

Chapter 8

Teaching Adult Students in the Middle East

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ABSTRACT

The practice of adult education is that adult students have a great impetus to develop life skills and improve their knowledge. The purpose of this chapter is to critically analyze adult education in the Middle East by assessing its trend, differences, and similarities with the West, instructional practices and strategies, and challenges facing lecturers in teaching adult education. The increase in the number of foreign students in US universities is attributed primarily to the quality of education offered. At the higher education level, Smail and Silvera, argue that 21st-century educators should shift from authority and control in the universities to critical thinking, creativity, and project-based learning. With the world being interconnected, higher education and teaching in the Middle East will be streamlined with Western education. As such, there is expected change in the curriculum and teaching style in MENA regions with the western education system considered to be superior.

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of adult education is that adult students have a great impetus to develop life skills and improve their knowledge. Adults feel the need to acquire new knowledge and understand the benefits associated with such skills. Adult education is rooted in determining the interests and needs of adult students, which should be aligned with institutional requirements. Furthermore, their needs and interests should be reflected in the programs developed, methods of teaching, and goals. The learning experience of adults is realized with the accumulation of knowledge and skills. The purpose of this chapter is to critically analyze adult education in the Middle East by assessing its trend, differences, and similarities with the West, instructional practices and strategies, and challenges facing lecturers in teaching adult education.

In the modern Arab world, new insights have been found into adult learning, especially in the field of human rights development (Abdulaziz, 2019). The aim is to develop individuals' capacities to make decisions and take control over their life. In the Middle East, adult education is fostered on three key institutional types – service and care institutions, development institutions, and human rights institutions (Benavot et al., 2022). Within the human rights institution, participatory growth is aimed at empowering adult students on their rights and the key transformation to be reported in society. Benefits accrued from adult learning on human rights include societal progress, constructive change, and improving their living standards. The practicality of adult education is prioritized with the interest being on improving hands-on learning experiences. Civil society organizations are providing positive experiences to adults toward sustainable development. This is achieved by encouraging participatory learning among adult students and providing them with opportunities to improve their livelihood.

US universities are often held in high esteem across the globe due to the quality of education offered. As provided by Pew Research Center (2021), about 59% of the adult respondents across 16 advanced economies showed that American Universities were superior to those institutions in other developed economies. This indicates one of the reasons for the US being the number one recipient of international students from countries such as China, the Middle East, Asia, GCC, and other developed countries. In recent data provided by the Institute of International Education (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic affected the enrollment of international students with the figures falling

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