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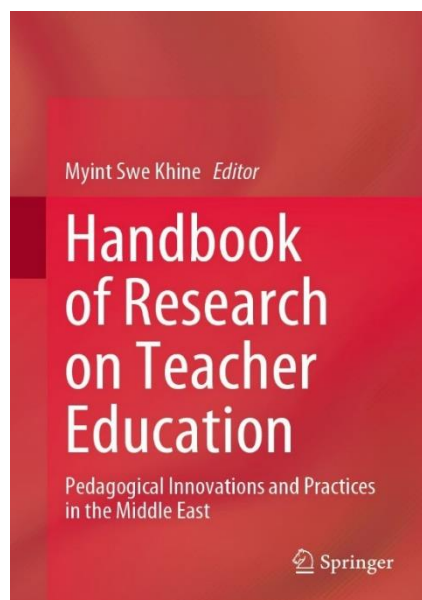
Khine, M. S. (Ed.). (2022). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Pedagogical innovations and practices in the Middle East*. Springer.

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An edited volume of 32 chapters, this handbook is a collection of review studies and empirical research highlighting teacher education programs, challenges, pedagogical innovations, and practices in 15 countries of the Middle East: Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen. It is composed of five sections: perspectives on teacher education (8 chapters), innovations in teacher education (7 chapters), subject-specific teacher education (5 chapters), redesigning teacher education—challenges and potentials (7 chapters), and teacher professional development (5 chapters). With contributions by 59 authors affiliated with 36 universities and educational institutions, this handbook brings together the most recent trends in teacher education in the Middle East as reported by expert and experienced educators in their respective regions.



Following an engaging introduction by the editor on the future of teacher education, section one highlights two approaches to reform efforts in teacher education in this region: adopting globalization and educational policy-driven reforms to improve schools in Qatar (Chapter 2) and employing thousands of expatriate teachers from English-speaking countries in the UAE (Chapter 3). Contributions also shed light on challenges for teacher education due to lack of financial resources in Jordan (Chapter 4) and

political disorder and armed conflict in Yemen (Chapter 5), which has severely affected education and schooling in that country. Also included in section one are historical accounts of teacher education and an outline of the status quo with a view to the future in Oman (Chapter 6), Kuwait (Chapter 7), and Turkey (Chapter 8).

The second section consists of seven chapters that explore teaching practices and innovations in teacher education across various Middle East regions. Examples include highlights of the innovative online practicum implemented to develop the teaching competencies of preservice teachers in the UAE (Chapter 9) and Saudi Arabia (Chapter 12) during the COVID-19 pandemic. Other chapters focus on innovations in teacher education programs to develop preservice teachers in Lebanon (Chapter 10) and in-service teachers in Palestine (Chapter 11). This section also includes detailed reports of specific innovation needs, such as incorporating inclusive pedagogy and teaching practices for preservice teachers in Bahrain (Chapter 14) and aligning teacher preparation curricula with real-world teaching contexts in Kuwait (Chapter 15). Also in this section is a description of the curriculum, instructional, and assessment reforms in Egypt, emphasizing the importance of enhancing teacher professional development to enable teachers to contribute to the reforms (Chapter 13).

The third section (pp. 266-354) covers subject-specific teacher education in five contexts in the Middle East region. Two of these contexts are related to teacher education in science, namely mathematics in Lebanon (Chapter 16) and science and biology in Palestine (Chapter 18). Teacher education in English as Foreign Language (EFL) are the focus of three chapters: EFL flipped classroom from the perspectives of EFL university students in Yemen (Chapter 17); educational systems and curriculum for EFL programs in Kuwait (Chapter 19); and online interactions between EFL teachers and collegial identities associated during online professional development in Iran (Chapter 20). These chapters shed light on significant discipline-related issues and challenges regarding teacher professional development in local settings; however, these issues are also applicable to other Middle East contexts presented in the volume.

Challenges and potentials associated with redesigning teacher education programs in the Middle East are discussed in the fourth section (pp. 356-477), which includes seven chapters. Three of these chapters (Chapters 21, 24, & 25) discuss challenges arising from conflicts and political turmoil in Iraq, Yemen, and Syria, respectively. The challenges include, among others, lack of infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, barriers to access to high-quality educational opportunities, insufficient teacher training and financial resources, and absence of an inclusive education system. Other regions with greater social and economic circumstances, namely UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Turkey, are not devoid of challenges in teacher education and have ambitious plans for redesigning teacher education in ways that align with worldwide developments. Chapters in this section address these challenges, such as sustainability, coherence among reform areas, and reform initiatives as in

UAE (Chapter 22); recruitment standards and complexity of adaptive systems as in Qatar (Chapter 23); international partnership and policy borrowing for teacher education as in Bahrain (Chapter 26); and reform models selection as in Turkey (Chapter 27).

The final section (pp. 480-584) is composed of five chapters that examine teacher preparation programs in five countries, emphasizing the importance of teacher professional development. One chapter is an evaluation of in-service teacher education programs in Palestine, calling for empowering in-service teachers (Chapter 28). Teachers' empowerment is also discussed in the Saudi context (Chapter 29), where reflection is stressed as a critical skill in teaching practices, as is teacher agency, empowerment, and engagement in pedagogical reform. Additionally, this part includes a discussion of the continuous professional development program in Kuwait, providing some suggestions for a sustainable teacher education mechanism (Chapter 32). Rounding out this section are two reviews of teacher preparation programs in Iraq (Chapter 30) and Iran (Chapter 31), calling for reconsidering teacher preparation programs in light of developments in the field.

Overall, this volume thoroughly examines teacher education programs, including preservice preparation programs, professional development, curricula, assessment, and approaches to learning and teaching with a focus on pedagogical innovations and practices. The chapters vary in scope and focus but mainly touch on teacher education in terms of current challenges related to sustainability, teacher education practices, and opportunities for innovation. Given the hostilities in Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen, as well as the development in some countries, including the Gulf countries, it is evident that teacher education in this region is in a state of flux or worse.

This volume compiles research focused on teacher education in the Middle East region, delineating the essential skills and qualifications that teachers there must possess. The discourse primarily revolves around formal educational environments, highlighting prevalent patterns, obstacles, and the origins of educational dilemmas, including the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and regional conflicts, as well as pedagogical advancements and methods. The volume concludes with proposals for ongoing professional growth and strategies to address existing impediments in the teacher training domain.

Data were collected about both preservice and in-service teacher education programs with a particular focus on preservice programs. Data were gathered mainly through document-driven analysis of the programs or extensive literature review in most contexts (Chapters 2 & 10). However, the objectives of some investigations necessitated utilizing other data collection tools, such as surveys (Chapters 15 & 17), interviews (Chapters 5 & 20), or FGDs (Chapter 32). The diversity of data sources and contexts utilized in this volume broadened its investigative reach and bolstered the credibility of its findings. However, the limited sample sizes used in some of the volume's

studies (Chapters 3 & 20) could potentially obscure the portrayal of teacher education within the contexts in focus.

Based on the reported work, it can be argued that teaching materials, methods, strategies, and modes change in response to constant technological advancement, which by itself has given ground to new learning and teaching modes and augmented realities (Al-Kadi, 2024). Like other aspects of education today, teacher education requires constant review, re-visioning, and updates (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2017). For such timely updates to take place, a quick official response is required. However, the bureaucratic hurdles and budgetary restrictions make the potential for rapid modification seem unrealistic in unstable contexts, such as in Palestine, Syria, and Yemen.

From another angle, the *Handbook* focuses on traditional approaches in teacher education although such instruction has been on the decline and replaced by more informal methods of training and professional development. Students enter the classroom equipped with their own knowledge and experiences, which may surpass those of their instructors. The contributors to this volume focused on future developments primarily based on traditional literacy practices, such as textbook-based learning, memorization, and standardized testing. However, the future is already being shaped by a variety of 21st century literacies (Al-Kadi, 2024), coinciding with the ongoing digitalization of society, where technology is integrated into every facet of life. Yet, the reality is that some countries mentioned in the volume, such as Syria and Yemen, are still struggling with technology integration into curricula.

The *Handbook* is academic in tone yet reader friendly, encompassing diverse writing styles due to multiple contributors with a range of academic backgrounds and expertise. The structure of the volume, with chapters grouped under five themes, provides a uniform arrangement with excellent readability. The potential audiences for this volume include a wide range of educators, researchers, policy-makers, teacher trainers, and education administrators with interest in teacher education in the Middle East as well as other countries. Similarly, it is a valuable resource on current issues in teacher education worldwide during an era of multiliteracies and both challenges and opportunities associated with innovation.

Despite the wealth and breadth of content, some critical issues remain unquestioned, such as conceptualizations of best practice in teacher education or the relationship between best practices in teacher education and cultural settings. Collectively, the volume suggests useful directions for further exploration with similar research tools and methods, for example, the comparative study and evaluation of different in-service teacher training programs and recommendations for improvement based on findings. The volume may interest researchers seeking to influence policy or practice, for example, how to improve the technological knowledge and skills of teachers in virtual learning environments. Individuals working in formal agencies like educational institutions, ministries of education, or professional development organizations concerned with teacher training and teacher curriculum

development, might utilize insights highlighted in the volume to design more effective teacher training programs tailored to address the needs of teachers identified in each context. The reference lists at the end of each chapter offer rich resources on pedagogy and teacher education. Along with another handbook of research on teacher education in Asia edited by Khine and Liu (2022), the volume could serve as core reading in a university course focused on global preservice teacher education.

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