

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Iraqi Students' Educational and Psychological Status

Authors : Bahman Gorjian

Abstract : The notorious COVID-19 is known as an illness that is caused by a novel coronavirus. Since its breakthrough, most governments have decided to temporarily close educational institutions in an attempt to reduce the spread of this disease. Distance education in Iran, like other countries, started from the beginning of the pandemic and caused the closure of schools and universities as an immediate response to control the spread of the virus. The present study followed two aims: First, to investigate if Iraqi M.A students majoring in TEFL who have been studying in Iranian universities during the pandemic believe that COVID-19 had negative/positive effects on their educational achievement; and second, to find how frequently these Iraqi M.A students have experienced psychological problems (e.g., anxiety, numbness, nightmares, nervousness) during the COVID-19. The participants were both male and female students who were admitted for M.A. TEFL courses at 4 Iranian Universities (Abadan Branch, Ahvaz Branch, Science and Research Branch, and Shiraz Branch of Islamic Azad University) for the winter academic term of 2020. The start of their classes coincided with the global outbreak of COVID-19. They were invited to take part in the present study through snowball sampling and were asked to provide their views on two questionnaires. The instruments used for gathering the data were the educational achievement questionnaire and self-rating anxiety scale. The results of the analysis suggested that the participants believed in the negative effects of COVID-19 on their education; the results also suggested COVID-19 affected participants' psychological states. The discussed findings may have implications for international students and experts interested in the online education system.

Keywords : COVID-19, distance education, Iraqi M.A. students, teaching English as a foreign language, educational impacts, psychological impacts

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