

Research Article

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The Development of Education in Jordan in 2023: Challenges, Innovations, and Future Prospects

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Abstract: The education system in Jordan has undergone significant transformations over the past decade. This paper explores the development of education in Jordan in 2023, focusing on the advancements, challenges, and the role of technological innovations in shaping the educational landscape. Key factors such as government policies, economic considerations, and the role of international organizations are discussed. In particular, the study examines the integration of digital learning platforms, efforts to improve the quality of teaching, and the expansion of higher education institutions. The paper also addresses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in Jordan and how the system adapted through hybrid learning models and digital tools. Furthermore, this research highlights the current state of public and private education in Jordan, identifying disparities and opportunities for growth. Recommendations for further development are provided, including the need for more investment in teacher training and the establishment of more inclusive education policies. By focusing on the year 2023, the study provides an up-to-date snapshot of the ongoing challenges and reforms, offering insights into the future trajectory of education in Jordan.

Keywords: Education Development, Educational Reforms, Digital Learning, Higher Education.

Introduction

Education in Jordan has long been recognized as a cornerstone for national development, driving economic growth and fostering social mobility. The country's education system is considered one of the most advanced in the Arab world, with a high literacy rate and a relatively large proportion of students enrolled in higher education institutions. However, despite these successes, the educational landscape in Jordan has also faced significant challenges, particularly in recent years. These challenges are multifaceted, ranging from overcrowded classrooms to disparities in access to educational resources between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, Jordan's education system has had to adapt to a rapidly changing global context, including the integration of technology into the classroom and the need to provide students with the skills required in a knowledge-based economy.

The development of education in Jordan in 2023 is a result of continuous reform efforts by

the government and various stakeholders, aimed at improving the quality of education, enhancing digital literacy, and making education more inclusive. Over the years, Jordan has adopted several reforms to modernize its education system, with a particular focus on expanding access to education, improving teaching quality, and integrating technology into the learning environment. These reforms have been particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced the education sector to rapidly shift to online learning.

In recent years, Jordan has made substantial progress in its educational reforms, particularly in terms of infrastructure development and the integration of digital technologies. The widespread adoption of e-learning platforms and the introduction of digital tools in schools have been among the key innovations in 2023. These innovations have not only expanded access to education, particularly in remote areas, but also allowed students to continue their education during the COVID-19

pandemic and beyond. This shift toward digital learning, however, has brought its own set of challenges, including the need for teachers to be adequately trained in digital pedagogy, the unequal access to technology in different regions, and the integration of online learning into traditional education systems.

In addition to technological advancements, the development of higher education in Jordan has also undergone significant changes. Universities in Jordan have become regional hubs for education, attracting students from neighboring countries. Jordan's commitment to providing quality higher education is reflected in the growing number of students enrolled in both public and private universities. However, higher education faces its own set of challenges, such as the need to align curricula with the demands of the labor market, improving the quality of teaching, and ensuring that graduates are equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in a competitive global economy.

Despite the progress made, the education system in Jordan is still grappling with significant challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the educational divide between urban and rural areas. Students in rural areas often lack access to quality education, with schools facing overcrowding, outdated curricula, and insufficient resources. Moreover, there are disparities in access to higher education, particularly for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The Jordanian government has made efforts to address these inequalities through initiatives such as scholarships, infrastructure development, and teacher training programs. However, these efforts need to be expanded to ensure that all students, regardless of their location or economic background, have access to quality education.

In light of these challenges, it is essential to evaluate the current state of education in Jordan and assess the impact of recent reforms. This paper aims to explore the development of

education in Jordan in 2023, focusing on the key reforms and innovations that have been implemented, as well as the challenges that continue to hinder progress. Specifically, the paper will examine the role of digital education, government policies, and international collaborations in shaping the future of education in Jordan. By focusing on the current year, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the state of education in Jordan, offering insights into the progress made, the remaining obstacles, and the future prospects for the education system.

The structure of this paper will first provide an overview of the key developments in education in Jordan in 2023. This will include a discussion of the government's educational policies and reforms, as well as the role of technology in reshaping the educational landscape. The paper will then review the challenges that still exist within the system, particularly those related to access and quality. The results of recent studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education will be analyzed to understand how the system has adapted and how these changes are likely to persist in the future. Finally, the paper will provide recommendations for further development, drawing on international best practices and the specific needs of Jordan's education system.

The education system in Jordan in 2023 reflects the country's ongoing efforts to modernize and adapt to the changing demands of the global economy. While there has been significant progress in improving access to education and integrating digital technologies, several challenges remain. Addressing these challenges requires continued commitment from the government, educational institutions, and international organizations. By focusing on the specific developments in 2023, this paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the current state of education in Jordan and offer insights into

the future direction of educational reforms in the country.

Literature Review

Educational Reforms and Policy Directions

Several studies have explored the educational reforms in Jordan, particularly in response to both regional and global challenges. According to a report by the World Bank (2022), Jordan's education system has been shaped by its commitment to increasing enrollment rates and improving the quality of education. Historically, Jordan's educational policies have emphasized universal education and access to schooling for all children. However, recent reforms have expanded beyond basic access to address quality issues, such as improving teaching standards and modernizing curricula. The government's efforts to align the education system with international standards are detailed in various studies. One such example is the work of Al-Fayez and Saleh (2021), who documented how the Jordanian Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced new educational policies designed to enhance the quality of learning and teaching through teacher training programs, curriculum redesign, and the promotion of digital learning tools.

Moreover, as noted by Al-Saleh (2021), the education system in Jordan has been undergoing significant shifts to meet the demands of a knowledge-based economy. The government has introduced programs to incorporate 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy into the curriculum. These reforms were driven by the need to equip students with the skills necessary for a competitive global workforce.

Digital Transformation and E-Learning

A prominent area of reform in Jordan's education system is the integration of digital technologies. In a study conducted by El-Hmoud (2021), it was observed that Jordan had made

considerable strides in adopting digital learning platforms to supplement traditional teaching methods. This shift was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced schools and universities to pivot to online learning models. The government's investment in digital education infrastructure, such as the development of e-learning platforms, the provision of digital tools for teachers and students, and the expansion of internet access in remote areas, was critical during this transition.

While digital education holds tremendous potential, several studies highlight the challenges associated with its integration. According to Al-Zu'bi and Al-Tarawneh (2021), the rapid shift to digital learning in Jordan revealed significant gaps in teacher readiness, with many educators lacking the skills necessary to effectively teach in an online environment. Additionally, the digital divide between urban and rural areas posed a significant barrier to equitable access to online education. Many rural students, particularly those in underserved communities, struggled to access the necessary technology and internet connectivity to participate in online learning, a challenge exacerbated by socio-economic inequalities.

To mitigate these challenges, the Jordanian government has worked to improve access to technology and enhance the digital literacy of both teachers and students. According to the Ministry of Education's 2023 report, the government has increased investments in digital infrastructure and training programs for educators. However, despite these efforts, the full potential of digital learning has yet to be realized, as issues like uneven access to resources and inadequate training persist (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Higher Education and Internationalization

Jordan has a well-established higher education system, with several universities recognized as regional leaders. The literature on

higher education in Jordan highlights both the successes and challenges faced by the sector. According to Abu-Rahma (2022), Jordan's higher education system has become a significant regional hub, attracting students from neighboring countries, particularly from Palestine, Syria, and Iraq. This trend has contributed to Jordan's reputation as a center for academic excellence in the Arab world.

However, despite this regional success, Jordanian universities face significant challenges. One of the key issues is the alignment of curricula with the needs of the labor market. According to a study by Al-Haj (2022), there is a growing disconnect between the skills taught in Jordanian universities and those demanded by employers in sectors such as technology, business, and healthcare. This misalignment has led to high unemployment rates among graduates, particularly in the fields of humanities and social sciences, where there is less demand in the labor market.

In response, Jordanian universities have begun to reform curricula to emphasize fields that are in high demand, such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In 2023, several universities introduced new programs in data science, artificial intelligence, and digital marketing, in recognition of the evolving job market. Additionally, there has been a push to increase the internationalization of higher education, with universities seeking partnerships with global institutions and offering more programs in English to attract international students.

Challenges of Inclusivity and Access

One of the central themes in the literature on education in Jordan is the issue of inclusivity and equitable access. Despite the significant improvements in enrollment rates, disparities in access to quality education persist, particularly between urban and rural areas. Studies by the United Nations Development Programme

(UNDP) (2021) and the World Bank (2022) highlight that students in rural areas often face overcrowded classrooms, outdated teaching materials, and a lack of qualified teachers. Moreover, the quality of education in private schools, which tend to have better resources and higher standards, remains far superior to that in public schools, creating a significant gap in educational outcomes between socio-economic groups.

The situation is further complicated by the ongoing refugee crisis in Jordan. The country has hosted large numbers of refugees, particularly from Syria, over the past decade. According to the UNHCR (2022), the influx of refugee students has placed additional strain on an already overstretched education system. Many refugee children face barriers to education, including language differences, trauma, and legal challenges. The Jordanian government has worked in partnership with international organizations to provide education to refugee children through programs such as the 'Education for All' initiative, which aims to ensure that refugee students have access to schooling. However, significant challenges remain in terms of integrating refugee children into the national education system and providing them with the resources and support they need to succeed.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on education worldwide, and Jordan was no exception. Studies by Al-Tarawneh and Al-Maharma (2021) reveal that the pandemic forced the Jordanian education system to adopt a hybrid learning model that combined both in-person and online instruction. While this shift ensured the continuity of education during lockdowns, it also exposed deep-rooted inequalities in access to technology and digital literacy. The lack of preparation for such a rapid transition to online learning highlighted the importance of building a

more resilient education system that can withstand future disruptions.

However, some positive outcomes have emerged from this crisis. As noted by El-Hmoud (2021), the pandemic catalyzed the adoption of digital tools and platforms, with many schools and universities successfully implementing blended learning models. This experience has paved the way for the future integration of technology into education, ensuring that students are better prepared for the demands of the digital age.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to analyze the development of education in Jordan in 2023, focusing on the impact of educational reforms, technological integration, and the challenges faced by the education system. The research methodology is designed to provide in-depth insights into the various facets of the educational landscape in Jordan through a combination of primary data collection and secondary data analysis.

The primary data for this study was gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the education sector. These included policymakers from the Ministry of Education, school administrators, teachers, and students from both public and private educational institutions. Interviews were conducted with individuals who have direct experience or involvement in the ongoing educational reforms, digital learning initiatives, and policy implementation in Jordan. The interviews aimed to gather firsthand perspectives on the challenges and successes of the current education system, as well as the perceived impact of recent changes, including the shift towards digital learning and the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, secondary data was collected from various sources, including government reports, policy documents, educational journals, and publications from

international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the UNHCR. These sources provided contextual background and statistical data on the state of education in Jordan, including enrollment rates, digital infrastructure, and educational outcomes.

The data collected from interviews and secondary sources was analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method that involves identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data. This approach was chosen to explore the key issues affecting education in Jordan, such as technological integration, quality of teaching, access to education, and the impact of refugee populations on the education system. The analysis also considered the role of government policies and international collaborations in shaping the development of education.

By combining both primary and secondary data, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the educational developments in Jordan in 2023, offering insights into the current challenges and future prospects for the education system.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into the development of education in Jordan in 2023, highlighting both the successes and challenges of the country's ongoing educational reforms. The study reveals key trends in the integration of technology, the impact of government policies, the challenges posed by socio-economic disparities, and the evolving needs of students and teachers in the context of global developments.

Technological Integration in Education

One of the most significant findings of this study is the widespread integration of digital learning platforms and educational technologies in Jordanian schools and universities. The shift

towards online and hybrid learning models, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has become a cornerstone of educational reform in 2023. According to the Ministry of Education's 2023 report, approximately 80% of public schools now incorporate some form of digital learning, with e-learning platforms such as "Edmodo" and "Google Classroom" being widely used for communication, assignments, and assessments.

Interviews with teachers and administrators revealed that the adoption of digital tools has enhanced learning experiences, particularly for students in urban areas where internet access is more reliable. Teachers reported a greater ability to engage students with multimedia content, interactive lessons, and real-time feedback. Students, especially in higher education, expressed positive experiences with online learning environments that allowed for more flexible schedules and a broader range of learning materials.

However, the integration of technology has not been without its challenges. A significant issue identified during the study was the digital divide between urban and rural schools. In rural areas, schools continue to struggle with inadequate infrastructure, including limited access to reliable internet and a lack of modern technological devices. As a result, students in rural areas are often excluded from the benefits of digital learning, contributing to educational disparities across the country. Teachers in rural schools also expressed concerns about their own lack of digital literacy, with many unable to fully leverage technology to enhance teaching.

The government's efforts to address these disparities include initiatives to expand internet access and provide digital devices to underserved schools. Nonetheless, the success of these efforts has been uneven, and further investment is needed to ensure that all students, regardless of location, have equitable access to digital learning opportunities.

Challenges in Teacher Training and Development

Another significant finding of this study is the ongoing need for comprehensive teacher training programs, particularly in the area of digital pedagogy. While digital tools are increasingly available, many teachers lack the skills and training necessary to effectively use these technologies in the classroom. Interviews with teachers revealed that while some educators are highly proficient in using digital tools, others struggle with the transition to online learning, particularly when it comes to maintaining student engagement in virtual environments.

The Ministry of Education has made efforts to provide professional development programs focused on digital literacy and online teaching strategies. However, teachers reported that these training programs are often insufficient and do not fully address the specific challenges they face in implementing digital learning. Teachers in rural schools, in particular, reported a lack of ongoing support and professional development, which has hindered their ability to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices.

A key recommendation from this study is the establishment of continuous, accessible, and high-quality teacher training programs that focus not only on digital tools but also on pedagogical approaches to online and hybrid learning. Additionally, it is essential to provide teachers with the resources and support they need to confidently implement digital learning, including access to technical support and collaborative teaching networks.

Disparities Between Public and Private Education

A significant disparity identified in the results is the gap in educational quality between public and private schools in Jordan. Private schools, particularly those in urban areas, benefit from superior resources, including modern

facilities, smaller class sizes, and highly trained teachers. In contrast, public schools, especially those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, continue to face overcrowded classrooms, outdated curricula, and a lack of teaching materials.

According to the 2023 Ministry of Education report, public schools still account for the majority of students in Jordan. However, many parents are increasingly opting for private education, citing the perceived higher quality of teaching and learning experiences. This shift has contributed to the widening gap between socio-economic groups, with wealthier families able to afford private education, while low-income families rely on public schools that often lack the resources necessary to provide high-quality education.

The government has made efforts to address this inequality through initiatives such as the National School Reform Strategy (NSRS), which aims to improve the quality of education in public schools. However, the study finds that the success of these initiatives is still limited, particularly in rural areas where educational outcomes remain significantly lower than in urban areas.

Impact of Refugee Populations on Education

One of the unique challenges facing Jordan's education system is the large number of refugees, particularly from Syria, who have sought asylum in the country. As of 2023, approximately 1.3 million refugees, including 650,000 Syrian children, are living in Jordan, with many attending schools alongside Jordanian students. The influx of refugees has placed considerable strain on an already overburdened education system.

Refugee children face multiple barriers to education, including language differences, psychological trauma, and legal challenges related to their status. Many refugee students are placed in crowded classrooms, which makes it

difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention and support. Additionally, schools in refugee-hosting areas are often under-resourced, with limited access to educational materials and trained personnel.

In response to these challenges, the Jordanian government, in collaboration with international organizations such as UNICEF and the UNHCR, has developed programs aimed at improving educational access for refugee children. These programs include accelerated learning programs, language support classes, and the provision of school supplies. However, significant challenges remain in terms of integration, with many refugee students still facing difficulties in fully participating in the national education system.

Government Reforms and International Collaborations

The Jordanian government has made considerable progress in reforming its education system, with a focus on improving quality and inclusivity. In 2023, the Ministry of Education launched the "Digital Transformation in Education" initiative, which aims to enhance the use of technology in schools, promote digital literacy, and expand access to online learning resources. The government has also worked closely with international organizations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and the EU to improve educational outcomes and ensure the alignment of the education system with global standards.

International collaborations have played a crucial role in supporting Jordan's educational reforms, particularly in terms of funding and technical assistance. These collaborations have led to the establishment of pilot programs in digital education, teacher training, and vocational education. However, the study reveals that while these efforts have been successful in some areas, they have not been uniformly implemented across the country, and further support is needed to

ensure that all regions benefit from these initiatives.

The development of education in Jordan in 2023 reflects significant progress in terms of technological integration, government reforms, and international collaborations. However, the challenges of digital divides, disparities between public and private education, and the impact of refugee populations remain significant. The findings of this study suggest that continued efforts are necessary to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students in Jordan, regardless of their socio-economic background, location, or refugee status. Teacher training, infrastructure investment, and ongoing support for digital learning initiatives are key areas that require attention to ensure that Jordan's education system continues to evolve in a way that meets the needs of its diverse student population.

Conclusion

The education system in Jordan in 2023 has undergone significant reforms aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of education. These developments reflect the government's commitment to modernizing the educational landscape and ensuring that the country's youth are equipped with the necessary skills to thrive in a rapidly changing world. Despite notable progress, several challenges persist that must be addressed to ensure the full potential of Jordan's educational system is realized.

Technological integration has emerged as a transformative force within the education sector, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift to digital learning platforms and hybrid education models has provided students with greater flexibility and access to resources. However, the digital divide between urban and rural areas remains a significant barrier to equitable access, with many students in rural schools lacking the infrastructure and resources to

fully engage with digital learning opportunities. Further investments in digital infrastructure, teacher training, and equitable access to technology are necessary to address this gap.

Additionally, the disparity between public and private education in terms of resources and educational outcomes remains a critical concern. While private institutions continue to offer superior quality, public schools, particularly in rural areas, struggle with overcrowded classrooms and outdated teaching materials. Government initiatives to improve public education, such as the National School Reform Strategy, have made progress, but more targeted and sustained efforts are required to reduce these disparities.

The influx of refugee populations, particularly from Syria, continues to place pressure on the education system. While the government, along with international organizations, has made strides in supporting refugee students, challenges such as language barriers, overcrowded classrooms, and limited resources persist.

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