

Overview of Teachers' Mental Challenges, Competences, and Readiness to the Transition to Distance Learning in the UAE

Nahla M. Moussa

American University in the Emirates, Dubai, UAE

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1342-8201>, e-mail: nahla.moussa@aue.ae

Nadine S. El Khalil

American University in the Emirates, Dubai, UAE

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-8424>, e-mail: nadeenelkhalil@gmail.com

The Coronavirus pandemic outbreak has changed numerous life activities. The education sector is one of many sectors that have been heavily impacted by the pandemic. Necessitating a transition to virtual distance learning challenged educators' adaptation towards using online platforms for teaching and assessment. This study examines (1) teachers' perception of their competencies and readiness to the online mode of learning in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), (2) teachers' mental states during the Coronavirus pandemic, and (3) the relationship between teachers' perception of competencies and their mental states. A Teachers' Competency Measurement Scale (TCMS) was developed to achieve the purpose of this research study. Data was collected quantitatively from 232 teachers who have teaching obligations for grades K-12 in the UAE. The findings showed that most of the teachers in the UAE feel competent and ready for the transition to the online learning environment. The Correlation Coefficient analysis revealed that there is no relationship between teachers' perception of competencies and their mental states. Furthermore, the Coronavirus affected teachers negatively.

Keywords: teachers, competency, readiness, e-learning, Coronavirus, mental health, UAE.

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Психологическое здоровье, компетенции и готовность к переходу на дистанционное обучение у учителей в ОАЭ

Нала М. Мусса

Американский университет в Эмиратах, Дубай, ОАЭ

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1342-8201>, e-mail: nahla.moussa@aue.ae

Надин С. Эль Халиль

Американский университет в Эмиратах, Дубай, ОАЭ

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-8424>, e-mail: nadeenelkhalil@gmail.com

Эпидемия коронавируса, охватившая весь мир, повлияла на очень многие сферы жизни. Огромные изменения произошли вследствие пандемии и в сфере образования. Вынужденный переход на дистанционное обучение стал настоящим вызовом для педагогов, которым необходимо было в сжатые сроки освоить онлайн-платформы для преподавания и оценивания. Данная работа посвящена изучению: 1) восприятия педагогами в Объединенных Арабских Эмиратах (ОАЭ) собственных компетенций и готовности к онлайн-обучению; 2) психологического состояния педагогов в период пандемии; 3) взаимосвязи психологического состояния педагогов и их восприятия собственных компетенций. Для этих целей мы разработали специальный опросник учительской компетентности (Teachers' Competency Measurement Scale, TCMS). Качественные данные были получены от 232 педагогов, работающих в системе полного среднего образования (К-12) в ОАЭ. Результаты свидетельствуют, что большинство педагогов ощущают себя уверенно и готовы к переходу в цифровую образовательную среду. Корреляционный анализ показал, что чем позитивнее учителя относятся к собственной компетентности, тем меньше у них негативных переживаний в связи с пандемией и переходом на онлайн-обучение.

Ключевые слова: учителя, компетентность, готовность, интернет-обучение, коронавирус, психологическое здоровье, ОАЭ.

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Introduction

As the Coronavirus disease significantly started to spread around the globe, the world had been drastically affected. A huge sector impacted was education. Campuses were closed, and new modifications had to be implemented in the educational

system. Based on the statistics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [38], more than 1.5 million students around the world have been influenced by the school closure because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Despite all conditions, political, economic, or health issues,

according to the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every child should maintain their right of education. Although many countries ended their academic year, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was prepared to face this emergency in education, willing to transform the pandemic into an opportunity to change reality and build a better future in the education sector. The Ministry of Education in the UAE has taken the required measures to provide and facilitate remote education; schools and universities directly shifted from traditional face-to-face classrooms to online learning environment or what is known as *Virtual Education* and/or *Distance Education*. This shift has not only severely impacted students and parents, but also teachers. As H.H. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, said, "*Schools are closed, but education will never stop. The UAE is the most-well-equipped nation for smart learning*" [9].

Online learning/ virtual education is not a new concept; it had been in activation since many years within some universities and colleges. However, the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic might have shed the light on its existence and provided an opportunity for its expansion and adoption as a new era of education that is different to the traditional schooling system. Research studies showed that prior to COVID-19, the online education market was projected to hit \$350 billion by the end of 2025 [34]. Today, online education provides the privilege of a quality education that can be reached anywhere and at any time. Although the global movement towards online education was sudden and obligatory for the sake of education continuation, yet it imposed various pressures upon the educational body as well as the parents. Parents struggled to reconcile between their job responsibilities and their presence with their children for online distance learning at home. According to Pew Research Center [28], parents of children from K-12 whose children study online, satisfied about the safety measures however, they need to ensure the quality of the education services, pedagogy, and assessment. To meet all these challenges, the educational system should focus on teachers' competence and readiness to meet the needs of all students

and the challenges of the transition to the online mode of teaching.

This research paper aims to examine teachers' perception of their competencies and readiness to meet the demands of the online learning. Furthermore, the paper explores the mental challenges that teachers face in the light of COVID-19 pandemics in the UAE and how teachers' perception of competences and readiness relates to their mental states. Teachers' perception of competencies is measured by Likert measurement scale designed to achieve the purpose of this study. Teachers' mental states here refers to teachers' perception and thoughts of the transition to the online mode of learning. Findings of this research paper will reflect teachers' perception of their competences, readiness, and their perception of the transition to online learning. As the research on this area in the UAE lacks, there is a need to examine teachers' competences and mental states/perception of the sudden transition. The findings could be integrated to the education system in the UAE, so stakeholders and policy-makers can review their strategies and policies to enhance the learning outcomes. Over the global level, the findings will benefit the international educational systems that are characteristically like the UAE education system.

Literature Review

Distance Learning

Since the rise of the Coronavirus pandemic outbreak, students from early grade levels to higher education institutions have shifted from face-to-face education to the remote learning environment, familiarizing themselves with the "virtual education" and "hybrid learning". The research study of [7] showed that the COVID-19 pandemic forced education systems to shift to the online learning environment. Those who were reluctant to change, accepted modern technology as it was the only possible platform for learning during the lockdown. Despite that more than 1.5 million students have been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic [1], many schools were able to accept the transition and welcome change by implementing all required measures to continue educating all students through remote learning. Distance education as an e-learning platform

has emerged since the nineteenth century, it was offered in different formats to facilitate students learning. [4] described online learning as the ability to use a computer or any device connected to a network, that enables learning without any time or geographical limitations, which can be expressed as online learning, web-based learning, blended learning, and computer-mediated learning.

Online learning posed several debates of its advantages and disadvantages. It made students become life-long independent learners where the students discover their skills, strengths, and potentials. They can explore different resources for obtaining knowledge, rather than relying on the teacher as a single resource of knowledge. Moreover, virtual learning made learning more accessible, affordable, and flexible [7]. Under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector implemented a third mode of educational delivery: Blended learning (BL)/Hybrid learning (HL). BL/HL is a pedagogical approach that combines traditional face-to-face learning and online learning into one mixed educational mode. [32] proposed that BL can be defined as a hybrid of classroom and online learning that provides access to online courses with limited face-to-face contact. According to [29], BL refers to a wide assortment of technologies integrated into traditional face-to-face classroom activities. Moreover, BL refers to a pedagogical approach that combines the social opportunities of the classroom with modern technologies to provide enhanced active learning via the online environment [8]. Investigating the literature review, as cited in [17] revealed that there are three well perceived and highly cited definitions. The first definition was presented by [14] who defined blended learning as follows: "Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction" (p. 5). The second influencer definition was explained by [13] who defined blended learning as "the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences" (p. 96). The third well-known definition was declared by [2] who explained the concept of a blended learning course as follows: "Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. A substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online

discussions, and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings" (p. 5). Hybrid learning was found to be effective as it provides teachers with additional helpful tools to create multimodal activities that better address the diverse learning styles of students [29].

Teachers' Competencies and E-Readiness

Competencies as a term is defined in many scholars' work, it refers to a set of different skills and tools that a person acquires to enable performing a task efficiently. A group of researchers [31] of the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction (IBSTPI), explained competency as "a knowledge, skill, or attitude that enables one to effectively perform the activities of a given occupation or function to the standards expected in employment" (p. 31). A teacher's competence is thus measured by the teacher's performance in meeting the learning objectives to maximize students' learning and skills development [36]. Many research studies focus on teachers' competencies and readiness [e.g., [35], [16], [23] as cited in [27]. [16] proposed that the readiness feelings of teachers could influence their ability to perform their teaching responsibilities. [23] demonstrated that highly ready teachers will feel that they will perform properly in the classroom. Accordingly, this implies that competency and readiness are interrelated concepts; that without the teacher feeling a sense of readiness their instructional delivery process will not be as competent.

The transition and evolvement of online learning required "digital" teachers or e-tutors which refer to an individual who can interact directly with learners when they are separated geographically from the instructor to facilitate their learning process [6]. The teachers' standards of competency and readiness need to be redefined, as today the educational system faces an inevitable transition to virtual education, and teachers are required to possess new sets of skills to enable them to cope effectively with the new educational system, forming a challenging task for teachers. Therefore, new standards of readiness and competence have been redefined according to the demands of online learning. [20] defined it as the ability to utilize the e-learning resources

and technology aspects to improve the learning outcomes. [41] introduced classified two components that influence teachers' e-readiness, which are psychological and technical skill readiness. Psychological readiness refers to the teachers' mindsets which involve their attitude, confidence, and anxiety levels, whereas technical skills are the competency level of the teachers in using the computer and multimedia platforms which contributes to the success of online teaching.

According to Martin et al., (2019), faculty readiness can be defined as the perspective on the online teacher's importance and teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach online properly. Due to the nature of online teaching because online teaching is different, teachers need to accustom their attitude in using technology in their teaching practices and be confident with their abilities to perform with the usage of new instructional strategies [24]. The research study by [5] classifies eight components of e-learning readiness which are the following: acceptance, access to technology, motivation, time management, institution and policy, content, pedagogical competency, and competency of technology usage. According to [5], acceptance refers to the ease of use and usefulness of the literature. Access to technology refers to the availability and the affordability of technological tools and full-time access to them. Motivation is the teachers' willingness to teach through an online setting. Time management is the measure of how effectively time is utilized and the class is managed on an online platform. The institution and policy component indicates the clarity of regulations put forward by the ministry of education, schools, and universities that join to implement e-learning. Content is the adaptation and modification of instructional materials to online teaching and accommodation of the content to the needs of all students. For this study teachers' competency refers to teachers' perceptions of online learning, the motivation to teach online effectively, and managing the teaching requirements in the e-learning environment.

Teachers' Mental States

The World Health Organization [40] explains the definition of mental health or mental states by emphasizing the important role of hedonic and

eudaimonic perspectives as they form individuals' well-being and productivity. Well-being refers to an individual's evaluation of his/her own life from both emotional and cognitive perspectives. [21] explained that well-being contains some components such as emotional, social well-being, psychological health, and includes positive feelings indicated by happiness levels and life satisfaction. Additionally, positive perceptions towards others, our own accountability, and the forms of positive functioning are indicated by social integration, self-actualization, and coherence. An articulated definition of mental health was presented by [11] as "Mental health is a dynamic state of internal equilibrium which enables individuals to use their abilities in harmony with universal values of society. Basic cognitive and social skills; ability to recognize, express and modulate one's own emotions, as well as empathize with others; flexibility and ability to cope with adverse life events and function in social roles; and harmonious relationship between body and mind represent important components of mental health which contribute, to varying degrees, to the state of internal equilibrium" ([11], cited in [12], p. 408). Today people face many daily stressors in workplaces, traffics, social relationships, and in many other perspectives, which influence individuals' mental health. Nevertheless, individuals who maintain positive mental health experience a broad spectrum of negative emotions, such as anxiety, anger, sadness, or misery.

Research has shown that occupational stress is the most mental health disorder amongst teachers which has a predictive impact on job burnout; however, its intensity level depends on the coping style [19]. Occupational stress refers to the process that indicates where workloads and demands exceed the person's capacity and capability to cope"[3]. Burnout is the result of prolonged occupational stress that has not been managed, which could lead to emotional debility, personality deterioration, and lack of personal development ([26; 25]). [30] and [25] further explain those three components as follows: emotional exhaustion is feeling emotionally drained and overwhelmed; depersonalization refers to the feeling of detachment from oneself; lack of personal accomplishment is a feeling of cynicism; giving oneself a negative evalua-

tion on their job performance. Stress is considered the most likely trigger behind the different psychological difficulties that individuals experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stress is defined by [22] as the state when individuals realize that they are not able to cope properly with the requirements from them or with peril to their well-being. Stress processes the brain to activate feelings of fear and threat, which in result release cortisol, epinephrine, and norepinephrine into the bloodstream; consequently, placing a negative effect on the hippocampus and the cardiovascular system by affecting the blood pressure and the immune system which increases the possibility of inflammation or getting infected with a virus [15]. Therefore, this infers that individuals with high levels of stress become more vulnerable to be infected with the Coronavirus.

Research Questions

This research study was conducted considering the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of their competencies and readiness to perform distance learning in the UAE?
2. What are the teachers' mental states towards the transition to distance learning in the UAE?
3. What is the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their competencies and their mental states during the transition to the distance learning in the UAE?

Methods

Participants

Participants of this study consists of teachers who have teaching obligations in the UAE education sector from K-12 grades. A total of 232 teachers participated in this study. From the 232 sample, 97 (41.8%) are males and 135

(58.2%) are female teachers. Participants' age ranged from 24 to 65 years with ($M = 39.95$, a median of 40, a mode of 36, and $SD = 8.848$). Participants' level of education varied from bachelor's degree to Ph.D. (See table 1). Participants are a representative sample from different countries including Ireland, Egypt, Jordan, KSA, Syria, Pakistan, and many other countries as shown in (Table 2). For the mode of teaching, 109(47.0%) teachers involved in hybrid teaching, 33(14.2%) teach face-to-face, and 90(38.8%) of the sample teach remotely.

Instrumentation

To achieve the purpose of the study, a Likert scale type questionnaire, the *Teachers' Competency Measurement Scale (TMCS)* was developed to measure teachers' perception of their competencies and readiness to the online environment, and to examine teachers' mental state or well-being during the online teaching process which took place along the COVID-19 pandemics. The *TMCS* questionnaire consists of three sections; the first section includes four questions positively stated to measure teachers' perception towards their competencies and the second section contains seven statements positively stated to briefly measure teachers' mental states. All items in the two sections are measured by Likert scale ranges from 1= *strongly disagree*, 2= *disagree*, 3= *neutral*, 4= *agree* to 5= *strongly agree*. Accordingly, the participants were asked to rate the degree to which each statement describes how they perceive themselves or feel in each situation. The total score is calculated by adding up all scores for each question and then divide the total by 4 to find the mean score for the first section (teachers' perception of competency). For the second section (teachers' mental states), adding up the scores of the 7 statements

Table 1

Distribution and Percentages of Participants by Education Level/Degree (N=232)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor	135	58.2	58.2	58.2
	Master	47	20.3	20.3	78.4
	Ph D	50	21.6	21.6	100.0
	Total	232	100.0	100.0	

Table 2

Distribution and Percentages of Participants by Nationality (N=232)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Irish	18	7.8	7.8	7.8
	Egypt	60	25.9	25.9	33.6
	Lebanon	22	9.5	9.5	43.1
	Syria	16	6.9	6.9	50.0
	Palestine	24	10.3	10.3	60.3
	Jordan	32	13.8	13.8	74.1
	KSA	6	2.6	2.6	76.7
	Iraq	6	2.6	2.6	79.3
	Tunisia	13	5.6	5.6	84.9
	USA	6	2.6	2.6	87.5
	India	9	3.9	3.9	91.4
	Pakistan	11	4.7	4.7	96.1
	Sudan	4	1.7	1.7	97.8
	Iran	5	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	232	100.0	100.0	

and divide them by 7 to obtain the mean score of teachers' mental states. To interpret the scores, the higher the mean score of the first section, the positive perception of teachers' competencies and readiness to the transition to online learning. For the 7 item-section, the lower the mean score the positive the mental state the participants express. The third part includes the demographic questions, which were added to provide some demographics such as age, gender, teachers' level of education/qualifications, years of teaching experience, online teaching experience, teaching settings (elementary, high school, college-level) (See Appendix A).

Validity and Reliability

As this questionnaire was created to achieve the goal of this study, the reliability was measured by calculating the internal consistency through calculating the Cronbach's α . Data analy-

sis revealed that Cronbach's α for the first section (teachers' perception of their competence) equated to .872. For the second section (teachers' mental states) Cronbach's α = .869. for the scale entirely, Cronbach's α = .789 (See table 3). As reported by [33], the 0.70 is an acceptable range for measurement scale reliability. As the Cronbach's α results showed higher than 0.70, these findings indicate a high level of internal consistency which reflects the high reliability of the scale. For validity, the questionnaire was sent to a panel of experts in measurements and evaluation to examine the constructive and face validity, which was approved by the panel.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a Likert scale questionnaire that was designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was designed on an online surveying form (*Google Forms*), which includes

Table 3

The Internal Consistency of TCMS

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
TCMS sec 1	.872	.878	4
TCMS sec 2	.869	.862	7
TCMS total items	.789	.771	11

informed consent, a full description of the study design, and the participants' responsibilities and rights. The researchers contacted many school principals asking for remote access to teachers during their break. After getting approval from some schools, the researchers visited the schools virtually and invite teachers to participate in the current research study. The researchers explained all details about the purpose of the study and the procedure for answering the questionnaire. The invitation was sent to 15 school principals from public and private schools across the Emirates to pass it to teachers. 13 schools have accepted to host the researchers during their break. Total of 232 teachers provided a valid response. Data collection took place in October 2020 and continued for 4 weeks. Data was collected and transferred to SPSS 22.0 for data analysis and conclusion.

Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis was conducted via SPSS 22.0. Prior to the analysis, all issues of missing values, outliers, homogeneity of variance, normality, and independence have been addressed by the researchers. For teachers' competency/teaching experience, this category was measured in two dimensions: years of teaching experience in general and experience in online teaching specifically. Descriptive data revealed that most of the teachers in the UAE have long years with more

than 70% of teachers have intermediate and advanced level of experience of traditional teaching; however, most of the teachers are new to online teaching with limited experience from 0—5 years familiarity with online teaching (See Table 4 & 5).

Descriptive analysis showed that teachers in the UAE from K-12 have a high positive perception of their competence level with a total score of the TCMS first section ($M= 4.1767$, $SD= .6798$), indicating that teachers feel competent and ready for online teaching and learning as interpreted by the TCMS measurement, which is consistent with the finding of teachers' competency/years of teaching experience as shown in Table 4. For mental states, data analysis showed that teachers have a medium negative mental state with ($M=3.4015$, $SD=.90466$), which reflects that teachers perceived the Corona-virus pandemic and the transition to online learning negatively, showing the unfavorable effect on teachers' mental health as a result of the pandemic. Thus, the transition forms a challenge that teachers need to cope with. The negative effect on teachers' mental health could refer to the lack of mental support, which suggests the need for more support through offering counseling training sessions to help increase teachers' mental state and subjective well-being. An explanation for these findings suggests that a major focus was given to teachers' technical abilities and competencies, however, there is an absence of paying attention to teachers' mental states. To explore the relationship between

Table 4

Distribution and Percentages of Participants by Teaching Experiences (N=232)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0—7 «Beginner»	58	25.0	25.0	25.0
	8—15 «Intermediate»	93	40.1	40.1	65.1
	16+ 'Advanced»	81	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	232	100.0	100.0	

Table 5

Distribution and Percentages of Participants by Online Teaching Experiences (N=232)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0—5	213	91.8	91.8	91.8
	6—10	17	7.3	7.3	99.1
	15+	2	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	232	100.0	100.0	

teachers' perception of their competencies and their mental state, a *Correlation Coefficient Pearson's r* was conducted and revealed so weak negative correlation, $r = -.066$, $p = .318$ is not statistically significant (See Figure).

Discussion

Although distance learning has been available from the early 2000s, in 2020 with the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic, virtual education became the dominant learning setting across the globe to provide a safe learning environment. The UAE is one of many countries that took a rapid initiative to shift to virtual learning. As data analysis revealed, teachers in the UAE have long years of teaching experience and an acceptable level of digital literacy and technical skills, making them feel competent and comfortable to use technological tools and different multimedia platforms for teaching virtually. Teachers in the UAE showed their ability to manage their classes

remotely and were open and motivated to teach and experience virtual education, consequently indicating that they possess e-readiness. These findings agree with [18], who found that teachers are ready for online learning and their readiness depends on a few factors such as gender and teachers' education level/qualification. These findings are also consistent with [39], who examined teachers' readiness through exploring many factors such as technical skills, the experience in the online mode of learning, teachers' attitudes toward online learning, revealing that teachers had a positive attitude towards the online learning which indicated their readiness to teach virtually.

The results of this study showed that teachers are having a medium negative mental state, indicating that teachers perceived the transition negatively. This could refer to an increase in their workload, causing them to experience stress, feel tired, experience sleep issues; they cannot tolerate the pressure of their work and feel as though

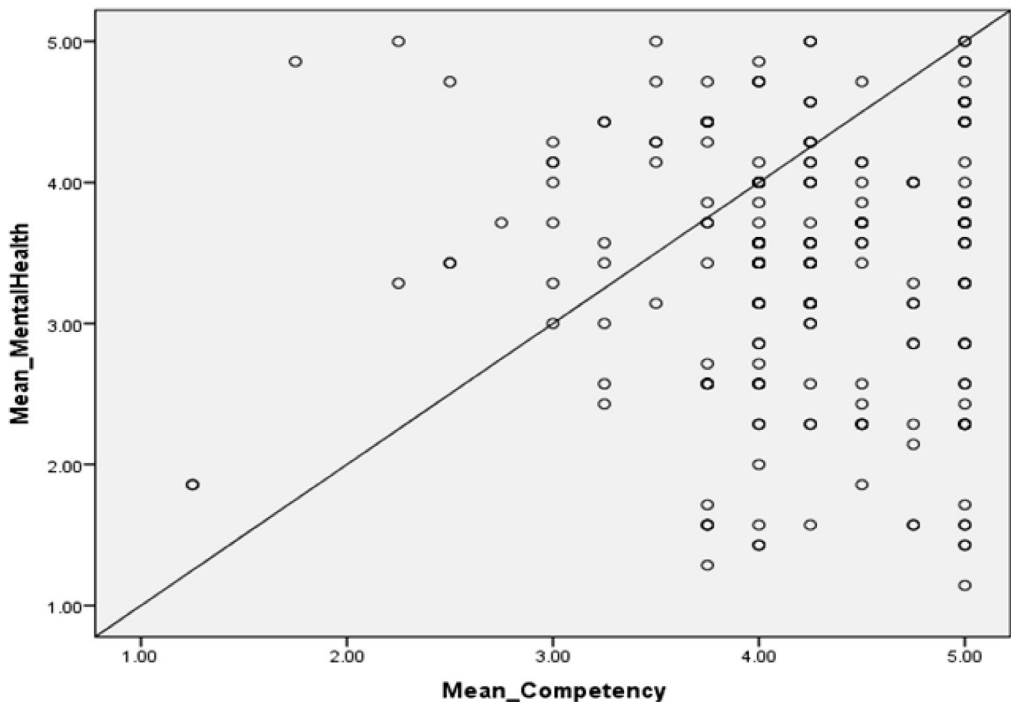


Figure. The Relationship Between Teachers' Competence and Mental Health

they lost balance in their life. These findings agree with [37], who revealed that online teaching requires a minimum of 14% more time than traditional/face-to-face teaching, which could cause stress and anxiety. These results are supported by the findings of [1], who conducted a research study to measure the psychological status of college teachers during the Coronavirus and found that 31.4% of their respondents had severe distress and 38.2% had mild to moderate distress, which reflect the negative impact of the Coronavirus on teachers when shifted to online teaching. These findings are supported by [11], who demonstrated that teachers in the UAE described the transition to online learning environment as stressful, exhausting, and more demanding than traditional teaching. Teachers had to experience a new transition in a very short period with intense training which has impacted them negatively. The findings of this study are expected during the current situation in which the Coronavirus pandemic has affected the education sector in many countries across the globe. The limitations of this study underlie in the correlational design which is not a causal relationship and the expected impact of the Coronavirus pandemic which could influence teachers' responses. The *TCMS* questionnaire was available only in English; however, the Arabic translation/version could help teachers to have a clear perception of the questions and respond more accurately.

Conclusion

This research article discussed the teachers' competencies and readiness for online learning, and the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the teachers in the UAE. Although teachers from K-12 educational settings in the UAE were found to be new to online virtual learning, the findings showed that most of the teachers feel competent, experienced with many years of teaching experience, and ready for the transition to online teaching. Teachers' positive perceptions of their competency and readiness enabled them to transit smoothly and manage their teaching duties virtually. Despite all the efforts that were done by the education authorities in the UAE to alleviate the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the education sector, the COVID-19 challenges and changes

to daily life routines influenced teachers' mental health status negatively. As online teaching requires high demand, it was perceived as a stressful teaching environment for most of the teachers in the UAE. The Coronavirus pandemic impact on teachers has expanded to cause them some mild psychological disorders such as stress, pressure, sleep disorder, and unbalanced life in general.

Recommendations

This study was conducted to explore the competency, readiness, and mental states of teachers from different educational settings in the UAE. As the results showed that most of the teachers are new to online learning, which shed the light on the importance of offering efficient training for teachers to be up-to-date and prepared for the sudden changes and development in technology within the educational sector. Teachers learn to overcome related challenges, as well as obtain the professional skills to manage, interact, and build relationships with their students through online platforms. The recommendations to the education authorities include offering an official technology assistive academic program with graduate-level courses and mandate it to enhance teachers' digital literacy and help them to be equally competent in online teaching as well as in traditional teaching. The findings of this study recommend the Colleges of Education in the UAE to integrate Educational Technologies as core courses that strengthen teachers' digital skills. Continuous teacher training programs should focus on the technical skills that are required for the online learning platform. Furthermore, the findings of the study can be used by stakeholders to develop effective interventions to look after teachers' mental wellness and instantly address their distresses and struggles accordingly. Thus, these interventions could help teachers to build a positive mindset, maintain boundaries with students and work-agendas, disconnect when necessary, self-care, and reach for counseling when needed. On the second hand, teachers need to take the initiative for self-development rather than having the directives towards change, which can be offered through well-being and counseling centers.

Based on the results of this research study, future research should focus on the influence of

teachers' training programs on teachers' digital skills and competencies. Additionally, studying the relationship between teachers' mental health and their performance and its effect on students' academic achievement. Moreover, investigations can be performed to test the different techno-

logical modalities used across the online distance learning process, how effective they are in facilitating the teaching and delivering the content, enhance the learning process, and what common challenges teachers faced during adopting these platforms.

Appendix A

Teachers Competency Measurement Scale (TCMS)

Demographics:

1. Gender (Male or Female)
2. Age
3. Nationality
4. Degree (Bachelor, Masters, PhD)
5. Years of experience (0—5 years, 6—10 years, 11—15 years, 15+ years)
6. Years of Online Teaching (0 years, 1—2 years, 3—4 years, 5+ years)
7. Teaching mode (Hybrid, Face-to-face, Online)

Teachers Competency Items:

1. I feel my technical competency is advanced.
2. I am very comfortable using technology in my teaching.
3. I feel motivated to teach online.
4. I can manage my class online regardless of any difficulties or challenges.

Teachers Mental Health Status Items:

1. The transition to online teaching increased the workload on teachers.
2. Since the transition to online learning, I have been nervous and anxious, I feel stressed.
3. I get tired easily and feel physically weak.
4. I cannot sleep properly; I am experiencing insomnia during the pandemic.
5. I struggle to balance my personal life and work duties in online teaching.
6. My job became a source of pressure, depression, and anxiety to me.
7. My work performance became less because of the transition to online teaching.

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Information about the authors

Nahla M. Moussa, PhD in Adult Education, Assistant professor, Department Chair of Education, American University in the Emirates, Dubai, UAE, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1342-8201>, e-mail: nahla.moussa@ae.ae

Nadine S. El Khalil, Bachelor of Educational Psychology & Counseling, American University in the Emirates, Dubai, UAE, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-8424>, e-mail: nadeenelkhalil@gmail.com

Информация об авторах

Нала М. Мусса, PhD, доцент, кафедра образования, Американский университет в Эмиратах, Дубай, ОАЭ, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1342-8201>, e-mail: nahla.moussa@ae.ae

Надин С. Эль Халиль, бакалавр (психология образования и консультирование), Американский университет в Эмиратах, Дубай, ОАЭ, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0654-8424>, e-mail: nadeenelkhalil@gmail.com

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