

## EDITORIAL

### **Preparing for and Reimagining Education of the Future: Towards a New Norm of Learning in the Post Pandemic Stage**

The release of this month's issue of the International Islamic University Malaysia Journal of Educational Studies (IJES) coincides with the university's return to face-to-face education in the post-pandemic (Covid-19) stage after two years of remote education via online. In our attempt to adjust and return to the previous norm of learning, this issue presents a range of studies that introduce alternative pedagogies to improve learning and attempt to provide a more equitable education for the marginalized group of the society. The International Commission on the Future of Education at the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2020 report entitled "Education in a post-Covid world: Nine ideas for public action", calls for teachers and educational leaders be given autonomy and flexibility to collaborate with students, the community, and other stakeholders.

In view of the UNESCO report, articles that focused on the main actors in any education system i.e., the teachers, educational leaders, and students are presented. Teachers' efforts to advance student-centered pedagogies are presented in articles using experimental research design. Najma and Zaharah's study investigated the effect of explicit instruction of connected speech among Libyan EFL learners while Tunku Badariah et al.'s study introduced reciprocal teaching in learning literature among Nigerian university students. Both studies indicate students' improved learning and performance particularly in the promotion of students' independent and collaborative learning. Apart from experimenting with alternative pedagogies, teachers may be moved to be empowered if they are encouraged to engage in evaluation of materials used in teaching and learning. A study by Muhammad and Khalid offered this to the English Language teachers, where they were asked to evaluate the suitability of using an imported textbook for Malaysian primary school pupils.

In addition to these forms of teacher empowerment, the need to improve teachers' 21<sup>st</sup> century pedagogic skills has become more pressing due to the pandemic. Hence, teachers' perception of the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching among Somali secondary school Islamic Education teachers was explored in Amiin and Gafur's study. The study also highlights the need to train teachers adequately in the use of 21<sup>st</sup>-century methods and approaches for student effective learning.

Realising the importance of 21<sup>st</sup> century education, many Muslim educators too have leveraged on technology to overcome the challenges of learning especially during the pandemic. They utilised technology to help expand Islamic knowledge and upskill the Muslim. The descriptive study by Alosman and Zawawi on the use of Qur'an application in understanding the meaning of words in *Surah al Fatihah* and Aishah et al.'s qualitative study on Iqra' Fast Track Rosnani (IFTaR) method of learning to read the Qur'an via online among

Muslim converts are illustration of this attempt.

The UNESCO's emphasis on 'No Child Left Behind' in education during the pandemic reflects the priority that is placed on ensuring access to quality education for the marginalized learners. Many institutions of learning use technology as the primary tool, but it can also create a gap in learning sites that lack the infrastructure to support effective remote and online learning. In this issue, articles affecting the education of a wide range of marginalized learners are presented. These studies are related to the provision of education for Syrian refugees in Turkey, the absence of educational aspiration and social mobility among the first-generation of B40 families in Malaysia, and a hypothesized model of educational strategic leadership practices (ESLP) among school leaders of at-risk schools in Malaysia. Drawing from the challenges faced by the minority in these studies, more attention and efforts must be made to help them manage these challenges while simultaneously striving to provide them with a better-quality system of education. Of the ten articles in this month's issue, the only Arabic article focused on the validation of the strategic planning model as a standard of the Total Quality Management in a selected cultural-educational Omani institution. The study recommends strategic planning practices for the Omani Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth to help achieve the Ministry's aspirations to be at par with the quality standard of reputable institutions.

As we move towards the post pandemic education, we have learned that concern for learning content is now replaced with developing skills imperative for survival during challenging circumstances of a crisis. We are compelled to acknowledge practices that may have hindered our learning progress while remain open in embracing new forms of learning. Admitting our past mistakes and adjusting to new changes in this post pandemic stage is essential if we plan to keep abreast with the rapid development of technology yet remain focus to our true aim of education. Perhaps, it is timely that we reimagine education of the future so that we can better prepare ourselves in confronting the challenges ahead. This can also be achieved if we draw lessons from the rise and decline of Muslim and other civilizations in the past, while consistently referring to the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet SAW. In doing so, we may cease to be mere followers and become leaders and innovators in education, thus reclaiming the tradition and culture of learning in Islam.

#### Reference:

International Commission on the Future of Education. (2020). *Education in a Post-Covid 19 World: Nine Ideas for Public Action*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Retrieved on May 20, 2022, at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373717>

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