



Edited by
Nehme Azoury
Georges Yahchouchi

Governance in Higher Education

Global Reform and
Trends in the
MENA Region

palgrave
macmillan

Governance in Higher Education

“This book stands as a beacon, cutting through the fog with its illuminating insights in an era where clarity is often clouded by the noise of information overload. Professors Yahchouchi and Azoury’s talent in distilling complex ideas into digestible narratives is nothing short of remarkable. It’s not just a book; it’s a journey - a journey that takes you from the realm of the known to the realm of the unknown, leaving you with a richer understanding of the world around us.”

—Georges Jabbour, *The George Washington University School of Business, USA*

“Professor Azoury has done an excellent job in gathering views on the future of Higher Education in the Middle East and North Africa - which, given online learning and international partnerships, is of global relevance.”

—Jonathan Michie, *University of Oxford, UK*

Nehme Azoury · Georges Yahchouchi
Editors

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To all the passionate educators, students, and researchers who tirelessly contribute to the field of education, this work is dedicated to you. Your unwavering commitment and dedication to improving the learning experience inspire us all.

Foreword

Professors Nehme Azouri (Holy Spirit University of Kaslik—USEK) and George Yahchouchi (American University of the Middle East—AUM), along with an esteemed team of academics, industry professionals, consultants, and tech leaders, present this insightful volume on higher education reforms and trends in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The MENA region, steeped in a rich historical tapestry, is home to some of the oldest higher education institutions in the world, symbolizing the region's early recognition of the value of advanced learning. Yet, despite this illustrious heritage, the region faces unique and pressing challenges. These range from the overarching political instability and unrest to those more specific to the higher education sector, a mirror to the global dilemma but intensified by the region's distinctive societal, cultural, and political dynamics. Furthermore, the drive toward academic excellence, underscored by international accreditation ambitions, lends further significance to the reforms discussed in the book.

Acknowledging these challenges and understanding the global shift in higher education, the authors embarked on a scholarly journey to

address a gap in the existing literature. The book explores global education trends, examining them through the specific lens of the MENA region. It offers unique perspectives on several key issues: the transformation to hybrid learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of inclusion and diversity in academia, and the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in the education sector.

The authors' exploration has unfolded during a time of exceptional technological advancements, particularly in the realm of AI. Recognizing AI's transformative potential, a dedicated chapter explores its implications on higher education, with a particular focus on personalized learning. This is emblematic of the team's agility in addressing emerging trends that hold immense significance for higher education reform.

The book takes the reader through a thorough examination of the MENA region's higher education landscape, beginning with an overview of the current system, discussing the shift to hybrid learning, and diving into the challenges and opportunities faced by students and faculty. It further explores the role of women in academia, the need for curriculum reform and program delivery restructuring, and discusses new tactics and tools for enhancing interactivity, engagement, and assessment in education. The text reflects on the changing role of governance, the quality of e-education, and discusses AI's potential to reshape higher education. Finally, it provides a comprehensive exploration of inclusion and diversity in the education sector.

The authors of this work are not mere observers of change but active catalysts in their respective domains. The professors, who are alumni of leading universities worldwide, have shaped minds and influenced educational policies. The industry professionals and tech leaders have driven innovation within the largest tech firms, while the consultants and policy leaders have navigated the complexities of shaping educational strategies amidst socio-political upheavals. Their rich experiences, diverse backgrounds, and deep insights converge in this seminal work, making it a beacon for those navigating the tumultuous seas of higher education reform.

Intended for education leaders, policymakers, and researchers interested in the MENA region, this book not only deepens understanding of the region's unique educational challenges and opportunities but also

inspires potential solutions. The authors aspire for the readers to comprehend the MENA region's peculiar situation: home to the earliest seeds of higher education and currently a hub of unique challenges, requiring innovative solutions, particularly leveraging AI, for the advancement of higher education.

Their unique synthesis of perspectives, drawn from the highest echelons of academia, consulting, policymaking, and technology in the MENA region, Europe, and North America, forms a profound commentary on higher education's evolving landscape.

With its comprehensive exploration and analysis, this book contributes significantly to the global discourse on higher education reforms, and the authors hope it will stimulate impactful changes in the educational landscape.

Brussels, Belgium

Professor Eric Cornuel
President, EFMD Global

Prof. Eric Cornuel is the President of EFMD Global.

He holds a degree in Sciences Po from IEP Paris, an M.B.A. from HEC Graduate School of Management in Paris, and a DEA in strategy and management from Paris Nanterre University, together with a Doctoral Certificate in Strategy from HEC Paris and a Ph.D. in management, written on international network organizations, from Paris Dauphine University.

Prof. Cornuel started his career as an entrepreneur by setting up a hydroelectric power plant in France while he was still a student. He was also the Coordinator of the HEC Institute for Central and Eastern Europe. From 1997 to 1999, he served as Dean of KIMEP, at the time the leading business and economics school in Central Asia, where he was awarded an honorary professorship. He has taught for over 20 years at various management schools in Europe and Asia, holding the positions of Affiliate Professor at HEC Paris and Professor at the Catholic University of Louvain.

Prof. Cornuel received several awards, including, in 2018, the Magnolia Award from the city of Shanghai and the French National Order of the "Légion d'honneur". He also received awards from PRME and CEIBS, as well as the John Fernandes prize for entrepreneurship in management education and the Koźmiński University personality of the year award.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the realization of this book. Our heartfelt thanks go to the researchers, scholars, and experts who have generously shared their knowledge, insights, and experiences. We also extend our appreciation to the editorial team, reviewers, and support staff who have dedicated their time and expertise to ensure the quality and accuracy of this work. We are grateful for the encouragement, support, and guidance provided by our colleagues, friends, and family throughout this journey. Their unwavering belief in our vision has been instrumental in bringing this book to fruition. Lastly, we extend our sincere appreciation to the readers for their interest in this work. It is our hope that this book will contribute to meaningful discussions, innovations, and advancements in the field of education.

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In his role as a regional education leader at Microsoft, his pioneering efforts in applying AI and cloud technology have been transformative across the region. He has enabled Higher Education institutions, Ministries of Education, and Global School networks to harness technology in innovative ways, solving critical educational challenges. By forging strategic relationships with key institutions, he has fostered a collaborative ethos, accelerating the adoption of digital practices. His transformative work has placed these organizations at the cutting edge of modern educational practices.

Prior to his tenure at Microsoft, he was a Senior Consultant with Oxford Policy Management, leading the digital transformation strategy in response to the COVID crisis for the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education. His strategic vision and ability to foster key relationships and lead critical negotiations proved instrumental in adopting innovative cloud solutions.

In addition to his extensive industry experience, his policy acumen was honed while serving as a Policy Advisor for several members of parliament. His background in Computer Science, coupled with his graduate studies in Political Science, provided a unique perspective that blended technology and public policy, proving invaluable in drafting educational policies and laws.

Johnny's commitment to education is evidenced by his extensive experience with both K12 and Higher Education institutions. With a rich background in educational management and curriculum development, he consistently encourages a transformative shift toward digital integration in educational settings. His career is a testament to his leadership and his deep understanding of the intertwined nature of education and technology, showcasing his ability to foster meaningful change. As he continues to shape the landscape of education technology, he remains a relentless advocate for innovation and progress, driven by his unwavering belief in the power of education to shape the future.

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Prof. Georges Yahchouchi as president of the American University of the Middle East, Prof. Georges Yahchouchi is committed to excellence in higher education and expertise in academic leadership and has had a broad educational background and exposure to multicultural environments during his educational and professional career. He is Professor in Business Administration, and he received his Ph.D. in Business Administration from Montesquieu Bordeaux University, France, in 2004 and earned a Post-graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education from the University of Chester, UK in 2013. He completed the Professional Education Certificate in Institute for Educational Management (IEM Class of 2019) offered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is the author of several research papers in business, leadership, and educational management.

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1

Introduction

Nehme Azoury

Technology improvements, cultural changes, and the changing demands of students and instructors are driving a dramatic revolution in the higher education scene. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area is the primary focus of this book's exploration of these shifts, which also offers a thorough examination of the present situation and potential developments in higher education.

As higher education systems continue undergoing rapid transformations driven by student realities. Changes on both individual and structural levels must be accompanied by extensive reflection. This book provides readers with a comprehensive overview of MENA's governmental/regulatory frameworks within public and private educational institutions. The many challenges faced by universities navigating today's landscape are also examined in depth so that educators may be best

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positioned to respond effectively. Hybrid learning modalities represent one such significant development that is currently coming into view—requiring vast shifts within prevailing organizational structures/regulations/decision-making processes. This book examines how institutions may remain relevant amid ongoing advancements and evolve through reevaluation continually.

Finally, this book offers insights into “the metaverse,” a virtual realm where real-time communication could revolutionize Education as we know it. Through deep global research/analysis—including exploring governance issues—readers will gain valuable perspective regarding how this dynamic technology can shape teaching practices going forward. However, it is crucial to consider the potential and problems it brings in order to properly adopt and control this new strategy. The book offers a thorough examination of the governance frameworks and procedures required to enable the metaverse in education, giving educators and decision-makers the knowledge and skills, they need to effectively explore this fascinating new territory.

Also covered are inclusion and diversity in higher education. The necessity of developing an accepting and encouraging learning environment is becoming more widely acknowledged. The book addresses the difficulties institutions confront in fostering diversity and inclusion and evaluates the efficacy of tactics including affirmative action laws, diversity training courses, and focused recruiting campaigns.

The possibilities and issues that the current higher education system brings to both students and teachers are also covered in the book. It draws attention to how governance affects student experiences and gives suggestions for how educational leaders and legislators may successfully navigate the challenges of hybrid learning in this rapidly evolving context.

Anyone interested in the future of higher education should read this book, which is written for management and international business professionals, academics, stakeholders, deans, instructors, and administrators. It provides a thorough grasp of the situation of higher education today and its prospects for the future, with a special emphasis on the

MENA area. It seeks to provide readers with the skills they need to successfully traverse the intricacies of the higher education environment and contribute to its continued development and improvement via its thorough analysis and observations.