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### THE PROCEDURES OF EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AND THE EXPLORATION OF CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN PALESTINE

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#### **Abstract**

The school education during Covid-19 pandemic requires managing it according to a plan that is able to adapt to the requirements of the pandemic, because the pandemic has imposed a set of challenges. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the main factors and challenges facing school education management during the pandemic. Owing to this reason, this study aims to explore the components of the Ministry of Education's plan that was designed to manage school education during the pandemic. Also, the critical challenges facing the management of school education. For the purpose of achieving the objectives of the study, the documents issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Education were analyzed, and an interview was conducted with a model sample consisting of: (8) teachers, (6) school principals, (3) educational specialists, managers of two educational centers, employees of the Ministry of Education, and two of the students' parents. After collecting and copying the data, it was analyzed according to the (2014) model. The analysis of the documents revealed that the ministry's plan included the following elements: (1) the complete closure of schools as a preventive measure (2) defining a health protocol (3) gradual return to schools (4) blended education (5) training teachers on using technology in education. Participants reported that there are five main challenges that impeded the implementation of the plan, namely (1) lack of clarity of the plan, (2) technical issues of the e-learning system, (3) financial and logistical support issues, (4) fear and confusion (5) lack of confidence in the procedures followed. The

findings of this study benefit policymakers and researchers, as it enables them to better identify the gaps that limited the successful management of education during the pandemic, and then contribute and work to improve education management during crises.

### **Theatrical Background:**

Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most dangerous manifestations, as it has harmful effects on all humanity, but the education system is one of the aspects most that have been affected by the pandemic, as it has been described as a major event, and a serious crisis threatening education, as it has caused (1.6) billion students to interrupt education (Saavedra , 2020), and the closure of 99% of schools in the world (United Nation, 2020), which resulted in depriving more than half of the world's students from education (UNESCO Institute for Statistics) leading to the social isolation that inflicted psychological harm on students, the laziness of the students, and a lot of damage, Brooks & et al., (2020) and Viner, &et al. (2020) and this due to Williamson (2020) to consider closing schools as a dangerous decision.

As a result of the impact of this pandemic, the hard-won gains in expanding access to education can stop and even end with the extension of school closures, and access to alternative options - such as distance learning - remain out of reach for those without the means of communication. This may cause more losses in human capital and reduce economic opportunities. Most importantly, the negative effects of this pandemic may reverberate for a long time which increases the severity of the pandemic (Azzi-Huk&Shmis, 2020).

This exceptional situation requires the adoption of unusual procedures because the escalation of the crisis entails imposing new strategies, alternatives and administrative methods to deal with it (Abdel-Al, 2009). And the use of systematic scientific processes, such as: planning, organizing, directing, monitoring, leadership in crises, communication, decision-making, and crisis evaluation. (Burnet, 1998).

In response to the pressures of this pandemic and in order to reduce its risks in education, three main areas have emerged: the dissemination of distance learning methods through a variety of platforms (with or without the use of technology), support and occupation of educational personnel, and taking care of the students' health. This requires the provision of computers, tablets for school students, and teacher training supplies and resources, particularly tools, use and management of information and communication technology (ICT) (ECLAC-UNESCO, 2020).

Governments have also taken a set of measures and actions, such as: the dual use of education, technology and focused training for teachers and school principals, raising education budgets, and working to build more equitable and just educational systems (Word Bank Group Education, 2020).

Fernando M (2020) indicated that the current situation requires a set of sequential educational interventions that focus on establishing school systems on a solid basis to give effective instructions and support as the

crisis continues, developing programs for compensating the students for lost teaching during the quarantine period, and reconstructing programs through the setting up of foundations for a shift towards an educational system that understands the complexity of producing education and its multiple components, and reflects the value we place on education as a society.

Schleicher (2020) argued that educational measures should be carefully weighed against health risks, mitigating the impact of the epidemic, providing digital devices to low-income students, and allocating budgets to schools. To provide the costs associated with special services, safety, necessary equipment and cleaning materials, and to hire new teachers for primary and secondary level. UNCIEF (2020a) also argues that benefits and risks across education, public health, and socio-economic factors must be considered, and that the best interest of every child should be at the center of these decisions, using the best evidence available.

Freendas & Shaw (2020) emphasized the following best practices: first: Servant leadership that emphasizes participation, cooperation, empowerment and participation. This leadership behavior requires the public interests above private interests. Second: the distribution of leadership responsibility over a network of groups in different regions. Third: communicate clearly and repeatedly with stakeholders through a variety of communication channels.

Regardless the nature and quality of the measures taken by the central authorities, they will remain weak unless the school has a prominent role, and this requires clearly defining the roles of school principals in responding to crises, providing them with the necessary support to enable them to perform their roles and developing training programs for principals through online professional development programs Sampat & Oommen (2020). Upgrading the procedures related to teachers, improving their performance, increasing their wages, and supporting school budgets in order to provide education requirements, train teachers to employ the Internet for educational purposes (Refilly, 2020), and increase the number of teachers (UNCIEF, 2020a).

These are some of the measures that countries have taken to reduce the negative repercussions of the pandemic, and reduce education losses. However, many middle and low income countries do not possess the material and human capabilities, this made these countries unable to face the challenges of this pandemic.

The State of Palestine, which has limited capabilities and resources, has found itself obliged to deal with this pandemic, and to manage this crisis educationally, but it is noted that managing the crisis is characterized by a lack of clarity and a blurry picture (Nassif, 2020). The Palestinian National Authority declared, on March 5, 2020, a state of emergency, and according to this decision, schools were closed in the West Bank, and the decision included public, private and agency schools (Palestinian Information Center, 2020) without offering alternatives or options.

## **The Research Problem**

Although model makers have different expectations and timeframes concerning Covid-19 pandemic, they agree that the virus will continue to spread for a long time (Scuddelari, 2020). Consequently, the disruptions caused by the pandemic will be unparalleled, and may threaten the right to education. Unplanned school closures will cause serious problems for students, teachers, parents, and society as a whole (UNCIEF,2020b)

In light of the various crises the education system that Palestine suffers from, with multiple sources and causes (Hilali and Debus, 2011). This pandemic constituted an additional burden, requiring a lot of efforts and developing plans. To reduce the negative repercussions of this pandemic on education outcomes. Consequently, the Ministry of Education was forced to handle these exceptional abnormal conditions. For adapting with this pandemic in order to reduce its repercussions and save social capital, this study aimed at examining the nature of the measures followed by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in the context of their dealings with this pandemic.

### **Research Questions**

- 1- How did the Ministry of Education manage school education under Covid-19 crisis?
- 2- What are the obstacles that prevented the implementation of the measures taken by Palestinian ministry of education?

### **This study aimed at achieving the following goals**

- 1- Determining how the Palestinian Ministry of Education will manage school education under Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2- Knowing the challenges that faced the plan during its implementation.

### **The Significance of the Study:**

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first study that investigated the management of school education in Palestine under the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic.

### **The study results can lead to:**

- A- That Palestinian Ministry of Education work to review and evaluate its plans and strategies for crisis management
- B- Increase teachers 'knowledge of how to deal with and manage crises, and offer appropriate and leadership solutions.

### **Terms**

**Procedures:** a series of the steps taken in a specific order (Merriam-Webster,2018).

**In this study, the procedures are defined as:** the measures taken by the Palestinian Ministry of Education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**School Education Administration:** the work performed by administrators at higher levels in the central educational system (Atawi, 2001).

**The school education administration is defined in this study:** as the work carried out by the Ministry of Education to manage school education.

**Covid-19:** the disease that spread in Wuhan, China in December 2019, and was declared by the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 as an epidemic (Alkahldi, &etal, 2020).

**Challenges:** the obstacles that prevented the plan of action from being implemented.

**Methodology:**

**Document Analysis Approach:**

According to this approach, documents were examined, analyzed and interpreted, in order to elicit meaning, understanding, and developing the experience (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This approach is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a method, which increases the validity and reliability of the results (Noble, & Heale, 2019). Triangulation is a combination of methodologies used in studying the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). The study used this approach, on the one hand, to understand the examined phenomenon, on the other hand, to develop the interview guide.

**Interpretive:**

In order to uncover the factors affecting the studied phenomenon and the relationships between them (Lattad et al., 2019). This approach provides detailed, deep, and useful data that contribute to answering the research questions. The Grounded Theory was used, as it relied on the ideas and experiences of the participants to develop an interpretive understanding. This method aids the development of interpretative analyzes of participant responses (Creswell, 2012).

**Participants:**

(8) teachers, (6) school directors, and (3) professors from Palestinian universities, (2) (2) educational centers from civil society, employees of the Ministry of Education, and two parents of students were chosen. They were selected interacting with the phenomenon directly according to Typical Sampling (Crossman, 2019). This enables the researcher to obtain realistic responses, which contributes to achieving the research objectives and answering the study questions. All participants were given a pseudonym code.

Index No. (1) shows the cods of the participants.

Index No.1: Participant codes

Profession	Code	Sex	
		M	F
School Teacher	1		
School principal	2		
Parent of the student	3		
University Professor	4		
Supervisor at the Ministry of Education	5		
Employee in the ministry	6		
Director of an educational center	7		

## **Materials**

### **Documents**

Focused review of documents that include procedures to understand the changes made to the Department of Education in response to COVID-19 in Palestine, published from 5-13-2020 to 10-25-2020, following the evidence-gathering framework proposed by Bowen, (2009). The documents in which the Palestinian Ministry of Education addressed schools to administer school education under the Covid-19 pandemic were searched. The number of these documents reached (47) documents.

### **Interview Guide:**

Based on the study questions and objectives as well as the findings of document analysis, the interview questions were written. After designing, the interview was applied to 4 persons who meet the specifications of the final interviews. After the interview guide was finalized according to the results obtained from the preliminary study, the interview was conducted with the participants who had been identified.

The interview questions were based on the actions taken by the Ministry to manage school education during the Covid-19 crisis, and the questions were reviewed and adapted. The main idea was to create experimental interview questions; to seek out more information and clarification from the respondents. The interview guide included three questions about the health protocol, five questions about distance education, four questions about face education, three questions about the ministry's readiness, and three questions about final suggestions and ideas. The questions were arranged based on the comments and suggestions of the experts. At this stage, some adjustments were made to the questions in terms of language and sentence structure, and the questions that were not clear were reformulated.

### **Experimental Interview:**

#### **Applying the protocol of trial interview**

This pilot test served to make some important adjustments, as it was found that the questions related to face-to-face learning were not sufficient. Therefore, two questions were added, namely: the participants understanding of the blended learning concept, and the blended learning requirements. Also, four questions to the questions related to distance education were added, and the researcher decided to add these questions as important criteria to obtain more information and responses from the participants.

In light of this pilot interview, some changes were made in terms of language, as it turned out that some questions need to be fine-tuned to be explicit and clear to the participants to answer the interview questions. Some questions have been reformulated and recent investigations have been conducted on the issues that emerged during the pilot interview.

### **Interview Protocol:**

After the interview guide was finalized according to the results obtained from the preliminary study, the interview was conducted with the participants who had been identified.

### **The Validity of the Interview Questions:**

To verify the validity and stability of the questions of the interview, the questions were presented to five specialized arbitrators of educational sciences. The level of consistency among the evaluators concerning coding method, followed by interviews analysis by using kappa coefficient for internal consistency. Kappa value for the agreement among arbitrators amounted to (0.90) this value indicated high agreement among arbitrators concerning the questions of the interview that will be used for answering the study questions.

### **Procedures:**

The participants were contacted by phone to discuss the study and arrange an appointment with them, and a brief report was submitted on the purpose of the study and ethical issues. The interviews lasted from 35 minutes to two hours. It was fully registered. During the interviews, information was extracted from the participants and the main points were documented and merged with the observations, through an ongoing interview protocol proposed by (Creswell, 2014). All interviews were later transcribed. The number of pages reached 120 pages of copied texts.

### **Analysis:**

**The data of the interviews were analyzed according to the following steps:**

- 1- Collecting, organizing, and storing data.
- 2- Exploring the data by getting a general idea of the data by conducting an initial exploratory analysis.
- 3- Encoding the data by reading the text copies and dividing them into categories as well as labeling them, and grouping the categories into the themes that describe the phenomenon.
- 4- Generating conclusions where the researcher has personal interpretations behind the meaning of the results (Creswell, 2014).

### **The Stability Analysis:**

To ensure the stability of the analysis, a sample was drawn randomly, where (6) documents (8) interviews were withdrawn, and after a week the sample was analyzed, the following equation was used to demonstrate coefficient stability analysis:

$$100 \times \frac{\text{The number of agreement between the shop and itself}}{\text{The number of agreement} + \text{the number of disagreement}}$$

The overall stability coefficient accounted for (81%) which is a reliable ratio.

### **Findings:**

To understand the measures taken by the Ministry of Education to manage school education under the pandemic crisis, the relevant documents were reviewed, and the documents revealed that the education department under the pandemic crisis is classified into two phases: the preventive stage and back to school stage. The following is an explanation of the measures taken during those two stages, as indicated by the review of documents:

#### **The Preventive Phase**

##### **The Response to School Closure**

During this phase and in response to the state of emergency declared in Palestine on the date, and to the recommendations of the World Health

Organization, schools closed for a semester as a preventive measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

#### **Employing social media networks:**

To reduce education losses, and because the pandemic was not signed, teachers were invited to employ social media networks and form groups by students in different school subjects, but without obliging students.

#### **The Accreditation Marks of the First Semester to Evaluate Students:**

Owing to school dropouts during the second semester, and the lack of assessment tools for students as a result of not teaching them during the second semester, the Ministry of Education adopted first semester grades.

#### **General Secondary Examination**

The fact that high school students do not hold an exam for them except once a year, and after the end of the second semester, the Ministry of Education worked to hold an exam for high school students as part of health procedures, and the exam was limited to the subject taught by students only.

#### **Back to school stage:**

In order to ensure a safe return to schools on 6-8-2020, the Ministry of Education developed a plan that included a set of procedures, and the analysis of documents related to the return of students revealed the following topics:

The start of the academic year was announced gradually, as the return took place in three phases, starting on 6-8-2020 until 9-20-2020. It was decided to return teachers on 8-20-2020 with the aim of preparing for the start of the school year, but this resolution was withdrawn on 8/22/2020 and it was decided to return teachers on 9/6-2020 with lower basic stage students.

#### **The Gradual Return to School**

##### **Health Protocol**

To reduce the risks of the pandemic, the Ministry of Education demanded schools to comply with safety rules, provide sterilization materials, wear masks, form health committees in schools, distribute health manuals to schools, stop activities, keeping social distance, clean drinking water containers, amend the rest system, and cancel events as well as activities.

##### **Blended Learning:**

For coping with Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry's plan included blended education according to two approaches:

##### **Face-to-Face Learning:**

According to this approach, students attend schools on average (10) days per month in which the classroom is divided into two parts:

##### **Distance Education:**

Ministry of Education plan to start the academic semester lies in merging face-to-face learning with distance learning. To this end, the ministry trained teachers on using zoom program, and then canceled it, and trained teachers on (designing distance learning) for (15) training hours through zoom technology. It asked teachers and students to prepare accounts on the MS Teams platform. Also, teachers were trained on (Microsoft Office 365), and (MS Teams) were linked with (ESchool).

##### **Educational Packages:**

In line with the Ministry of Education's plan to reduce the number of school days, the Ministry has adopted educational packages as an alternative to

textbooks. These packages have been processed as compressed files (pdf). The schools uploaded them to their websites (Eshoo).

These are the most important measures taken by the Ministry of Education for managing school education under the impact of the pandemic crisis, in a way that balances health and education requirements, with the aim of adapting to the pandemic challenges and reducing its repercussions on the educational system. Are these measures effective and were implemented by school teachers and principals? or are there obstacles and difficulties prevent their implementation? To understand this, the interviews with the participants were analyzed, and the analysis revealed the following topics:

**The Obstacles of Employing Distance Education:**

The participants were discussed in the distance education issue and the opinions of the participants of the study showed that distance education is not just an instruction, but an education strategy that needs technical and human capabilities. Examples of participants' opinions on the employment of distance education boil down as follows:

**(A:1,F):** "Distance education cannot compensate for the loss of education, and that a return to face education must be made."

**(B:1,F):** "I used to stay with the students for more than a quarter of an hour, and there were three or four students attending."

**(P:4,M):** "Distance education is appropriate for students in the upper school stage, but it is inappropriate for students of the lower primary stage because students and parents do not possess remote education technologies."

**(C:1,M):** "What is the value of the worksheet for the first grade if the student solves it by himself/herself?"

Teachers and school principals agreed that the Teams program used in distance education suffers from technical capacity gaps, such as:

**(D:1,M):** "The student can be silent, the teacher can be silent and you can take out any student from zoom meeting."

**(E:1,M):** "The students send some messages and I ca not see the text of the message."

**(T:5,F):** "The interface in the face-to-face meeting is uncomfortable."

Participants indicated computer possession and Internet problems. Examples include:

**(X:3,M):** "I am not able to buy one computer. How can I buy one for each child?"

**(I:2,F):** "Do not blame the students if the school computers are outdated and bad, how will the students become?"

**(J:2,M):** "The internet is dismissed whenever I open teams, and when I return the students disappear."

**(T:5,M):** "(SM Teams program needs high internet speed and this speed is not available in Palestine."

**(P:4,M):** "The education system in Palestine is established according to traditional arrangements based on the teacher and the textbook, and therefore the employment of distance learning cannot be used without prejudice to the structure of the educational system."

The participants referred to the topic of training and technical skills:

**(F:1,M):** "During the training meeting, they would train us on more than one topic, and I was not able to master them."

**(R:5,F):** "If the teacher comes out of the program during training, s/he can return again."

**(S:5,M):** "Once they trained on using zoom, then they cancel it, this is confusion."

**(Q:2,M):** they trained us on using zoom, after that they canceled it.

**(Z1:7,M):** "Distance education or electronic education needs an awareness of parents and students in Palestine. Such awareness does not exist, and the students use the Internet to play, entertain, or get acquainted."

**(Y:3,F):** neither me nor my daughter knows how to use the program, nothing substitutes face-to-face learning.

**(Z2:7,F):** "The education system in Palestine is established according to traditional arrangements based on the teacher and the textbook. Therefore, the employment of distance learning cannot be used without prejudice to the structure of the educational system."

The responses of the participants showed that distance education in Palestine still faces many challenges and obstacles, whether technical or material. These responses reflect that employing technology as a substitute for reducing education losses is extremely difficult.

#### **Confusion the regularity of the educational process:**

According to the ministry's plan, students attend schools' day after day to adopt face education. The responses of the participants on this topic were:

**(G:1,M):** "Teaching the letter R needs four classes, and today we must study it with one class."

**(L:2,F):** "Because 95% of students have not mastered the basic and necessary skills in the first grade of basic, and this will convert students from mastering the skills in the second grade, and thus the problem will become cumulative and this is taboo."

**(Z1:7,F):** "The student will consider himself/herself as a visitor to the school rather than a student."

**(P:4,F):** "Blended education will lose parents' and students' confidence in education, and will make education formal."

**(H:1,M):** "Blended education has led the education to lose its content. Thus, the student comes to school without remembering anything".

#### **Health Protocol:**

##### **Participants' response was related to the health protocol:**

**(M.:2,M):** "I am not able to organize the daily program because there are 3 teachers who are absent because they are injured and the education will not appoint an alternative."

**(N:2,F):** "The school cannot provide health and safety conditions. The yards are closed and small, and the classrooms do not have ventilation, and I cannot buy sterilizers and cleaning materials. I cannot guarantee what I and the teachers will have, and all the time I am petrified."

When we asked **(T:6,M)** why schools are not able to employ health supplies:

**He replied:** "The ministry has approved an emergency budget that is approved by the Council of Ministers, but the Ministry of Finance has not approved it all because of the pandemic the schools suffer from a financial crisis."

**(C.:1,F):** "I cannot explain while I am wearing mask, and the girls do not wear masks and I cannot explain if there is a distance between me and the students.

**(B:1,M):** "you can catch the virus at any time."

**(U:6,F):** "The ministry adopted an emergency budget that is approved by the Council of Ministers, but the Ministry of Finance did not approve it all because of the crisis.

**Problems of educational packages:**

These are the most important responses of the participants concerning the educational packages:

**(O:2,M):** The school cannot copy packages for students because there is not enough budget to buy paper and ink.

**(F1,F):** "Parents accuse us that we study according to our mood and we do not adhere to the curriculum, because packages are not with girls"

**(A:1,F) stated that:** "the land lesson was deleted, two exercises were added from the crow and jar lesson, and one exercise was added from the dairy factory lesson in the educational packages although there is no correlation between these topics."

**Discussion**

The analysis of documents and interviews showed that the Ministry of Education did not have a prior preparation to deal with crises, as its response to the crisis was not an educational but political decision, without presenting a plan for the administration of school education that lasted for a whole semester. It was noted from the analysis of the documents on 5/13-2020, for endorsing the results of the academic year 2019-2020.

This procedure is not commensurate with crisis management in terms of methods and procedures (Abdel-Al, 2009) as well as in terms of crisis leadership, communication, decision-making, and crisis evaluation. (Burnett, 1998), developing critical and successful solutions (Khalil, 2016). During the one-semester closure period, the Ministry made no effort to reduce education losses, did not work to train teachers and school principals to cope with the psychological and educational challenges of the pandemic crisis, and only trained them to employ technology in education. This procedure is inconsistent with what was recommended. Sampat and Oommen (2020) and UNCIE (2020b) in terms of developing training programs to achieve professional growth for principals, and interest in teachers in terms of training and upgrading their performance, and increasing their wages, and the ministry did not provide what is required of it at a minimum to reduce the loss of school education outcomes during the closure period in terms of providing materials and means to support homeschooling.

The analysis of the documents and the response of the participants showed that the ministry did not have a clear plan. Therefore, it was forced to take a set of short measures because it is unable to meet the requirements of a pandemic crisis, such as those explained by (ECLAC-UNESCO, 2020, (2020), (World Bank Group, 2020 Education (Schleicher, Refilly, 2020).

The absence of a plan with the ministry after the declaration of the state of emergency by the national authority, and the inability of the Ministry of Education to bypass formal procedures, and to move towards effective

measures resulted in doubling the negative repercussions of the pandemic on the educational system outputs. This result is consistent with the results of (UNCIEF, 2020c) and (Viner, & etal2020), where it was clear that unplanned school closures would cause serious problems. This is what prompted World Health Education (2020) to recommend that educational facilities be closed only when there are no other alternatives.

After a period of waiting, the Ministry launched its plan for the safe return of students to schools by adopting blended education (face-to-face learning and distance education). According to this plan, the student attends an average of 10 days a month, and in line with this plan a health protocol was adopted, and the school curriculum was reduced in educational packages. To suit the time of face education. However, this procedure was not clear. This was reflected in the nature of the measures taken by the Ministry of Education, whereby action was taken and then reversed, such as adopting the zoom program and then canceling it, setting a date for the return of teachers and then it was retracted, and the Ministry did not follow up the plan during implementation, as a lack of Providing educational packages, and appointing a substitute teacher for a teacher who drops out of education because of his/her HIV infection.

The analysis of the documents and the responses of the participants showed that the ministry did not provide the requirements for safe return that balance between health and education requirements, and the ministry's role in this context only went beyond the instructions without monitoring budgets for schools, qualifying and training human resources, saving costs associated with special services and safety equipment, and cleaning the needed materials as indicated by Schleicher (2020).

As a result, this protocol has faced many obstacles that prevented its implementation, which made Palestinian schools unsafe, because a safe environment requires taking a number of measures, including: setting attendance and entry rules, rehabilitating the infrastructure, and maintaining a clean environment (frequent cleaning of common surfaces and things, and studying the symptoms by parents and teachers (World Health Education, 2020). However, the inability of schools to implement the requirements of the health protocol led to the infection of many faculty members and students with the virus, which caused the closure of more than 30 schools in the West Bank due to the presence of Covid-19 infections among high school students before the official start of the new school year 2020/2021 leading to parents' and students' fear and concern concerning the continuation of the educational process in schools in a safe manner (Assi, 2020).

The severity and complexity of the problem are compounded by the fact that the health infrastructure of Palestinian schools in terms of the cleanliness that still needs to increase its rate, which calls for reviewing the numbers of callers distributed to schools, and the budgets allocated for the construction and rehabilitation of canteens. The health problem is complicated by the shortage of 111 field school health personnel compared to the number of schools in the West Bank, which is 1845. The school attendance system lacks sufficient programmatic and time space that enables students to possess health knowledge and behaviors (Hammada,

2019). The lack of sufficient experience in the field of prevention and combating dangerous epidemics such as Covid-19 increases the health setbacks in schools (Alkahldi, ect, 2020).

### **The Challenges of Face-to-Face Learning:**

The Ministry has worked to adopt the health protocol in order to start the school year according to the blended education system, that is, the combination of face-to-face learning with and distance education, but the analysis of the participants' responses showed that face-to-face learning faced many challenges, the most important of which are: lack of motivation towards education, and confusion in the course of the educational process, due to the multiplicity of references of e-learning, and teacher training did not meet the required level, and this result is consistent with the results of Qenibi et al. (2020) study which showed that the multiplicity of references confused teachers. It is compounded by the severity and complexity of the problem in the context of distance education is that the participants of the study do not possess the essential technical skills to employ technological techniques in education, and this was attributed by Nassif (2020) to the subjectivity of workers in the education sector, as 50% of them depend on traditional education. This category is unable to deal with the skills and technology requirements. Therefore, this category is not eligible to invest in cyberspace in education.

This result is consistent with the result of the Almaiah et al. (2020) study, which showed that among the challenges of employing technology in education during the pandemic: cultural factors and self-efficacy. The study also indicated that there are three main challenges that hinder the use of the e-learning system, namely: change management issues, financial support, and technical issues. For e-learning.

This is also confirmed by Oneyma et al. (2020) that education might be hindered by the Internet due to the weakness of infrastructure including, network, strength, lack of access, lack of availability and the weakness of digital skills.

The success of distance learning is also associated with technical capabilities in terms of Internet access to rural locations and Internet speed because it will impede distance learning in the event of not achieving that (Mustafa, 2020). However, as Aman (2019) showed, the telecommunications and internet sector in Palestine face many challenges that prevent citizens from enjoying services with advanced features and high speed. Therefore, the services offered remained low. This fact was confirmed by the responses of the participants who indicated that the technical infrastructure in Palestine is an obstacle impede the activation of technology in education, and this is what Shahwan (2020) confirmed that one of the most important challenges in employing e-learning in Palestine is the deterioration of the technical infrastructure.

The Palestinian situation concerning the employment of technology is further complicated by the occupation authorities' control of Palestinian space, which prevented rural communities from accessing communication services (Abd al-Wahhab, 2020).

The employment of technology is hindered by the small percentage of Internet users, as the number of Internet-sharing households in Palestine constituted 363 thousand families out of a million families, while the percentage of individuals (10 years and over) who used the Internet with a computer did not exceed 22%. The inability of parents to provide computers for their children. The participants of the study indicated this result and confirmed by the survey conducted by Abu Farha (2020), which showed that Palestinian families cannot meet the requirements of e-learning.

### **Conclusion:**

This paper contributes to research the nature and effectiveness of organizational and administrative procedures for managing school education during COVID-19 pandemic which covers the overall requirements of school education management. Consequently, the results represent a new contribution for policymakers; to review and use it to assess the plan's starting points in order to ensure that school education is managed effectively and successfully.

The results of this research are based on the evidence developed by the authorities and researchers, which specifies the procedures that must be applied to the management of school education during the pandemic, and supports the understanding of other researchers and their analysis of the challenges facing the education system. Moreover, the procedures examined in this study and the associated challenges are almost the same in developing countries. Thus, policy-makers and developers of educational systems can benefit from the results of this study, which provides a true picture of the current education system, and can be considered as a guide to improve the use of educational systems.

To answer the research questions, this study used the document analysis methodology, in which it analyzed the relevant documents issued by the Ministry. The interview was conducted with faculty members, school principals, students' parents, and employees of the Ministry of Education, with the aim of presenting an integrated picture of the nature of the procedures. The results of the research revolved around the two organizational topics: the procedures followed for managing school education during the pandemic, and the challenges that the education system faces during COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the results that were achieved by analyzing the documents, it was found that the Ministry was late in responding to the challenges of the pandemic, especially during the complete closure of schools, as it did not take any action during this period. The ministry's plan, which came after a period of approach and waiting that lasted for more than three months, was unclear, as it was characterized by generality, and did not exceed generalization without being associated with procedural steps, and in some cases action was taken and then withdrawn. All of which burdened the teachers. In the light of the findings of the study, it is recommended that the procedures be reconsidered, developing the ministry, the future orientation, allocating the necessary budget, and developing distance education.

### Limitation of the Study

The results of this study are related to the procedures followed by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in Covid-19 pandemic during the second semester of the 2019-2020 academic year until 1-11-2020 of the first semester of the academic year 2020-2021.

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Ethical Approval:

All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of University's Research Ethics Board, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) and with the 2013 Helsinki Declaration.

Informed Consent:

Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

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