

Managing a Military Educational Organisation During Covid in Saudi Arabia

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Military educational organizations globally have seen exceptional difficulties in sustaining their operations and safeguarding the safety and welfare of their personnel due to the COVID-19 epidemic. Saudi Arabia, known for its substantial expenditure on defense and military infrastructure, is no different. The pandemic's onset led military educational institutions in Saudi Arabia to promptly adjust to distant learning and operational modifications, affecting the training and growth of upcoming military leaders. The pandemic forced military educational institutions in Saudi Arabia to shift from in-person teaching to remote learning, creating distinct obstacles and possibilities. To facilitate this change, new technology, procedures, and protocols were put into place to maintain the quality and consistency of military education and prevent the transmission of the virus among cadets and staff. In addition, overseeing a military educational institution in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 outbreak required dealing with logistical, operational, and psychological factors. Military educational leaders encountered complex difficulties that demanded creative solutions and flexible techniques, including providing essential resources and infrastructure for remote learning and supporting the mental well-being and motivation of cadets and personnel. This research proposal intends to explore the tactics, problems, and best practices in administering a military educational organization in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 epidemic. This study aims to enhance the comprehension of efficient crisis management and resilience-building in military educational institutions during global health crises by examining experiences, lessons gained, and development opportunities.

Problem Statement

The rapid spread of COVID-19 created a new testing moment for the Saudi Arabian military education system because it called for a mature analysis of the strategies used, the

present challenges, and the best approaches that the educational institutions obtained from this global health care crisis. Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Defense has increased its defense budget, amounting to \$69 billion, representing 50% of the previous year's budget. Thus, it is necessary to give a clear evaluation of the impact of the pandemic on military education within this higher budget framework (Alkhathami et al., 2023). In the pandemic, the system of military education has undergone a rapid transformation, facilitated by the emergence of "courses on the example of crises-military e-learning" as an important trend. The sudden transition to remote learning has impacted students and teachers, prompting inquiries on the flexibility and efficacy of online education within the military setting. The Vision 2030 initiative aims to have 50 percent of military purchases done locally by 2030. This target adds complications as needed to analyze how the epidemic has affected these localization efforts. This study aims to tackle the urgent issue of overseeing military educational institutions in Saudi Arabia within the current pandemic, providing an analysis of the distinct obstacles encountered and the creative tactics employed. During the pandemic, the complex aspects of military education, including the training of practical skills and traditional hands-on elements, have been greatly impacted. Restrictions in sectors that require physical activities and hands-on experience require an examination of how they affect students' learning of practical skills. The disparity between the technical and humanities disciplines in adjusting to online education is a critical factor that necessitates further examination. The research intends to investigate the views of students and instructors on the effectiveness of online military education and the possible compromises between academic achievements and the adverse social and psychological consequences mentioned. This issue statement is crucial for guiding policy and decision-making in military education in Saudi

Arabia, helping institutions to effectively address existing challenges, improve resilience, and get ready for future disruptions.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are as follows:

- To evaluate the tactics employed by military educational institutions in Saudi Arabia to support the shift from conventional in-person teaching to online learning under the COVID-19 crisis.
- To Identify the obstacles faced by military educational institutions in Saudi Arabia in addressing logistical, operational, and psychological issues during the pandemic.
- To Investigate how the COVID-19 epidemic has affected the development of practical skills among cadets enrolled in military educational programs in Saudi Arabia.
- To investigate how students and instructors view the effectiveness of online military education during the epidemic and its impact on academic results, social interactions, and mental health.

Literature Review

The military training schools have been faced with a new trend of challenges from the COVID-19 epidemic, and, therefore, their operating procedures and teaching approaches must quickly adopt the change. Despite being critically important, military educational organization management, as well as the strategies, problems, and best practices during the epidemic, should be well-grasped since the country has a large portion of military and defense investments. The literature review will analyze the findings of previous studies and academic publications on the management of crises in military education, on the impact of the pandemic on teaching approaches, and on the adaptation of military education training programs for online learning.

Crisis Management in Military Education

In the field of military education, crisis management refers to the proactive identification, mitigation, and response to issues that pose a threat to the continuity and efficacy of educational programs inside military institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the imperative of crisis management in military education by forcing military educational institutions to reconsider their conventional approaches and adopt new ones to respond to the crisis and increase the probability of success during operations (Kirchner & Yelich Biniecki, 2022). In their article entitled "The Role of Military Crisis Management During Military Operations in Today's Changing World," Bundy et al. (2017) emphasized the role of successful crisis management in military organizations by stressing the requirements of flexibility, resilience, and adaptability in the face of disruptions that cannot be foreseen. The literature underlines the value of good crisis management in military organizations. Military educational institutions are accustomed to operating in contexts that are dynamic and uncertain, where crises can erupt quickly and grow rapidly. This is because of the nature of the institutions within the military. It is thus important that military leaders and educators are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to safeguard the mission objectives while simultaneously working to alleviate stress among victims (Leavy et al., 2021).

Based on the opinion of Szczepański and Pacer (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic created unparalleled threats to military instruction. These challenges required institutions to swiftly adapt to distant learning modes and develop stringent regulations for health and safety inside the military. Suddenly, switching to online instruction presented several obstacles, including those related to technology, pedagogy, and logistics. As a result, creative ways to deliver the curriculum and the involvement of students were required (Maciej, 2022). Furthermore, the

pandemic brought to light the importance of good communication and coordination among military officials, educators, and stakeholders to guarantee a cohesive and unified response to crisis circumstances (Kirchner & Yelich Biniecki, 2022).

To promote the continuity of operations and to enhance students' skills, military educational institutions have adopted technology-supported cyberlearning platforms and virtual training environments as a means to overcome the problems that resulted from the pandemic (Leavy et al., 2021). Szczepański and Pacer (2021) asserted that the employment of simulation software, virtual reality technology, and e-learning platforms has facilitated military organizations to duplicate real-world scenarios, conduct virtual training, and provide learning information remotely. (Bundy et al., 2017) Hence, in the future, it is highlighted that the literature centers upon periodic research and assessment as a way of studying, summarizing, and advancing the best practices in crisis management and educational continuity within military institutions. Military commanders and trainers can enhance the readiness, resilience, and adaptability parameters in the face of future crises by making use of lessons learned from the past and re-thinking the COVID-19 case. In the face of uncertainties, more agile and cross-functional strategies need to be adopted to prioritize the health and education of military personnel to ensure effective crisis management within the military education domain.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Educational Practices

COVID-19 has disrupted education worldwide, especially in military schools. While schools, colleges, and universities were closed to quarantine the virus, educational systems had to quickly adapt to virtual learning (Tadesse & Muluye, 2020). This abrupt transition presented considerable challenges to military educational systems, which have traditionally focused on hands-on, practical training (Bularca et al., 2021). Educational institutions have had to reconsider

their instructional methodologies, infrastructure, and organizational support systems due to the pandemic. Spinello et al. (2021) found that military educational institutions, like civilian ones, struggled to maintain education while managing remote learning. The sudden switch from traditional classrooms to virtual platforms caused logistics and pedagogical issues for teachers and students (Bularca et al., 2021). Tadesse and Muluye's 2020 research found that restricted technology, internet connectivity, and student and staff technical skills are the biggest barriers to online education.

In fields that need hands-on training and practical abilities, education quality and effectiveness have been questioned (Carroll, 2018). This is especially true in increasingly popular virtual learning environments. Military students rely heavily on practical activities and simulations to build crucial leadership and decision-making skills (Bularca et al., 2021). Military schools could not conduct fieldwork or in-person training because of the pandemic. They have to find other ways to give kids hands-on learning experiences. Tadesse and Muluye (2020) found that the pandemic revealed educational resource and support service inequities, particularly in underdeveloped nations with limited infrastructure and technology. Due to a lack of network infrastructure, computers, and internet access, distant learning was difficult in these locations. As a result, educational institutions had to innovate to give equal access to education and help students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds (Spinello et al., 2021).

Military-affiliated schools adapted to the pandemic in many ways. This includes the rapid implementation of digital learning platforms, the creation of online teaching resources, and staff training and assistance to use technology effectively. Despite attempts, the transition from traditional to virtual learning is still ongoing, and educational institutions are always adjusting their techniques to meet the changing needs of students and teachers.

Adaptation of Military Training Programs to Remote Learning

During the COVID-19 pandemic, military training has undergone some crucial transitions. Therefore, institutions have had to modify their policies and procedures in order to fit the constraints imposed by distance learning. The research work of Bularca et al. (2021) regarding the effect of the pandemic on the acquisition of practical skills in military education was aimed at highlighting the difficulties both students and the military face and the need to adapt military education to the new reality. At the "Nicolae Bălcescu" Land Forces Academy in Romania, a total of 288 pupils were given a questionnaire as part of the research project, which utilized a quantitative methodology (Bularca et al., 2021). After analyzing the information at hand, it was evident that students experienced difficulties while attempting to answer the academic questions during the pandemic and where the questions required practical involvement. What is more significant is that in the research, it was proven that the effectiveness of the training program for future officers depends on the balance between that part of the research that contains theoretical and practical aspects. The former one is not less important, but still, the development of leadership skills is a very crucial task.

The transition to distant learning has been successfully handled by military educational institutions as a response to the limits imposed by the pandemic (Bodziany, 2021). This has resulted in the development of "crises-military e-learning" (Cmel) (Bodziany, 2021). Quinn et al. (2022) shed insight into how military psychiatry training evolved throughout the pandemic. This study demonstrates that the military is capable of pivoting and maintaining high educational standards even when faced with adverse conditions. This exemplifies the extraordinary flexibility of military psychiatry in modifying the teaching focus amid a global pandemic. It also demonstrates the military's dedication to meeting the educational and medical needs of

individual service personnel (Quinn et al., 2022). The findings of these studies together highlight the importance of military education undergoing a process of evolution and incorporating modern approaches, such as e-learning and virtual platforms, to guarantee the ongoing growth of key skills and education among military personnel during times of crisis.

Challenges and Opportunities in Military Education During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic presented both complications and opportunities for military teaching around the world. One of the main problems was the sudden shift to online training, which required a rapid change in the framework of military education to protect the quality of training programs (Keys, 2022). Considering that military education is heavily dependent on face-to-face interaction, role-playing, and practical exercises, Lehaci et al. (2020) highlighted the specific obstacles that are encountered by this field of study. As a result of the transition to online platforms, issues have been raised regarding the effectiveness of virtual learning environments in the development of important military competencies and leadership skills. To successfully navigate these hurdles, educational institutions within the military were required to maintain the quality and standard of their training programs (Lehaci et al., 2020).

Despite the difficulties, the pandemic also gave chances for military education to innovate and adapt to new circumstances. During the pandemic, Keys (2022) emphasized the successful use of online training for professional military education courses offered by the Air Force. According to the findings of the study, students generally fared better in online classrooms compared to in-person instruction. This finding suggests that online platforms have the potential to improve learning outcomes in specific settings. A more inclusive and accessible approach to education is shown by the fact that disciplines have been eliminated as a result of the shift toward remote learning (Keys, 2022). These findings can be utilized by decision-makers in

the military to investigate the advantages of online learning environments and to contemplate the possibility of incorporating them into future educational initiatives.

In addition, the pandemic brought to light the significance of resiliency and adaptation in the academic curriculum of the military. To mitigate disruptions brought about by health hazards and logistical constraints, institutions were required to build contingency plans and adaptive instructional techniques (Wilén, 2021). A reevaluation of traditional teaching approaches was encouraged as a result of the crisis, and discussions were sparked regarding the role that technology plays in strengthening educational resilience and preparedness for future problems. To improve their capacity to provide high-quality training while successfully addressing increasing risks and uncertainties in the global scene, military educational organizations can boost their capacity to do so by embracing creative techniques and using technological breakthroughs.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research will use a mixed method to cover the politics, obstacles, and success strategies for the management of military education in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The method will apply both quantitative and qualitative methods to collate data from many sources and provide an understanding of the phenomenon in general. The research strategy will have two primary phases: data collection and interpretation. Quantitative data will be gathered through organized surveys given to students, instructors, and administrative personnel in military educational institutions throughout Saudi Arabia during the data collection period. The survey instruments will obtain demographic details, perceptions of online learning effectiveness, hurdles encountered during the transition to remote learning, and suggested

improvements. Semi-structured interviews will be carried out with decision-makers, educators, and military commanders whose views, experiences, and processes of decision-making are needed during the epidemic. We will use stratified random sampling to achieve representation across the military branches, educational levels, and geographical regions of Saudi Arabia.

During the analysis phase, descriptive and inferential statistical approaches will be applied to quantitative data to discover patterns, trends, and relationships in the data. The data extracted from the survey will be analyzed using statistical tools like SPSS or R, producing summary statistics, frequency distributions, and cross-tabulations. Thematic analysis will be conducted on qualitative data obtained from interviews to detect themes and patterns as well as any diversity in the responses of the participants. Bringing together qualitative and quantitative data will reproduce a full picture of strategies, problems, and best practices put in place to solve educational problems in the military organizations in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 outbreak. Through the use of multiple data sources, the accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness of the research results will greatly improve, and the issues of crisis management and resilience establishment in the armed forces educational system will be better understood.

Participants

The study will include a varied group of participants from military educational institutions around Saudi Arabia, including both students and faculty personnel. The target market will consist of cadets in military training programs, instructors delivering curriculum, and administrative staff overseeing educational activities. The estimated sample size is approximately 100 individuals, representing different branches of the military, educational levels, and geographic areas in Saudi Arabia. Participants will be chosen using stratified random sampling to guarantee a diverse representation of demographic and professional traits. Cadets

will range from entry-level recruits to advanced training programs in military education, while teachers will have varying levels of teaching experience and subject area competence.

Administrative staff will consist of individuals in charge of organizing logistical support, enforcing educational policies, and overseeing institutional resources. The study seeks to obtain a thorough understanding of the problems, methods, and best practices in managing military education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia by involving a wide spectrum of individuals.

Data Collection

The study will use a mixed-methods approach to collect thorough insights on the strategies, problems, and best practices in managing military education during the COVID-19 outbreak in Saudi Arabia. Surveys will be used to acquire quantitative data from officers, cadets, and faculty members. The surveys will aim to gather data on individuals' distant learning experiences, the particular obstacles faced, and their views on the efficacy of online education. The surveys will utilize a Likert scale to record replies, and statistical analysis will be possible. Information gathered alongside this will be a result of qualitative data with the help of interview data from relevant stakeholders like military education officials, faculty members, and officer cadets. The interviews will go into detailed viewpoints, experiences, and personal stories, offering a more profound insight into the complex issues of overseeing military education amid a worldwide health emergency. Official records, reports, and regulations regarding military education administration during the pandemic will undergo document analysis to enhance the study with institutional viewpoints and historical background.

Data Analysis

The information that was gathered will be subjected to a thorough analytical process. In order to detect trends, patterns, and correlations within the dataset, statistical approaches such as descriptive statistics and inferential analysis will be applied to the quantitative data that was gathered from surveys. A method known as thematic analysis will be utilized to examine qualitative data obtained from interviews (Castleberry & Nohel, 2018). This method involves the discovery and classification of recurrent themes and patterns that are present within the qualitative responses. The robustness and validity of the study findings are increased with the use of triangulation, a technique where data is obtained from both quantitative and qualitative analyses at the same time. This mixed-methods approach is designed to result in a wide-ranging and multi-dimensional understanding of the plans, obstacles, and successful strategies for coping with the challenges in the provision of military education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia. If successful, this approach will contribute valuable insights to the field of crisis management within military educational institutions.

Expected Contributions

The anticipated results of this research on the management of military educational organizations in Saudi Arabia during the COVID-19 pandemic are projected to be promising and numerous. Primarily, it will provide useful data regarding what military educational institutions have applied in terms of strategies, hindrances, and positive experiences to adjust to changes in operational tasks and shift to remote learning during the pandemic. Through the exploration of the lives of cadet personnel, the executive team, and instructors, the purpose of the study is to depict a clear picture of the interdependent nature of military education under the current pandemic. The systems must be adaptable, which means that they can be modified and adjusted to deal with unforeseen political crises; otherwise, they would be too rigid and ineffective.

Moreover, the output of the research will complement the pool of knowledge about crisis management and resilience development in the context of military educational organizations. Through examination of the obstacles and achievements related to the pandemic, such a study can give policymakers more grounds to base their future decisions on and strengthen military education in the context of disaster management. Upon studying the ever-changing features of military training programs and the impact the pandemic has had on the learning of practical skills among cadets and assessing the performance level of online military education, these data would yield useful information about the tradeoffs between academic results and social welfare from the military point of view in case of emergencies.

In addition, the research will be beneficial not only for the reform of military education in Saudi Arabia but also for the whole global community on the crisis management and resistance of the education system. This research can enlighten and stimulate dialogues and initiatives aimed at enhancing crisis management aspects within the military educational systems at the global level through the contribution of what has been shared and the lessons learned from the Saudi Arabian context. In brief, the project is intended to bridge gaps in expertise, promote collaboration, and bring innovation that can be used in military education to solve the problems of global health crises. This collaboration will eventually transition and contribute to the development of educational systems that are resilient and prepared for global crises.

Ethical Considerations

In view of the confidentiality, integrity, and well-being of the participants, there is a need to first address some ethical issues. Before participating in the study, everybody—students (cadets), lecturers, and also administration members—has to give their informed consent. Participants will have specific and comprehensive information that contains the risk assessment,

methods, objectives, and benefits of the action. Moreover, they would be the ones with the freedom to either agree or bar themselves from participation and bear the costs that come with their decision. The research procedure will be followed to the letter according to the confidentiality and anonymity standards applicable throughout. The third one is focused on ways to ensure that the participants' privacy is protected and sensitive information is not disclosed. The confidentiality of all the data, including surveys, interviews, and document analysis, will be ensured. In addition, there will be anonymous identification of the participants. Moreover, the measures for the secure storage, transmission, and treatment of the research data will be put into practice according to the applicable data protection rules and the guidelines prescribed by the institution.

Additionally, the research holds the basic virtues of cultural respect, integrity, and sensitivity towards the group of participants, who are representing a wide range of cultures and have had different experiences. Among the many issues is how to establish trust and rapport with the participants and uphold ethical conduct throughout the study process while being aware of existing cultural practices, religious beliefs, and organizational hierarchies. In order to deal with any probable risks or power disparities that not only may discourage the involvement or decisions of people at risk, such as cadets and junior officers, but also influence the process of participation, special attention will be given to these vulnerable populations. In addition, to ensure that the research design, processes, and protocols comply with the ethical norms and guidelines, ethical approval will be obtained from the institutional review boards or ethics committees to which the research is applicable. There is an assumption that any conflicting interests as well as biases are disclosed in an open and transparent way, and measures will be taken in order to minimize the impact that these factors have on the credibility and integrity of

the study. The research will maintain the level of ethical conduct and responsibility in such a way as to prevent violations of the rights, dignity, and welfare of all those who participate in the study.

Timeline

Phase	Activities	Timeline
Preparation	Establish research inquiries and goals	Month 1
	Establish research inquiries and goals	Month 1-2
	Obtain ethical approvals	Month 2
Data Collection	Administer surveys to officer cadets and faculty	Month 3-4
	Conduct thorough interviews with key stakeholders	Month 4-5
	Examine formal documents, reports, and regulations	Month 4-5
Data Analysis	Examine numerical data using statistical instruments	Month 5
	Perform thematic analysis on qualitative data	Month 5-6
Report Writing	Summarize findings and insights	Month 6
	Draft and review the research report	Month 6
	Finalize the research report	Month 6
Dissemination	Create presentations and materials for distribution	Month 6
	Share research results through presentations	Month 6
	Submit study results to appropriate academic publications	Ongoing after completion

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