The Impact of Social Interaction, Wellbeing and Mental Health on Student Achievement During COVID-19 Lockdown in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : Prior research suggests that reduced social interaction can negatively affect well-being and impair mental health (e.g., depression and anxiety), resulting in lower academic performance. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly limited social interaction among Saudi Arabian school children since the government closed schools and implemented lockdown restrictions to reduce the spread of the disease. These restrictions have resulted in prolonged remote learning for middle school students with unknown consequences for perceived academic performance, mental health, and well-being. This research project explores how middle school Saudi students' current remote learning practices affect their mental health (e.g., depression and anxiety) and well-being during the lockdown. Furthermore, the study will examine the association between social interaction, mental health, and well-being pertaining to students' perceptions of their academic achievement. Research findings could lead to a better understanding of the role of lockdown on depression, anxiety, well-being and perceived academic performance. Research findings may also inform policy-makers or practitioners (e.g., teachers and school leaders) about the importance of facilitating increased social interactions in remote learning situations and help to identify important factors to consider when seeking to re-integrate students into a face-to-face classroom setting. Potential implications for future educational research include exploring remote learning interventions targeted at bolstering students' mental health and academic achievement during periods of remote learning.