school district leaders, principals, tutors, and parents, do not participate in the educational reform decision-making process (Alhouti, 2020). Unfortunately, lack of elaborate stakeholder participation in the decision-making process may be responsible for the poor educational outcomes in Kuwait.

Though Kuwait is credited with a 100% free education policy, previously published literature (Al-Shehab, 2010; Blair, 2009; McKinsey & Company, 2007; National Institution of Education, 2013; Winokur, 2014) reveals that the quality aspect has not been achieved. Similarly, the Ministry of Education (MOE) also recognizes that lack of quality education is a challenge that requires redress (MOE, 2008; 2014). Since the turn of the 21st century, the ministry has established several reforms and strategic programs in partnership with global bodies, such as the World Bank and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to improve the quality of Kuwait's educational system. For example, the MOE collaborated with the World Bank to establish the Integrated Education Reform Program (IERP) that aimed to develop and modernize the education system (World Bank, 2014; 2015). Theoretically, this reform aimed at enhancing education quality outcomes by addressing issues related to the curriculum, teacher training, and school leadership.

Despite the hype associated with the MOE's educational reforms, they did not achieve the intended goals due to improper implementation. According to Winokur (2014), these policies failed because the MOE did not integrate them properly into the broader Kuwait context. To maintain successful implementation, the ministry was required to ensure that the borrowed principles were implemented in tandem with factors within the local context. The reforms' failure was also attributed to their inability to incorporate economic aspect when addressing education problems (Mohamed, 2019). Moreover, the MOE's educational reforms faltered due to a lack of adequate understanding and appreciation among administrators of what constitutes quality education

(Male & Al-Bazzaz, 2015). These barriers have prevented Kuwait from transforming its education system to meet international standards.

The concept of online learning has been a recurrent topic in the Kuwaiti education sector for over two decades. However, e-learning became a reality during the pandemic when the government ordered the closure of schools. The MOE's officials started discussing the possibility of introducing online learning at the beginning of the 21st century. These efforts gained momentum in 2008 when Minister Al-Sabeeh announced plans to introduce online learning in the country within a few years to improve academic outcomes (Aljarida, 2008). However, these plans did not come to fruition until 2015, when the ministry launched its first ambitious online learning program. The then Minister of Education, Al-Easa, announced that e-learning was a top government priority to improve the country's education profile (Samad, 2016). As part of the IERP, the MOE launched one of the country's most extensive online learning program to enhance information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning. The project cost the ministry about \$84.5 million entailed distributing 80,000 tablets to all secondary school students and teachers from grades 10-12 (Al-Hamady, 2018). The main objective of this program was to integrate online learning into the classroom to improve educational outcomes through ICT.

Nevertheless, the ministry canceled this online learning program and asked teachers and students to return the tablets (Al-Hamady, 2018). The ministry also launched the Electronic Gate program to allow teachers to communicate with parents and students online. Additionally, the program comprised textbook digitization and appraising students via online platforms (Alhouti, 2020). Nevertheless, schools did not activate this program, and books were not digitized, rendering the whole initiative unsuccessful. Thus, the Electronic Gate program did not achieve the intended educational goals.

The frequent government changes, due to a complicated political landscape over the past two decades, were primarily responsible for the lack of progress in educational reforms. Every time a new government came to power, a different person was appointed to the MOE, contributing to leading instabilities (Council of Ministers General Secretarial, 2017). In addition, the ministers' lack of professional capital ensured that they did

not adopt the most appropriate policies to accompany the newly adopted educational reforms (Hargreaves & Fallan, 2012; Harris & Jones, 2018). The ministers could not decide on new educational policies, denying the country an opportunity to fully implement online learning. Overall, the MOE's attempts to shift to the online learning framework failed to take shape for about two decades.

2.5 Teachers' Preparation Programs in Kuwait

The practice of teacher preparation has a long-standing history in Kuwait, dating back to the pre-modern education period. In most cases, children acquired their education in the mosques where teachers came from different parts of the Islamic world, including India and Iran (Alonaizi, 2016). However, this trend changed suddenly after the introduction of formal education. The government invited well-educated people, worldwide, to come into the country and help to reform the sector (Alonaizi, 2016). During this period, teachers comprised self-educated Kuwaitis and foreign intellectuals who had received training in other countries before moving into Kuwait (Alonaizi, 2016). Thus, teacher preparation for Kuwaiti teachers officially began after the introduction of formal schooling. The sudden increase in students joining formal schools created a teacher deficit, forcing the government to recruit fresh graduates as teachers (Alonaizi, 2016). The government sent bright students to teacher preparation programs in Iraq to acquire further skills to ensure high-quality education. This move established a foundation for effective teacher preparation.

Efforts to ensure effective teacher preparation continued in the late 1940s and culminated in the establishment of the Teachers Institute for Men in 1949 (Alonaizi, 2016). However, this institution did not last long before it was closed due to low student enrollment in their programs. The Education Board responded by offering classes to prepare teachers for effective instructional delivery. In 1953, the board opened the Teachers Institute for Women to prepare female as educators (Alonaizi, 2016). Unlike the one for men, this institute continued to operate despite having a small student enrollment. After independence, the government opened a new Teachers Institute for Men, the College of Teachers. Subsequently, the government consolidated several Teachers' institutes into the College of Basic Education in Public Authority for Applied Education and Training

(PAAET). The PAAET allowed students to receive degrees equivalent to a bachelor's degree in education (Alonaizi, 2016), and the College of Basic Education became a vital teacher preparation tool for Kuwait in the 1990s to the present times.

The College of Education in PAAET focuses on education and comprises four colleges and several institutes. Besides the College of Basic Education, PAAET includes the College of Business Studies, the College of Health Sciences, and the College of Technological Studies (Kuwait Information Education, 2022). The College of Basic Education has 19 departments related to education. Courses at the college take four years to complete, and graduates receive a bachelor's degree in education (Alonaizi, 2016). Statistical evidence reveals that women comprise the biggest percentage of students who graduate as teachers from the College of Basic Education. For example, PAAET colleges had 27,507 registered students in 2012/13 out of which 61.1% and 38.9% were females and males, respectively (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2013). This representational difference was consistent with the general enrollment in the College of Basic Education where 17.4% and 72.6% of the population comprised male and female students, respectively (Annual Statistical Abstract, 2013).

The establishment of Kuwait University in 1966 also contributed to teacher preparation efforts (Alonaizi, 2016). Besides education, the university has another 16 colleges offering different degrees. In 2016, Kuwait University was the best educational institution in Kuwait and ranked 17th in the Arab World (Webometrics, 2016). The ratio of male students to that of their female counterparts has been skewed in favor of the latter. For example, the university reported a 1:2 ratio of male to females in the 2013/2014 academic calendar (Alonaizi, 2016). This difference in ratio was more significant in the college of education than other departments. According to the Annual Statistical Abstract (2013), the ratio between males and females in the college of education in 2013 stood at 1:9. The college of education prepares teachers in three programs.

The first category includes the undergraduate programs that focus on preparing teachers for intermediate and secondary schools in literature subjects, kindergarten and elementary schools, and intermediate and secondary schools in sciences (Kear, 2013). The programs cover different specialty areas aimed at preparing

teachers in core educational categories. The secondary category of programs comprises postgraduate qualifications where students earn diplomas in psychological counselling and teaching preparation for graduates from non-educational colleges (Kear, 2013). The last category, master's program, provides degrees in curriculum and teaching techniques, psychological counselling, educational foundation, and school administration (Kear, 2013). These programs ensure teachers have the requisite capacity to discharge services.

2.6 Covid-19 Precautions and Changes in the Kuwaiti Educational System

The COVID-19 pandemic had far-reaching implications on the educational sector in many countries globally. Kuwait announced the first case of COVID-19 in early February 2020, prompting the government to take drastic measures to prevent widespread infections (Alhouti, 2020). Lockdowns, travel bans, suspension of physical learning, and border and social gathering closures were some of the initial measures that the Kuwaiti government undertook to curb the rapid spread of the pandemic. However, on 20 May 2020 the government imposed a 21-day curfew due to the ever-growing infection rates in the country (Al-Saif, 2020). Schools and universities were the first institutions to close immediately after the announcement of the initial COVID-19 cases. The MOE believed that the closures would be temporary, at least until the Ministry of Health developed appropriate health protocols. Nevertheless, the government suspended all physical learning activities for two weeks, a few days after the MOE had made its decision (Alhouti, 2020). At this point, many educational practitioners began to realize that learning institutions would not be opened any time soon, as initially envisaged.

On 28 May 2020 the government announced a five-phased plan to resume normalcy after closing most of the sectors for several days (Kuwaiti News Agency [KUNA], 2020). Surprisingly, learning institutions were not included in the list of the organizations expected to reopen. This confusion underlined the pervasive lack of collaboration between government agencies on important issues. Parents and teachers started to air their frustrations concerning whether children would ever return to school in the foreseeable future. On 30 May 2020, the Minister of Education, Al-Harby, announced that grade 12 education would resume in mid-June via online platforms (Alhouti, 2020). However, the minister failed to outline the specific modalities and online platforms

that would be utilized for online learning. Poor planning combined with inadequate decision-making processes ensured that schools remained nonoperational for several months before they finally resumed learning via online platforms.

The MOE finally ordered learning institutions to resume, and the 2020/2021 academic year was completed through digital learning (Al Mulla, 2021). Unlike public institutions, private schools were swift to transition from face-to-face to e-learning almost immediately after the government announced closure measures. Private entities capitalized on their elaborate digital infrastructure to quickly shift to online learning after the government ordered learning institutions to suspend in-person learning processes (Al Mulla, 2021). The eventual adoption of online learning by public schools made Kuwait one of the countries globally that relied heavily on this platform to provide educational services during the pandemic. Despite this success, the MOE was still keen to resume normal in-person learning towards the end of the 2020/2021 academic calendar (Al Mulla, 2021). These plans implied that the country was not fully ready to continue with online learning as the primary mode for providing educational instruction to students.

The MOE announced the reopening of schools on 4 October 2021, marking the end of an 18-month closure (Huaxia, 2021). Besides being a relief to students, teachers were delighted to have a chance to resume face-to-face teaching. Teachers felt that traditional in-person teaching was more effective than distance learning due to the ability to supervise students and to implement the curriculum effectively (Huaxia, 2021). Unlike before, physical learning was marked by a flurry of measures meant to create a safe educational environment by observing appropriate health precautions. Notable measures include social distancing, a small number of students in each classroom, rapid vaccination programs, and continuous testing of the unvaccinated. While school resumption was a welcome move among parents, some were concerned about the cost of weekly COVID-19 tests (Huaxia, 2021). Besides tests being expensive for parents with more than one student, online learning was also associated with a myriad of challenges.

While online learning provided a temporary solution for the Kuwait educational system during the pandemic, two barriers affected its efficacy. Lack of sufficient digital infrastructure in public schools hampered the MOE's intent to roll out e-learning at the earliest opportunity. Moreover, a significant number of public schools in Kuwait did not have a functioning digital infrastructure, including official websites, email addresses, and Internet coverage (Alhouti, 2020). This trend accentuated the problematic role of poor digital infrastructure in fast-tracking the adoption of e-learning in public schools soon after the government closed all learning institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, teachers lacked the requisite skills for using digital platforms to offer teaching instructions to students (Alhouti, 2020). Collectively, these factors prevented the MOE from implementing the online learning model for several months after the official closure of learning institutions by the government. Before the pandemic, teachers could not use online platforms for teaching partly because classes lacked computers and the Internet, thus the predominant reliance on whiteboards (Alhouti, 2020). This obstacle made it difficult for learning institutions to shift to e-learning.

Additionally, the MOE's lack of implementation of online learning policies was responsible for the sluggish shift to this framework during the pandemic. Harris and Jones (2018) argue that implementation and the capability of the leaders to achieve the desired outcomes are the most important components of policymaking in project management. The MOE's inability to implement online learning policies was evident during the initial months of the pandemic. The Minister of Education failed to make appropriate decisions that could give learning institutions direction concerning the best ways of shifting to e-learning (Alhouti, 2020). Besides, the majority of MOE officials did not have sufficient educational backgrounds, hence they could not understand how to integrate new learning methodologies into the school curriculum (Alhouti, 2020). Overall, the MOE's indecisiveness hampered the process of shifting to online learning within the first few months of the pandemic.

The MOE's leadership instability has also derailed the implementation of online learning in Kuwait since 2002 (Council of Ministers General Secretarial, 2017). Between 2002 and 2015, the country witnessed multiple government changes, with 12 ministers heading the MOE during this period. These changes had an adverse

outcome on educational policy making. Every new minister who came to power advanced a different agenda and priority without building on their predecessor's work (Alhouti, 2020). Therefore, leadership instability within the MOE contributed significantly to the challenges that Kuwait experienced when shifting to online learning during the pandemic.

Furthermore, the inability to incorporate major stakeholders in the decision-making process was partly to blame for the slow shift to e-learning during the pandemic. Besides the SEC, the Minister of Education does not involve teachers, parents, or district representatives in making important educational decisions (Alhouti, 2020). Moreover, Hargreaves and Fullan (2015) underscore the importance of incorporating multiple stakeholders in the decision-making process. This approach could benefit Kuwait in its attempts to make online learning an integral part of the learning process. The MOE's inability to make effective decisions was marked by persistent top-down management where many critical stakeholders are neglected in policy making.

2.7 Summary

The reviewed literature shed deep insights into background information regarding Kuwait, its educational reforms, and changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to high revenue from the oil industry, Kuwait is considered among the countries with a relatively stable economy. Since independence, the government has earmarked education as one of its flagship priorities in making the country more prosperous. Besides being one of the countries in the Gulf region to introduce free education, school attendance for 6 to 14-year old children is compulsory and free. The majority of the Kuwaiti children attend public schools partly because they are free and perceived to be relatively equal in quality when compared to private entities. However, a few Kuwaiti parents continue to send their children to private schools to learn English. For the past two decades, the government has introduced various programs to improve the quality of education in the country. Online learning is one of the programs that the MOE wanted to adopt in the education sector to enhance learning outcomes. However, the country struggled to embrace the online learning model for many years.

The reviewed literature also unearthed critical factor impacting teacher preparation in Kuwait. The country has made significant strides in teacher training programs since the time it relied heavily on school graduates as teachers. The government established the College of Basic Education and Kuwait University to allow individuals to acquire higher education. While the College of Basic Education offers bachelor's degrees in education, teachers can graduate from Kuwait University with bachelors', postgraduate, or master's degrees. Despite proper educational preparation, Kuwait experienced monumental challenges adapting to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. The government closed all institutions of learning in compliance with the WHO regulations for managing the pandemic. The MOE's efforts to introduce online learning were futile for several months due to poor decision making and planning. While learning institutions finally shifted to e-learning, they have now reverted back to face-to-face learning.

3 CHAPTER

3.1 Methodology

Pre-service teachers' preparation programs are designed to deliver the theoretical aspects of teaching and are accompanied by a training course to implement the learned skills. Often, the internship course takes place during the last year or semester in Kuwaiti Universities. Intern students are usually placed in schools based on their civil identification address. The Public Authority for Civic Information (PACI) issues a civic identity card to authenticate the digital identities of all nationals and residents (Thales Group, 2022). This new identification card initiative was designed to revolutionize the way citizens and residents' access daily services. The civic ID card comprises a microprocessor that can host a large amount of data. Besides the holder's full names, local address, date of birth, and expiry date, the card securely stores digital certificates, enabling electronic authentication and digital signatures (Kuwait Visa, 2022; Thales Group, 2022). Thus, the card is essential in enabling residents and nationals to access government and essential services.

Universities and colleges require students to undertake intern programs to gain practical experience before graduating. Students under these programs perform the tasks of fully fledged teachers under the supervision of departmental heads and external supervisors. Interns are evaluated according to their attendance, preparation skills, class management skills, and quality of instruction. However, universities and colleges either canceled or shifted internship programs online due to the COVID-19-related lockdown and social distancing measures. Thus, the model of offering internship programs changed significantly due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. The present study examined the changes that higher education institutes in Kuwait implemented after they resumed during COVID-19.

3.2 Research Question

The following main question guided this study:

What changes were made by Kuwaiti higher education institutions to their practical training requirement for their teacher preparation programs due to school lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Sub-questions:

- i. How has COVID-19 impacted this in-school internship program?
- ii. How have Kuwaiti higher education institutions adapted their in-school internship programs during the pandemic when schools were closed?

3.3 Research Objectives and Rationale

3.3.1 Research Objectives

- i. To examine the influence of the COVID-19 lockdown on teacher preparation programs in Kuwait.
- ii. To evaluate the influence of virtual teacher education internships on the quality of teachers' classroom management.
- iii. To analyse the influence of virtual education training as a substitute for practical training on the ability of teachers to manage the conventional and unconventional classroom.

3.3.2 Rationale

Raising education achievement of students is a priority for the Kuwaiti education system, which intends to increase youth social, political, and civic life participation. However, the quality of the Kuwaiti educational system is currently under scrutiny. This study sought to produce knowledge to enhance the education for the younger generation in the wake of the prevailing pandemic. This was done to advance the development of more effective instructional materials and tools necessary to improve students' literacy and propensity for advancing education. This research contributes to promoting and sustaining an influential educational culture in Kuwait.

3.4 Data Collection Method

The present study relied on qualitative data collected from two public higher education institutions in Kuwait: PAAET and Kuwait University. The two institutions were selected due to their critical role in preparing Kuwaiti teachers. As highlighted earlier, Kuwait University offers higher learning training to prospective teachers through its bachelor's, master's, and post-graduate degrees. However, PAAET only provides bachelor's courses for teacher trainees in its College of Basic Education. Though providing different academic programs,

both institutions continue to play a critical role in equipping prospective teachers with the requisite skills to succeed in their profession. The present study obtained required data from the two institutions' curricula. These data were vital in identifying critical changes that the institutions introduced to adapt to COVID-19-related measures. The collected data also included information contained in the institutions' syllabi and official websites.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is pivotal to completing a high-quality research project. The present study utilized modified thematic analysis to analyze the collected data. This method entails a close examination of the data to identify recurring themes (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis was selected because it offered the required flexibility. In this study, the method was modified accordingly to analyze data from the chosen curricula, syllabi, and official websites. Each data set was analyzed separately to identify the emerging ideas, concepts, and patterns.

3.6 Conceptual Framework – Theoretical Perspectives

The structural functionalism theory, conflict theory, and sociology of education theories provide a solid lens to understand the extent to which institutions of higher learning in Kuwait responded to the pandemic. The MOE's decision to announce a shift to online learning is consistent with the principles of the structural functionalism theory. As emphasized by this model, the ministry was forced to announce new learning changes to ensure education survived during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, schools, colleges, and universities shifted to online learning in response to the restrictions imposed by the government to curb the spread of the pandemic.

Similarly, conflict theory can explain the underlying reasons for the differential response to the pandemic between private and public institutions. The theory attributes power and authority to the pervasive socioeconomic gaps in society. Consistently, private and public institutions' shift to online learning differed significantly. In particular, private institutions changed to online learning more swiftly than public schools. This

swift adoption was credited to the immense resources at the private institutions' disposal. Thus, these entities exploited their extensive digital infrastructure to switch from face-to-face to online learning soon after the imposition of social distancing and lockdown regulations.

Theories within the sociology of education can also help to explain the factors that led to the sluggish transformation to online learning among public entities. As established early, the proponents of this model conceptualize education as a process influenced by multiple socioeconomic and individual factors. For example, policymakers play an instrumental role in determining the extent to which learning institutions responded to the pandemic. In the Kuwait context, the Minister of Education was largely to blame for the ineffective transition. The Ministry of Education's response to the current pandemic reflects an issue impacting the lack of adequate policy changes in higher education teacher preparation programs. Inadequate planning and inefficient decision-making processes at the MOE ensured that universities remained nonoperational for several months before they finally resumed learning via online platforms. In addition, the bureaucracy of the MOE prevented teacher preparation programs from promptly shifting to online modalities. This study explored the changes teachers' preparation programs implemented to fulfill their programs' requirements.

3.7 Data Collection/Research Methods

The present study adopts a qualitative approach by analyzing available curricula and syllabi in order to identify changes made by higher education institutes to their teacher preparation programs due to the ongoing pandemic. Acquired documents included the updated policies implemented by two Kuwaiti higher education institutions, as well as available syllabi. The strategies used by Kuwaiti higher institutions to pivot from in-school internships to virtual internships during the pandemic will also be examined.

4 CHAPTER

4.1 Research Purpose

This study aimed to examine the changes that higher learning institutions in Kuwait adopted in order to continue with teacher preparation programs amid the social distance and lockdown regulations. Some teacher preparation institutions decided to shift their training programs online to adhere to the government measures while continuing their daily activities. Moreover, the prevailing low educational standards suggest the country's need for continuous teacher preparation. On 11 July 2021, the National Assembly Speaker, Marzouq Al-Ghanim, disclosed that the government spent KD2.4 on education annually, of which KD2 billion goes to paying salaries (Arab Times Kuwait, 2021). Despite this enormous expenditure, Al-Ghanim complained that the quality of education in the country was relatively low compared with countries that spent less.

Thus, this study sought to examine the specific measures that higher learning institutions adopted to ensure seamless teacher preparation during the COVID-19 period. This study explored the approaches higher learning institutions in Kuwait adopted to prepare teachers during the pandemic and to identify the key challenges. Raising education achievement is a priority for the Kuwaiti education system, which intends to increase youth social, political, and civic life participation. The present study aimed to produce more profound insights about best practices in teacher preparation during adversity to keep the educational outcomes in Kuwait high. The outcome from this study intended to shed light on the approaches that higher learning institutions could use to develop effective instructional materials and tools to improve students' literacy and propensity for advancing education. This research contributes to promoting and sustaining an influential educational culture in Kuwait.

4.2 Research Statement/Question

In achieving the intended purpose, this study was guided by the following research question:

What changes were made by Kuwaiti higher education institutions to their practical training requirement for their teacher preparation programs due to school lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Sub-questions:

- i. How has COVID-19 impacted this in-school internship program?
- ii. How have Kuwaiti higher education institutions adapted their in-school internship programs during the pandemic when schools were closed?

4.3 Discussion of the Specifics of the Study

The current study adopted a qualitative approach to examine the research question. The PAAET and Kuwait University were selected as the most suitable institutions to collect the required data. The two institutions were selected due to their critical role in preparing teachers in Kuwait. As discussed early, Kuwait University offers higher learning training to prospective teachers through its bachelor's, master's, and post-graduate degrees, while the PAAET provides bachelor's courses to teacher trainees in its College of Basic Education. Therefore, the two institutions play a critical role in offering prospective teachers requisite skills to succeed in their profession. The present study obtained the required data from the two institutions' curricula. This data was vital in identifying changes that the institutions introduced to adapt to the COVID-19-related measures. The obtained data also included information contained in syllabi and official websites.

4.4 Development of the Findings

4.4.1 The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on In-school Internship Programs

The collected data revealed that the pandemic had practical implications on in-school internship program. Like other programs, in-school internships were discontinued indefinitely immediately after the outbreak of the pandemic. Schools and universities were the first institutions to close during this period. Two days after confirming the first COVID-19 case in Kuwait, the MOE suspended all learning activities for two weeks (Alhouti, 2020). The ministry made this announcement with the belief that learning would resume once health protocols were established. Nevertheless, these hopes were dashed a few days later when the government extended the suspension for further two weeks (Alhouti, 2020). At this time, it was evident that learning would resume in due course. However, the MOE suspended learning indefinitely after the government introduced a full curfew on 10 October 2020 (Alhouti, 2020). This announcement ended in-school internship.

Additionally, the pandemic led to premature graduation of the students who were pursuing their final internship programs. The findings from the Kuwait University official website revealed that student teachers in the spring semester of the academic year 2019/2020 graduated without fulfilling their practical training requirements. Although schools resumed learning sessions via online teaching, student teachers at Kuwait University did not recommence their training during the pandemic.

4.4.2 How the Kuwaiti Higher Education Institutions Adapted to COVID-19 Disruption

Both PAAET and Kuwait University provide ideal platforms to comprehend the steps that institutions of higher learning took to respond to COVID-19-related learning disruptions. The PAAET's College of Basic Education's practical training department shifted to online learning to ensure teacher preparation continuity after the MOE suspended in-school internships indefinitely. In addition, the college issued a new evaluation sheet to assess student teachers after shifting to online courses. Student teachers did not teach via online platforms. Instead, the PAAET's practical training department developed a curriculum that required students to prepare micro-lessons and present them to their classmates. Table 4.1 depicts the new evaluation sheet that reflects their new procedures.

Table 1 The PAAET's practical training department's training curriculum

Student's Name	Assessment Criteria	First Meeting (20)	Second Meeting (20)	Third Meeting (20)	Fourth Meeting (20)	Fifth Meeting (20)	Total (100)
	Attendance (3 points)						
	Lesson preparation (4 points)						
	PowerPoint (5 points)						
	Class Presentation (5 points)						
	Peers Evaluation (3 points)						
	Total						

As illustrated in the table above, the new curriculum requires teacher students to meet several criteria to qualify for graduation. The new distributed rubric entails evaluating students on five critical areas to determine their readiness for graduation from the PAAET.

Similarly, Kuwait University undertook practical steps to adapt to the new environment. The university plays a critical role in teacher preparation. Kuwait University's Practical Training Department implemented several changes to its training course in response to the effects of the pandemic. The department introduced changes to ensure proper training for students enrolled in the Practical Education course after resuming learning in the second semester of 2019-2020.

The first change entailed the training and evaluating of students on the specific program they enrolled in before the pandemic. This change was executed by the practical training department in collaboration with the Practical Education Center and with the help of faculty members and assistant teachers. The second change comprised training student teachers under the supervision of the professor of the graduation project course taught remotely via Microsoft Teams. After being tested by the professor and students, these teams were assigned to the course division. The third transformation required the professor of the graduation project course to present the specified course lectures according to the academic schedule without modifying the timetable. The fourth change included staff from the faculty assisting the graduation course professor in administering training to students. The fifth change focused on adding the assigned faculty member or academic support staff to the assigned team via Microsoft Teams for the Graduation Project Course Division.

The sixth change comprised redefining the components of student assessment in the practical education course into the following measures:

- 1) A presentation for preparing a lesson plan with the student's audio recording to assess lesson-planning skills.
- 2) Presenting an integrated lesson (microteaching) to evaluate particular teaching competencies, using the Whiteboard and teaching aids, presentation and explanation, delivery, and lesson format. (Video recording)
- 3) Providing a live integrated lesson (not recorded) microteaching to evaluate executive teaching competencies.

The sixth change comprised undertaking training and evaluating based on the criteria established in Table

4.2.

Table 2 The Modified Training and Evaluating Rubric at Kuwait University's Practical Training Department

Phase Two	Week two	August 16-20	First assignment: Delivering a lesson preparation presentation (with the student's audio recording) to assess lesson planning skills. (10 Points)	Feedback and discussion with students	Second assignment: Submit another lesson preparation presentation (with the student's audio recording) to assess lesson planning skills. Feedback and discussion with students. (10 Points)
	Week Three	August 23-27	General discussion about the learned skills.	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.
	Week Four	August 30-September 3	The third assignment: Presenting one integrated lesson (micro-teaching) To assess teaching competencies and use whiteboards, teaching aids, and teaching skills. (videorecording) (15 Points)	Feedback and discussion with students	The fourth assignment: Presenting one integrated lesson (micro-teaching) to assess teaching competencies using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills. (Videorecording) with feedback from the external supervisor (15 Points)

Phase Three	Week Five	September 6-10	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.	Students are required to write a short report on the teaching competencies needed when implementing a particular lesson to discuss with their colleagues and supervisors.	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.
	Week Six	September 13-17	Fifth assignment: Presenting one integrated live (unrecorded) lesson (micro-teaching). To assess the execution of teaching competencies (25 Points)	Feedback and discussion with students	Sixth assignment: Presenting one integrated live (unrecorded) lesson (micro-teaching). To assess the execution of teaching competencies (25 Points)
	Week Seven	September 20-24	Final evaluation	Final evaluation	Final evaluation

The eighth change entailed requiring students to upload four files containing each assignment from #1 through #4 to Microsoft teams under the practical education course in which the student was registered. Additionally, students were required to upload the same files to the team designated for the graduation project course in adherence to the graduation professor's instructions. The ninth change underscored the need for the graduation professor to supervise and evaluate all assignments with the help of the assigned faculty member or academic support staff member. According to the tenth change, a faculty member or academic support staff member was responsible for the practical education course. These meetings were to take place outside the graduation project's lecture hours and in the morning period. These meetings aimed to provide feedback or coordinate the course work as determined by the faculty member for the graduation project. The eleventh change emphasized that assignments were to be evaluated using the modified set of competencies (Table 4.2). The last change underlined the need for the professor of the graduation project to submit the final grade sheet to the Center for Practical Education, indicating each student's score out of 100 points, including the attendance and absence data for lectures.

4.5 Summary

The findings revealed that the PAAET's College of Basic Education at the PAAET shifted to online learning to comply with the government's social distancing and lockdown regulations. Similarly, the college modified its curriculum to train teachers on preparing integrated lessons. Similarly, the Kuwait University's practical department changed its curriculum to make microteaching central to teacher preparation.

5 CHAPTER

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the changes that higher institutions in Kuwait undertook regarding teacher preparation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In achieving this goal, the study analyzed data from the official websites of the PAAET's and Kuwait University's Practical Training departments. While the current study sheds valuable light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teacher-training programs in colleges and universities, the findings should be interpreted in light of a few associated limitations. Firstly, the study relied on data obtained from two institutions' official websites to undertake a qualitative analysis. This form of data was not detailed enough to make an elaborate conclusion about the extent to which the pandemic affected teacher preparation programs. Secondly, the reported conclusions may not offer a true picture of the trends across the rest of the institutions because they were based on data from only two teacher education institutions. Thirdly, the study experienced limited access to primary data from the two institutions. Though the objective of the study was to evaluate the effects of the pandemic on teacher preparation programs from a broader perspective, only data related to curriculum change were obtained. Therefore, the lack of access to more data limited the study's ability to generate more conclusions. This chapter summarizes the findings, explores the study's significance, and outlines recommendations for future studies.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 The Effect of COVID-19 on In-School Internship Program

Like many other instances, the pandemic disrupted in-school internship programs. The reviewed data revealed in-school learning stopped as institutions adhered to the government's closure directive. Besides disrupting the standard training process, school closure led to premature graduation of higher education students, especially those in the spring semester of the 2019/2020 academic year.

5.2.2 How the Kuwaiti Higher Education Institutions Adapted Their In-School, Internship Programs After the Government Closed Schools Following the Pandemic Outbreak

The data reviewed in this study revealed that higher learning institutions introduced changes to their training curriculum to prepare teachers for new teaching models. Besides, some institutions such as the PAAET's Practical Training Department introduced online learning during the pandemic to continue preparing teachers on practical skills. At the same time, the department changed its assessment criteria to focus more on micro-teaching skills. Similarly, Kuwait University's Practical Training Department revised its curriculum to prepare students for more practical teaching skills, including integrating technology into lecture presentations.

5.3 Evaluation/Discussion of Findings

The analyzed data shed valuable light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on in-school internship programs. Like many other initiatives, the pandemic disrupted in-school internship programs. The reviewed data indicated that in-school learning and teacher internships stopped as institutions were forced to comply with the government's closure directive. Besides disrupting the standard training process, school closure led to premature graduation of students, especially those in the spring semester of the 2019/2020 academic year.

Consistent with the structural functionalism theory, universities were required to adopt new strategies to guarantee normal learning processes during this period. To achieve this goal, the MOE needed to embrace sociology of education principles in order to make appropriate decisions. The theory considers policymakers as critical actors in determining the extent to which learning institutions respond to environmental changes. Therefore, the MOE leadership, especially the minister, had the crucial responsibility of giving institutions a clear direction regarding the next course of action after the suspension of face-to-face-learning.

Additionally, the analyzed data provide vital insights into the specific changes that the PAAET's College of Basic Education and Kuwait University's College of Education introduced after the pandemic. As postulated by the structural functionalism theory that social systems adopt new changes to survive, institutions of higher learning in Kuwait moved to online learning after the pandemic. The College of Basic Education at the PAAET transitioned to online learning to comply with the government's social distancing and lockdown regulations. As

revealed in the findings section, the new curriculum emphasized the need for teacher trainees to prepare micro-lessons and to share them with classmates to hone their practical teaching skills. The new assessment criteria focus on appraising teacher students on five fundamental areas: attendance, lesson preparation, PowerPoint preparation, class presentation, and peer evaluation. As indicated in Table 4.1, each of the five criteria comprised specific scores that gauged the readiness of teacher students for graduation.

Similarly, the Kuwait University's Practical Training Department proposed several changes to the curriculum to prepare student teachers once they resumed learning in the second semester of the 2019/2020 semester. This transformation initiated by the department aligns with the tenets of the structural functionalism theory. As shown in Table 4.2, the new assessment criteria featured critical learning criteria in technology utilization for teaching.

The first criterion entailed appraising students' ability to prepare a lesson plan using audio recording. The second dimension evaluated the student's ability to present a short lecture on teaching using the whiteboard and other teaching aids and skills. The third criterion involved assessing the student's ability to use whiteboards, teaching aids, and other skills. The fourth dimension entailed asking students to write a short report on teaching competencies to share with classmates and supervisors. The fifth criterion entailed testing the extent to which learners could present an integrated live lesson using technology, such as audio or video enhancements. The final dimension entailed assessing the students' readiness for graduation by examining their cumulative score and attendance rating.

However, the public entities' sluggishness in shifting to e-learning embodies the effects of power and wealth on social systems as explained by conflict theory. Unlike public institutions, private entities transitioned to online learning quickly after the pandemic outbreak due to their elaborate virtual infrastructural resources. Theoretically, private universities took advantage of their immense resources to outshine public institutions in their response to the COVID-19-related measures.

5.4 Significance

The findings reported in the present study have practical implications for Kuwait's MOE, higher learning institutions, schools, and teachers. The results underscore the need for the MOE to develop an elaborate policy that guides learning institutions on what they should do during a crisis. As revealed in the results section, lack of proper planning led to premature graduation of students at Kuwait's College of Education. Theoretically, the affected students graduated without having acquired some critical teaching skills. As established by the Arab Times Kuwait (2021), Kuwait is struggling with low education quality despite dedicating an enormous budgetary allocation for infrastructure and salaries. Besides other factors, teacher preparation is one of the strategies that the MOE can use to ensure high-quality education in the country. However, the ministry cannot achieve this objective without ensuring flawless teacher preparation, especially during a crisis. The shift by the PAAET to online teaching implies that this new model of teaching should be an integral part of the country's education system. The MOE can contribute to an effective response to crises by introducing a policy that makes an integrated learning approach mandatory in Kuwait. The policy should provide a clear roadmap for implementation across various learning levels with reasonable deadlines to ensure success.

Additionally, the findings established in this project accentuate the need for all higher learning institutions to modify their teacher-training curriculum to make technology integration a fundamental learning component. As seen in the PAAET's and Kuwait University's practical training departments, microteaching offered teacher trainees vital skills in using video and audio tools for teaching. Similarly, colleges could contribute to the shift to an integrated learning approach by training teachers on using whiteboards for teaching. Similarly, the results reported in the present study illustrated the significance of an extensive investment in online learning infrastructure across learning institutions. The inability of the College of Education to implement online learning during the pandemic reveals that many institutions are yet to develop the appropriate infrastructure. Thus, schools, colleges, and universities should collaborate with the MOE to determine how to roll out an extensive integrated learning system.

A critical evaluation of the findings also indicated that some trends should be prevalent among learning institutions in the coming few years. As colleges continue to transform their curricula to respond to the challenges presented by the pandemic, Kuwait needs to produce more teachers with the skills for an integrated learning approach. The new training models at PAAET and Kuwait University offer students practical skills on using technologies, such as video, audio, and whiteboards. Thus, this new approach will lead to the release of more technology-savvy teacher graduates into the labor market.

As more teachers with strong technology skills enter a teaching career, education standards in Kuwait will be enhanced. Technology integration into teaching is a fundamental tool for improving educational standards. For example, teachers can use interactive boards to improve their students' ability to store knowledge, offer efficacious and active learning, and motivate students to strengthen previously discussed constructs (Kumar et al., 2022). Other scholars (Burac et al., 2019; Cacheiro-Gonzalez et al., 2019; Şad & Göktaş, 2013; Sarmad, 2016; Sadeghi, 2019) have attributed online to more positive learning outcomes among students. In this regard, Kuwait is likely to improve its educational ranking regionally and internationally in the coming years due to the expected rise in the number of teachers equipped with technology-relevant skills.

Further, technology adoption in Kuwaiti schools is likely to experience less resistance due to a higher number of teachers that are anticipated to show a more positive attitude towards this technological change. Teachers equipped with relevant skills in new technology are likely to be more receptive to a more integrated learning model than those without this basic expertise. This trend is expected to be more prevalent across various schools due to the move by colleges to incorporate technology skills into the teacher-training curriculum.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should attempt to address the limitations inherent in the present study. Notably, collecting and analyzing data from a larger number of higher education institutions is vital in understanding the association between the pandemic and teacher preparation programs better. Eventually, this approach will ensure that the generated findings are more representative of the sector. Research should also aim to undertake either

quantitative or qualitative surveys to obtain first-hand information concerning the extent to which the pandemic affected how colleges and universities prepared teachers. For example, a qualitative survey would provide a platform for researchers to conduct in-depth interviews with former teacher graduates or university representatives to better understand the problem. Similarly, a quantitative survey would allow future researchers to augment data generalizability by broadening the sample size. Unlike qualitative research, quantitative research permits a larger sample size, thus enhancing the findings' generalizability to the entire target industry. Researchers should also consider obtaining data in the same language that they intend to publish their findings to improve reliability levels. Furthermore, future studies should collaborate with the targeted higher education institutions to obtain express permission to access protected data. Overall, these recommendations will allow future research to address the weaknesses encountered in the current study.

5.6 Conclusion

The present study confirms that higher education institutions in Kuwait made significant changes to teacher preparation programs during the pandemic. Notably, they modified the curricular to incorporate microteaching into teacher training. This change was designed to enable enabling pre-service teachers to acquire practical skills in using technology in their future classrooms.

APPENDIX A
KUWAIT UNIVERSITY PRACTICAL TRAINING POLICY CHANGES

Kuwait university and the Ministry of Education work hand in hand to prepare teachers to join the work force with the needed knowledge and practice. They have a signed agreement that indicates providing the needed resources to accommodate student teachers throughout their training course. Principals, vice principals, head of departments, and school staff are all required to be part of student teachers' training semester.

Student teachers who were already placed in schools for their training course in the Spring semester of the academic year 2019/2020 graduated without fulfilling their practical training requirements. Although schools resumed via online teaching Kuwait university student teachers did not resume their training online. Kuwait university Practical training department proposed implementing the following changes to their practical training course:

Kuwait University

The plan of the Practical Education Center to complete the field training program for students enrolled in the Practical Education course for the second semester 2019-2020.

1. Students of the practical education course are trained and evaluated within the “graduation project” course in which the student is registered, according to their major. This is done in cooperation with the Practical Education Center and with the help of faculty members and assistant teachers.
2. The students of each major are trained under the supervision of the professor of the graduation project course “remotely” via Microsoft Teams assigned to the course division, which has already been tested by the professor and students during the trial period.
3. The professor of the graduation project course presents the specified course lectures according to the academic schedule without changing in terms of the number of lectures or their timing.
4. Colleagues from faculty and the academic support staff assist the professor of the graduation project course according to the attached table of names. The major and the number of registered students were taken into consideration when distributing the tables
5. The assigned faculty member or academic support staff is added to the assigned team Via Microsoft Teams for the Graduation Project Course Division.
6. The components of student assessment in the practical education course consist of the following measures:
 - (No. 2) a presentation for preparing a lesson (lesson plan) with the student's audio recording to assess lesson planning skills.
 - (No. 2) Presenting an integrated lesson (micro-teaching) to evaluate particular teaching competencies, using the Whiteboard and teaching aids, presentation and explanation, delivery, and lesson format. (Video recording)

-(No. 2) Providing a live integrated lesson (not recorded) micro-teaching to evaluate executive teaching competencies.

7. Training and evaluation are carried out according to the indicated table below:

Phase Two	Week two	August 16-20	First assignment: Delivering a lesson preparation presentation (with the student's audio recording) to assess lesson planning skills. (10 Points)	Feedback and discussion with students	Second assignment: Submit another lesson preparation presentation (with the student's audio recording) to assess lesson planning skills. Feedback and discussion with students. (10 Points)
	Week Three	August 23-27	General discussion about the learned skills.	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.
	Week Four	August 30-September 3	The third assignment: Presenting one integrated lesson (micro-teaching) To assess teaching competencies and use whiteboards, teaching aids, and teaching skills. (videorecording) (15 Points)	Feedback and discussion with students	The fourth assignment: Presenting one integrated lesson (micro-teaching) to assess teaching competencies using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills. (Videorecording) with feedback from the external supervisor (15 Points)
Phase Three	Week Five	September 6-10	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.	Students are required to write a short report on the teaching competencies needed when implementing a particular lesson to discuss with their colleagues and supervisors.	Presenting a short lecture on teaching competencies about using the whiteboard and teaching aids and teaching skills.
	Week Six	September 13-17	Fifth assignment: Presenting one integrated live (unrecorded) lesson (micro-teaching). To assess the	Feedback and discussion with students	Sixth assignment: Presenting one integrated live (unrecorded) lesson (micro-teaching). To assess the execution of

			execution of teaching competencies (25 Points)		teaching competencies (25 Points)
	Week Seven	September 20-24	Final evaluation	Final evaluation	Final evaluation

8. Students are required to upload four files containing each assignment from 1-4 to Microsoft teams under the practical education course in which the student is registered, in addition to uploading the same files to the team designated for the graduation project course and according to the instructions of the graduation project course professor.
9. The graduation project course professor supervises the evaluation of all assignments with the help of the assigned faculty member or academic support staff member.
10. A faculty member or a member of the academic support staff assigned to the practical education course can meet with students (or groups of students) outside the graduation project's lecture hours and during the morning period, "note that students of the practical education course do not have any other lectures during the morning period until one o'clock in the afternoon.". These meetings are to provide feedback or coordinate the course work or evaluation, as determined by the faculty member for the graduation project course.
11. The assignments are evaluated using the attached "lesson evaluation" form, which contains a set of competencies.
12. The professor of the graduation project submits the final grade sheet to the Center for Practical Education, indicating each student's score out of 100 points and the attendance and absence data for lectures.

7. خطة مركز التربية العملية لاستكمال برنامج التدريب الميداني للطلبة المسجلين بمقرر التربية العملية للفصل الدراسي الثاني 2019-2020.

اللية التنفيذ:

1. يتم تدريب وتقييم طلبة مقرر التربية العملية ضمن مقرر "مشروع التخرج" المسجل فيه الطالب وفقاً لتخصصه. ويتم ذلك بالتعاون مع مركز التربية العملية وبمساعدة أعضاء هيئة التدريس والمدرسين المساعدين.
2. يتم تدريب طلبة كل تخصص تحت اشراف أستاذ مقرر مشروع التخرج وذلك "عن بعد" ضمن فريق مايكروسوفت تيمز المخصص لشعبة المقرر بالفعل والذي تم تجربته بالفعل من قبل الأسناذ والطلبة خلال الفترة التجريبية.
3. يقدم أستاذ مقرر مشروع التخرج محاضرات المقرر المحددة وفقاً للجدول الدراسي دون تغيير من حيث عدد المحاضرات أو توقيتها.
4. يقوم الزملاء من أعضاء هيئة التدريس والهيئة الأكاديمية المساندة بمساعدة أستاذ مقرر مشروع التخرج وفقاً لجدول الأسماء المرفق. تم الأخذ في الاعتبار التخصص وعدد الطلبة المسجلين عند توزيع الجداول.
5. يتم إضافة عضو هيئة التدريس أو الهيئة الأكاديمية المساندة المكلف لفريق تيمز المخصص لشعبة مقرر مشروع تخرج.
6. تتألف عناصر تقييم الطالب في مقرر التربية العملية من التكاليف التالية:
 - (عدد 2) عرض تقديمي لتحضير درس (خطة درس) مع التسجيل الصوتي للطلاب بهدف تقييم مهارات التخطيط للدرس.
 - (عدد 2) تقديم درس متكامل لتدريس مصغر (micro teaching) بهدف تقييم الكفايات التدريسية الخاصة في استخدام السبورة والوسائل التعليمية وعرض الشرح واللقاء ونسق الدرس. (تسجيل فيديو)
 - (عدد 2) تقديم درس متكامل مباشر (غير مسجل) لتدريس مصغر (micro teaching) بهدف تقييم الكفايات التدريسية التنفيذية.
7. يتم التدريب والتقييم وفقاً للجدول الاسترشادي الموضح أدناه.

الفترة الثانية	الاسبوع الثاني	16 – 20 أغسطس	التكليف الأول: تسليم عرض تقديمي لتحضير درس (مع التسجيل الصوتي للطلاب) لتقييم مهارات التخطيط للدرس. (10 درجات)	تغذية راجعة ومناقشة الطلبة
الاسبوع الثالث	23-27 أغسطس-	مناقشة عامة عن أبرز النقاط المستفادة	تقديم محاضرة قصيرة عن الكفايات التدريسية الخاصة في استخدام السبورة والوسائل التعليمية وعرض الشرح واللقاء.	تغذية راجعة ومناقشة الطلبة
الاسبوع الرابع	30 – 3 أغسطس- سبتمبر	التكليف الثالث: تقديم درس واحد متكامل لتدريس مصغر (micro teaching) لتقييم الكفايات التدريسية الخاصة في استخدام السبورة والوسائل التعليمية وعرض الشرح واللقاء. (تسجيل فيديو) مع تغذية راجعة من المشرف الخارجي (15 درجة)	تقديم محاضرة قصيرة عن الكفايات التدريسية الخاصة في استخدام السبورة والوسائل التعليمية وعرض الشرح واللقاء.	تغذية راجعة ومناقشة الطلبة

تقديم محاضرة قصيرة عن الكفايات التدريسية الخاصة بتنفيذ الدرس.	كتابة تقرير قصير عن الكفايات التدريسية المطلوبة عند التنفيذ درس معين يختاره الطالب لمناقشته مع زملاءه والمشرفين	تقديم محاضرة قصيرة عن الكفايات التدريسية الخاصة بتنفيذ الدرس.	6 سبتمبر- 10	الاسبوع الخامس	الفترة الثالثة
التكليف السادس: تقديم درس واحد متكامل مباشر (غير مسجل) لتدريس مصغر (micro teaching) لتقييم الكفايات التدريسية التنفيذية مع تغذية راجعه (25 درجة) تقييم نهائي	تغذية راجعة ومناقشة الدروس المقدمة من الطلبة المعلمين	التكليف الخامس: تقديم درس واحد متكامل مباشر (غير مسجل) لتدريس مصغر (micro teaching) لتقييم الكفايات التدريسية التنفيذية (25 درجة) تقييم نهائي	13- 17 سبتمبر-	الاسبوع السادس	
تقديم نهائي	تقييم نهائي	تقديم نهائي	20 - 24 سبتمبر	الاسبوع السابع	

8. يقوم الطالب برفع 4 ملفات تحتوي على كل من التكاليف من 1 - 4 على فريق تيمز المخصص لمقرر التربية العملية المسجل به الطالب بالإضافة الى رفع نفس الملفات للفريق المخصص لمقرر مشروع التخرج وبحسب تعليمات أستاذ مقرر مشروع التخرج.
9. يقوم أستاذ مقرر مشروع التخرج بالإشراف على تقييم جميع التكاليف وبمساعدة عضو هيئة التدريس أو عضو الهيئة الأكاديمية المساندة المكلف.
10. يمكن لعضو هيئة التدريس أو عضو الهيئة الأكاديمية المساندة المكلف بجزئية التربية العملية الالتقاء بالطلبة (أو مجموعات من الطلبة) خارج أوقات محاضرة مشروع التخرج وخلال الفترة الصباحية ،علما بأن طلبة مقرر التربية العملية ليس لديهم أي محاضرات أخرى خلال الفترة الصباحية وحتى الساعة الواحدة ظهرا. تكون هذه اللقاءات إما بهدف تقديم التغذية الراجعة أو التنسيق لأعمال المقرر أو التقييم وبحسب ما يحدده عضو هيئة التدريس لمقرر مشروع التخرج.
11. يتم تقييم التكاليف استرشاداً بنموذج "تقييم الدرس" المرفق والذي يحتوي على مجموعة من الكفايات ذات العلاقة.
12. يسلم أستاذ مقرر مشروع تخرج كشف الدرجات النهائية لمركز التربية العملية موضح عليه درجة كل طالب من 100 نقطة وبيانات الحضور والغياب للمحاضرات.

APPENDIX B
THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY FOR APPLIED EDUCATION AND TRAINING PRACTICAL TRAINING
POLICY CHANGES

Distributed a new evaluation form to the teacher training department

Student's Name	Assessment Criteria	First Meeting (20)	Second Meeting (20)	Third Meeting (20)	Fourth Meeting (20)	Fifth Meeting (20)	Total (100)
	Attendance (3 points)						
	Lesson preparation (4 points)						
	PowerPoint (5 points)						
	Class Presentation (5 points)						
	Peers Evaluation (3 points)						
	Total						

The previous figure illustrates the new distributed rubrics for evaluating student teachers' enrolled in their training courses to fulfill the number of credits required to graduate from The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

المجموع (١٠٠)	الاجتماع الخامس (٢٠)	الاجتماع الرابع (٢٠)	الاجتماع الثالث (٢٠)	الاجتماع الثاني (٢٠)	الاجتماع الأول (٢٠)	مجالات التقويم	اسم الطالب/ة
						الحضور (٣ درجات)	
						تحضير الدرس (٣ درجات)	
						إعداد مادة العرض (٥ درجات)	
						إلقاء الدرس (٥ درجات)	
						التقويم (٣ درجات)	
						المجموع	

APPENDIX C
IRB REPORT



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board

FWA00000351
IRB00001138, IRB00012110
Office of Research
12201 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

NOT HUMAN RESEARCH DETERMINATION

April 11, 2022

Dear [Nour Alshammari](#):

On 4/11/2022, the IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title of Study:	The Impact of Covid-19 precautions on teachers' preparation programs in Kuwait
Investigator:	Nour Alshammari
IRB ID:	STUDY00004140
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nour HRP-251- FORM - Faculty Advisor Scientific-Scholarly Review fillable form.pdf, Category: Faculty Research Approval; • HRP-250-FORM- Request for NHSR.docx, Category: IRB Protocol

The IRB determined that the proposed activity is not research involving human subjects as defined by DHHS and FDA regulations.

IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities are research involving human in which the organization is engaged, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination. You can create a modification by clicking **Create Modification / CR** within the study.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or irb@ucf.edu. Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Katie Kilgore
Designated Reviewer

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[AQAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=STRUCTURAL+FUNCTIONALISM&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=STRUCTURAL%20FUNCTIONALISM&f=false](https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=SeY-AQAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=STRUCTURAL+FUNCTIONALISM&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=STRUCTURAL%20FUNCTIONALISM&f=false)

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