Exploring the Impact of Kolb's ELC Cycle on Palestinian Women Educators and their Teaching Practices in Palestine During Covid-19

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Abstract
This study aimed at exploring the impact of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) on Palestinian women educators and their teaching practices in Palestine during Covid-19. An explanatory mixed-method research approach was employed in the design of the study using a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The purpose was to explore and document the participants' teaching strategies used to cope with online teaching and learning. The sample consisted of 53 Palestinian women educators teaching in the private and public sectors of schools and higher educational institutions. Snowballing sampling was chosen for the quantitative part of this study to ensure the reliability of the data. The main findings of the research demonstrated that many Palestinian women educators were unaware of Kolb's ELC or its abstract concepts. That in turn reveals that lack of awareness is the main reason for the minimal impact of ELC on their online teaching practices.

Keywords: Kolb's ELC, online teaching, Palestine, women educators, Covid-19

Introduction

Covid-19 has affected all aspects of life. The pandemic has moved education into a different era, especially for women educators. Women educators have carried out the brunt of the pandemic in different ways and on different levels. Mother educators have been already managing two roles; however, the sudden transition to remote learning due to the pandemic has encumbered them.

In Palestine, education is a form of resilience that most Palestinian women equip themselves with. During the pandemic, women educators have

experienced great pressure both in the public and private spheres. Palestinian women educators were shouldering much of the burden of online and blended teaching to keep up with their students while taking care of their own children as mothers. Rethinking lesson plans, adapting instructions, and accommodating the different needs behind the screens has seemed like redoing the whole curriculum. Shifting away from the traditional stereotype thought of Palestinian women educators, there has been a tendency to employ and tailor pedagogical practices during this pandemic to cope with teaching students remotely. In addition to that, being women educators in Palestine, a geographical area that is already under occupation and is struggling to thrive economically, socially, and culturally, has heightened the burden.

Despite all these challenges, it is worth investigating how Palestinian women educators are able to adapt, cope, and reflect on their teaching practices, and how such adaptations may have an effect on their pedagogical practices. This paper will explore and examine the impact of the Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) on the teaching practices of Palestinian women educators during Covid-19.

Contextual Background

Palestine has been under foreign rule for centuries. Palestinians assumed ownership of their education in 1994, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) was formed in 2000 (MoEHE, 2022). The Ministry of Education (MoE) has been putting plans since 2000 to rectify education and support teachers in their careers. However, the limited resources and the restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation has limited its working capacity.

Purpose of the Study

This study focuses on female women educators in Palestine. Our choice of women as the main participants in the study stems from the need to document the real experiences of women as mothers and educators during the pandemic. It is crucial for Palestinian women educators to be cognitively aware of different learning cycles that would help them promote their teaching practices by applying them. When women educators reflect on their own practices and teaching styles, they open space for change, growth, and development. Further, they promote better quality education for their learners. This study seeks to explore the impact of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC) on Palestinian women educators during Covid 19 by investigating the notion of reflection and its effect on teachers' pedagogical practices.

Research Questions

In order to explore the impact of ELC on the teaching practices of women educators in Palestine, this study seeks to answer the following main question and sub-questions.

What is the impact of Kolb's ELC on Palestinian women educators' online pedagogical practices during Covid 19?

1. What pedagogical practices did Palestinian women educators take to adapt their teaching practices during Covid-19?
2. To what extent are Palestinian women educators aware of Kolb's ELC?
3. How do Palestinian women educators revise their reflective teaching practices?
4. What strategies do Palestinian women educators use in order to reflect?

Significance of the study

In Palestine, research studies about women educators related to their reflective practices are scarce. A very limited number of studies addressed the impact of Covid-19 on women educators in Palestine. Some of these studies neglected the various aspects and strategies of reflection in detail. Therefore, the significance of this study stems from the need to fill the gap in researching the impact of Kolb's ELC on women educators during Covid 19. The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of reflection, and in specific, Kolb's ELC on Palestinian women educators and their teaching practices during Covid-19. Additionally, this study emerges from our personal experiences as we have experienced the ELC throughout our professional training and development, work, and teaching career. We witnessed growth in knowledge and learning throughout our teaching careers. These changes were explored through reflection as a major process in developing our abilities to adapt and respond to experience and the way we teach and learn. We applied reflection using Kolb's ELC at different intervals throughout our teaching careers.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

A. Importance of Reflection in Education

The term reflection can imply different meanings. It can range from thinking about one's experience to discovering thoughts, actions, and values, to merely considering alternative approaches to problems (Roberts & Westville, 2008). Thus, reflection, or the process of "critically thinking about our behaviours,

attitudes, beliefs, and values" (Roberts, 2008, p.117) has been identified by scholars as a core aspect of any learning process. Reflection is a basic and integral part of the teaching process, and its importance has been growing in the educational field and professional practices (Finlay, 2008).

According to Roberts (2008), Kolb's ELC considers reflective observation an integral part of the learning cycle. Experience leads to observation, and thus by reflecting on the new experience, developments of new insights take place which contributes to shaping various practices in the future (Roberts, 2008). Likewise, in his seminal work "The Reflective Practitioner", Schon (1983) emphasised the importance of reflection in professional practices and added that reflection may happen not only after a teaching moment, yet simultaneously within the moment as well (Roberts, 2008). Similarly, Finlay (2008) highlighted the importance of reflective practices by learning through and from experience to gain new insights and thus develop new conclusions. Accordingly, Harris (1994) emphasised the notion of eliciting and reflecting on what is in the mind and included that in his definition of genuine education, where he stated, "genuine education is not inserting the stuffing of information into a person, but rather eliciting knowledge from him; it is the drawing out of what is in the mind" (Harris, 1994, p. 1). As such, genuine education is defined by eliciting the power of real experiences that educators process in a dynamic and meaningful context. The means to achieve that is through developing strategies through reflective thinking via the process of experiential learning which continues to be re-visited by scholars.

In this context, Lin et al. (1999) defined reflective thinking as a process of learning through active, intentional, and meaningful explorations. The researchers stated the indispensable role of reflection to both the teachers and the students in the teaching and learning process. They believed that students need to reflect on the strategies they use to make decisions and solve problems in order to be able to make conscious decisions and improve their strategies. Therefore, through reflection, "we relate our personal experience to a wider perspective, which helps us to see the bigger picture" (Agouridas & Race, 2007 as cited in Chang, 2019, pg.96).

Reflective thinking is rooted in reciprocal, meaningful interaction via self, others, and the world to optimise "lived experiences'' as Dewey (1960) defines it. He declares that experience is not separate or isolated, rather it is the core of experiential learning, and therefore it shapes the lives of individuals. Dewey (1960) stated that the concept of education can be merely defined by the extent of its development and reconstruction of experience. While technically, the concept of education is the reconstruction or reorganisation of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases the ability to direct the course of subsequent experience.

B. Three Major Models of Reflection in Education

In order for educational changes to become action steps, teachers should have a deep understanding and awareness of their teaching practices. That could occur through different strategies of reflection, observation, and evaluation as explored in this section. This part will highlight three major models of reflection and their notion of this self-awareness process in the teaching and learning career.

Wallace's Model

One important model of reflection is for M.J. Wallace. Wallace (1991) has stressed the importance of reflection in teachers' practices in a cycle. According to Wallace (1991), reflection has a major impact on promoting teachers' learning and that will ultimately enhance learners' outcomes. Wallace's model alludes to the notion that a reflective model requires a balance both through experience and scientific bases of teaching. That is, carrying out professional development through a combination of "received" and "previous experiential" knowledge.
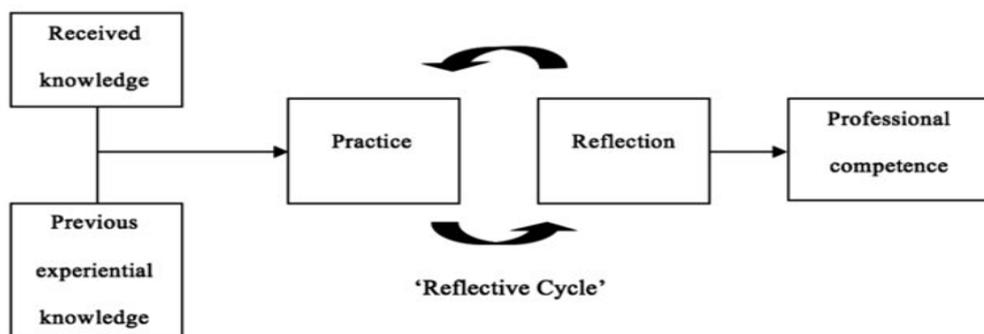
Reflective model (Wallace, 1991, p. 15).

Gibb's Model

Graham Gibbs' model (1988) provides a sequential structure to learning from experiences as it offers a framework within six stages of reflection. These stages include a description of the experience, feelings and thoughts, evaluation, analysis of the experience, conclusion, and an action plan for how to deal with practical situations in different contexts. One distinguishing characteristic that signifies Gibbs' reflective cycle is that Gibbs' Model (sometimes referred to as the interactive model) grants focused attention to learning through repetition and in multiple stages. However, this model requires employing the six stages in a sequential manner.
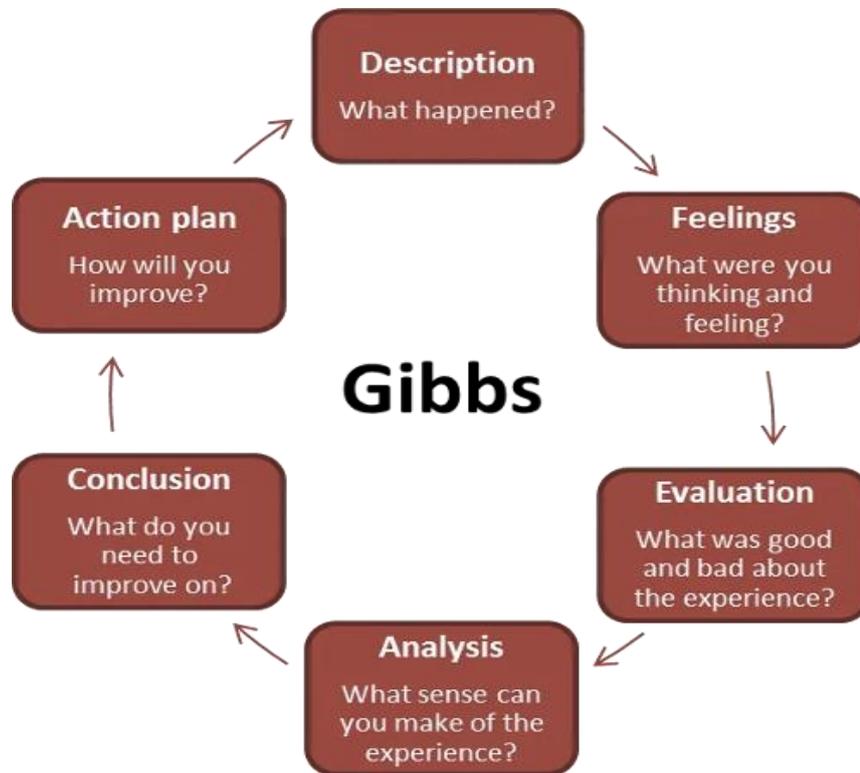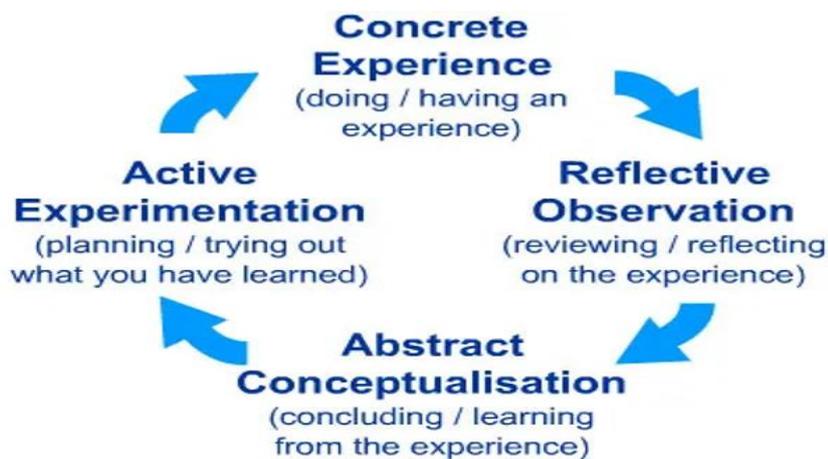
Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (ELC)

The main features of Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) have been thoroughly explored in related literature. Kolb's work, developing the earlier work by Dewey and Lein, grants a comprehensive approach to education through a lifelong process of learning as a foundation of cognitive and social psychology (Healey & Jenkins, 2000).

Kolb's ELC is contoured by social constructivism in its theoretical framework (Kolb, 2015). This infers that learning through reflection based on experience is a form of constructing meaning by interacting with the self as part of dialogic and the surrounding environment. Constructivists like Kolb grant focused attention to individual growth via reflections on past experiences as part of their theoretical model. However, Kolb's framework lacks the connection of cognition with the surrounding environment and thus does not attribute cognition to any environmental interaction (Mughal & Zafar, 2011). This missing paradigm is an essential component in the socio-cultural dimension that Vygtosky (1978) refers to.

According to Kolb (2015), the two major objectives in the experiential learning process are learning the details of a specific subject and learning about one's own process of learning. As such, the experiential learning process supports performance improvement, learning, and development for teachers and learners equally. The core of Kolb's four-stage model shows how experience is transformed through reflection based on these four concepts in a spiral manner (active, reflective, abstract, and concrete). The mere purpose is to ensure that learners can self-renew and self-direct their own learning (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). Thus, the cycle can be entered at any point, but the stages need to be followed in sequence to accomplish the intended outcome (Healey & Jenkins, 2000) as seen in the figure below. In addition to that, Kolb (1976) provides a learning inventory that identifies students' different learning styles which entails the need to aid reflection on the grounds of associating instructions with learning styles to address students' needs.

The Experiential Learning Cycle (Kolb, 2015)

Reflecting on the three models mentioned above, Wallace's approach comes in line with Kolb's (1984) who stated that experience alone is not sufficient for learning to occur. However, reflective thoughts and internal processing of information would ensure learning takes place. Gibbs' model emphasises learning through repetition as it is an iterative model compared to Kolb's model of learning through experience.

The theoretical framework that guides this article is informed by Kolb's ELC. The rationale for selecting this model is that Kolb's theory addresses both the surface and deep levels of thinking while reflecting in a recursive manner. Kolb's theory targets the different preferred learning styles in each of its stages throughout the process of acquiring and applying new knowledge (Kolb, 1984).

Moreover, throughout our teaching careers, we have experienced professional growth through using Kolb's ELC first-hand, especially while teaching online during Covid-19.

Empirical Studies

      A.   Impact of Covid-19 on Teachers

In Palestine, as with all other countries, educational institutions were forced to move from face-to-face teaching to online to avoid any interruption in education due to the pandemic. Teachers faced many challenges due to this sudden shift. Those challenges caused teachers to neglect many aspects of teaching and focus mainly on the basic levels of teaching and delivering instructions. Palestinian teachers were under immense stress and massive burdens due to the high demands that were placed on them during such a hectic time. Thus, they called for support, focusing mainly on the pedagogies and content teaching strategies (Shraim, & Crompton, 2020).

In their educational study on teacher-mothers working at schools, Herman et al. (2020) concluded that with the shift to online learning, the burden has been massive on teachers who are also mothers. The researchers elaborated that those teachers have demanding, yet important roles, that may lead to physical and emotional exhaustion due to their selfless nature within their roles.

      B.   Impact of ELC on Teachers

Akella (2010) reflected on the challenges witnessed in a course using Kolb's ELC. The study aimed to provide insights into diversity within classrooms and its impact on the teaching, pedagogies, and learning styles of both educators and students. Results indicated that it is imperative for an educator to be critically reflective of their own culture, context, and teaching pedagogies in the classroom based on their needs.

Kolb's cycle of reflection can be nurtured in a community designed to produce effective and fulfilled teachers as reflective practitioners. This notion was evident in a study conducted by AmidEast (2015) to investigate and measure the impact of the Professional Certificate of English Language Teaching (PCELT) programme on trainers, graduates, and language learners in the MENA region. The PCELT programme introduces teachers to Kolb's ELC as part of their experiential transformation. The study demonstrated that participating teachers learned how to observe, analyse, experiment with, and adopt a broad range of new teaching practices within learning contexts using micro-teaching and feedback as tools to channel their thoughts (AmidEast, 2015). The study demonstrated that PCELT teachers have significantly better performance than their peers who are not PCELT-certified.

C. Impact of ELC on Learners

Some studies investigated the impact of Kolb's ELC in relation to learners' learning styles. That is the preference for activities that can bolster learners' appreciation of their different learning styles. In a study that was conducted by Sudria et al. (2018), the researchers examined the effect of Kolb's learning styles on chemical learning activities taught by inductive guided inquiry learning to 11th graders. Results revealed that learning styles significantly impacted students' performance on different levels, especially cognitive learning achievement. In addition, findings revealed that all students with different learning styles showed very good performances while learning.

These positive views are consistent with Ba'lousha et al. (2021). The purpose of their study was to explore the experiential learning standards, methodologies, and techniques of English majoring students by investigating the impact of a designed training programme on enhancing teaching performance, cognition, and improving their speaking skills. The results indicated statistically significant gains in cognitive abilities, and that students' performance in speaking skills was above 80%. Clearly, the ELC was effective in supporting and improving the practices of students (Ba'lousha et al., 2021).

Reflection may affect students' performance as it gives them the opportunity to revisit and evaluate their own experiences during the process. Chang (2019) investigated the effect of reflection on learning in an online learning environment. Reflection was purposefully designed and embedded within various assignments as part of the teacher's planning. Reflective ideas addressed five themes that were integrated to aid students in reflecting including personalization and making connections. The results of the study revealed the significant impact of reflection on students' learning. Similarly, Richmond and Cummings (2005) examined the need to consider engaging students using Kolb's theory of learning styles as a basis for designing any course instruction. The study focused attention on different objectives while presenting Kolb's learning style research and ELC through its use in online education. In addition, it provided a critical evaluation of learning style research in online learning environments.

To conclude, the literature shows a positive correlation between employing reflection and experiential teaching and learning and teachers' and students' performance. Therefore, this study comes to investigate Palestinian women teachers' practices and the impact of Kolb's ELC cycle on their teaching practices.

Methodology and Research Design

In this explanatory research, mixed-method data strategies were used in the processes of collecting and analysing the collected data.

Research Instruments

A questionnaire was conducted to address and collect data for the main research question and sub-questions. Further, this study used semi-structured interviews to further explore and document the participants' strategies used to cope with online teaching and learning.

The questionnaire was informed by the literature review and the three major models of reflection with an emphasis on Kolb's ELC model. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part addressed the demographics and background information of the participants. The second part targeted the teaching experience and practices of the participants as well as their reflective practices and strategies during Covid-19. The questionnaire was sent to teachers working at public and private schools and higher education institutions using the snowball strategy. The questionnaire was sent along with the consent form that explains the specifics of the study and the privacy and confidentiality of the participants who agreed on taking part. The questionnaire contained a 5-point Likert scale. We developed an odd Likert scale that had 5 points on it ranging from not at all to a great deal to allow participants to have a neutral answer. After collecting data, some teachers agreed to further do an interview with us to collect more in-depth data about their teaching and reflective practices during Covid-19.

The interviews were an extension of the questionnaire and aimed at collecting in-depth data about teachers' practices and the strategies they use in reflection. The interviews were semi-structured to explore the adaptations that women teachers did during their online teaching during a pandemic. Moreover, the interviews focused on investigating the participants' reflective practices and strategies, as well as their awareness of any reflective models. The interviews were done remotely due to Covid-19 and social distancing restrictions. The participants chose a time that is suitable for them, and they were ensured of the confidentiality and privacy of their information.

Participants

The population for this study consisted of women educators in Palestine, teaching in the private and public sectors of schools and higher educational institutions. The sample consisted of 53 EFL Palestinian women educators of which 53 filled out a questionnaire and 8 were interviewed. Out of the 53

female participants, 62% were mothers. About 40% of the participants had a master's degree and two PhD holders while the rest had either BA or BS degrees. The participants' teaching backgrounds varied as they were teaching at private schools, public schools, universities, and other academic institutions. More than half of the participants had up to five years of teaching experience and about 25% had six to ten years of teaching experience.

Sampling

Snowballing sampling (Cohen et al., 2018) was chosen for the quantitative part of this study to ensure the reliability of the data. According to Bernard (2002), the snowballing strategy may be a good way to form an exhaustive sampling frame that allows researchers to choose people randomly for interviews. From the questionnaire, five participants volunteered to conduct the interviews.

Validity and Reliability

Validity is the accuracy of the collected data in research studies. To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, we designed a pilot sample of the questionnaires and sent the questionnaire to a jury of referees in order to get feedback and revise it accordingly. The participants' input was valuable, and we acted based on the input by eliminating the irrelevant questions and elaborating on the important ones. To ensure the validity of the qualitative data, some copies of the interviews transcripts were sent to some of the participants to check the collected data and verify it. Moreover, to ensure the validity and accuracy of the qualitative data in this study, the method of triangulation was employed. According to Creswell (2013), triangulation is collecting data from one that one source. Triangulation enriched the data collection, and, in this study, two different instruments were used to collect data.

Reliability is the accuracy and stability of the research response. Creswell (2013) stated that reliability is ensuring getting the same results if the research was repeated in the same way and such, auditing the research process. As for the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was checked in the pilot questionnaire. It was 0.67, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability. As for the qualitative data, and to ensure consistency of the results across the data in the research, we had another researcher perform the thematic analysis to check the degree of agreement between our analysis. The agreement result between the analysis was around 81%. The rate of agreement between our and the researcher's analysis was calculated using the formula: Agreement rate = a number of similar codes / total number of codes *100%.

Data Analysis

This study investigated the impact of Kolb's ELC on Palestinian women educators' pedagogies during Covid-19. To answer the main research question regarding the impact of ELC on Palestinian women educators' pedagogical practices and the four sub-research questions, we started by conducting a questionnaire. Teachers' responses were analysed by calculating the mean scores and percentages for each item quantitatively using SPSS software. All the responses were analysed and thus charts were derived from the respondents' answers.

Then, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants who were willing to provide more information to gather in-depth data. The interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed. A sample of transcriptions was sent for some of the participants to check for validity. After reading the transcriptions to familiarise ourselves with the data collected, we proceeded to the next step of Braun and Clarks's (2006) thematic analysis. Reading in depth has aided in identifying patterns and gathering similarities and differences. That led to being able to code similar and repetitive statements. These statements were gathered and some were merged while others were eliminated, and thus themes emerged from the analysed data. We reviewed the codes and themes and examined them to give them proper names. After agreeing on the themes, we started writing up the findings.

Findings

This section presents quantitative and qualitative data analyses and the merging of the findings for the purpose of answering the research questions. The findings section is illustrated using the component design because data from each of the quantitative and qualitative sections were evaluated separately but were combined at the discussion writing level (Caracelli & Greene, 2004).

Quantitative findings

Findings from the questionnaire were categorised into three main categories which are: background information, career information, and adaptations.

    A. Background Information

The target sample consisted of 53 women educators who teach in both the public and private sectors in universities and schools in Palestine. Women participants teach both young learners and adults. Most of the participants are married and have children, and they come from different geographical locations in Palestine. In addition, as holders of BA and Master, their teaching experiences range from five to 26 years of experience.

B. Career information

With regards to their career information, and in response to the question addressing the extent to which they received support from their administrations, participants considered that the administration somewhat provided them with support to cope with online teaching during the pandemic with a mean score of 3.2. Table (1) below shows that participants considered that online teaching affected their teaching process during Covid-19 with a percentage mean score of 3.74. This entails that the amount of support those participants received from peers or the administration was occasional and with moderate deal.

Table 1: The Impact of Covid-19 on Palestinian Teachers' Online Teaching

Descriptive Statistics		
	N	Mean
On a scale from 1 to 5, how much did the Covid 19 affect your teaching process?	53	3.74
Valid N (listwise)	53	

C. Adaptation

The third section of the questionnaire addressed Palestinian women educators' teaching practices during the pandemic. In response to the questions addressing any changes in their teaching practices, 90.57 % of the participants declared that they have changed and adapted their teaching strategies during online courses, while the rest mentioned no change occurred in their teaching practices

As displayed in Table (2) below, and to further explore the nature of changes, teachers responded that frequent changes took place in lesson planning on a high scale of 83.0%. However, changes in teachers' performances and in teachers' observation and reflection were equally 42.7%, which was the lowest percentage. In addition, other changes took place such as changes in students' performance (73.6 %), changes in the learning environment (62.3 %), and changes in feedback and assessment (56.6 %). Likewise, with regards to the time teachers allot for lesson planning, the mean score was 3.6 which indicates that they occasionally spent some time on lesson planning. Moreover, 98% of women teachers believe that they were able to adapt techniques to achieve their online lesson objectives.

Table 2: Changes Encountered during Online Teaching
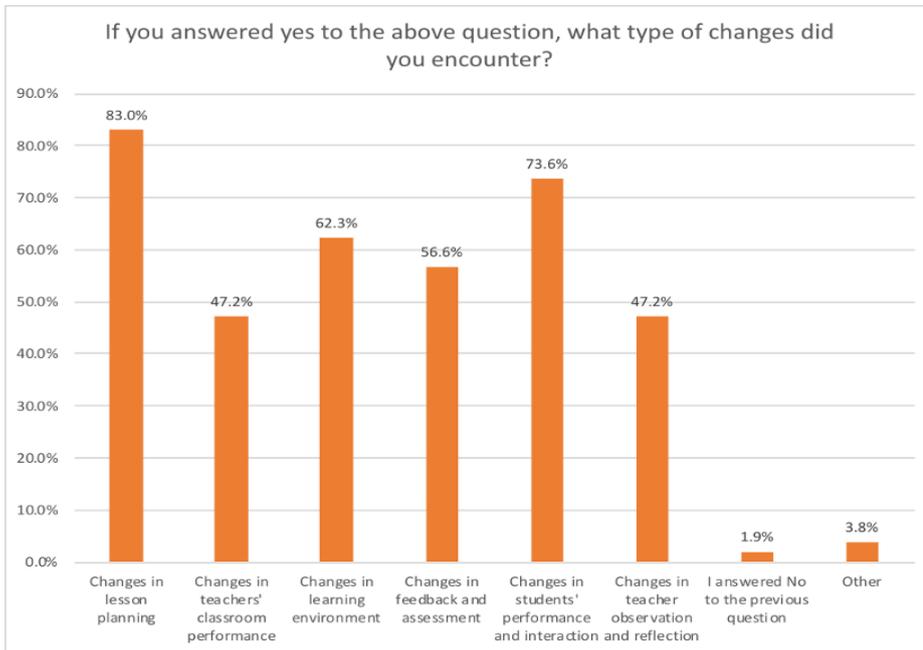
Results in Table (3) below reveal that teachers used a variety of strategies to cope with online teaching and learning. Results significantly show that questioning was among the highest strategies used with a percentage of 83%. However, participants rarely used authentic assessment (26.4 %) or drilling and peer evaluation which had a percentage of   20.8 %   equally. The mean scores of other strategies also varied. The second highest strategies that participants employed in their teaching practices were giving clear instructions (69.8%) and modelling (63.3%) which entails that they were effectively employed. Thus, responses revealed that the monitoring and evaluation strategy was used by 49.1%, ongoing feedback by 43.4 %, error correction by 34.0 %, and self-reflection by 37.7%. That indicates that teachers rarely employed the previous four strategies during the process of teaching and learning. As such, with regards to participants' satisfaction with their performance, while teaching online, results indicated that participants were somewhat satisfied with their own performance as the mean score was 3.6.

Table 3: Teachers' Use of Frequent Teaching Strategies during Covid 19

Choose the teaching methods and strategies that you frequently use via online teaching and learning
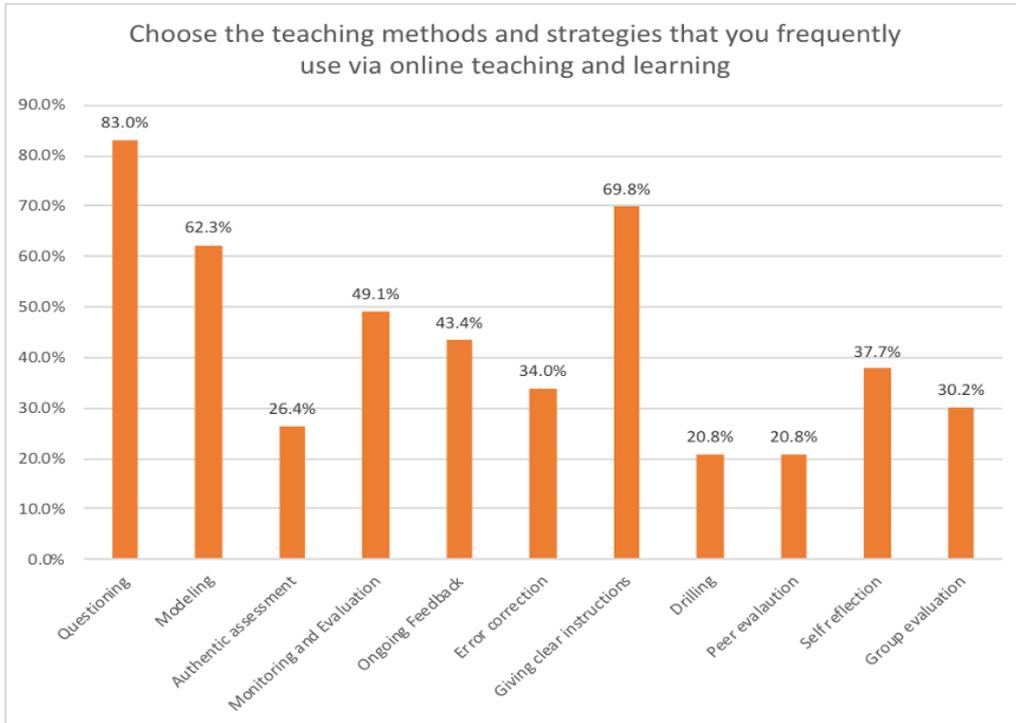
As presented in Table (4) below, 98% of the participants responded that it is important to reflect during their teaching practices. Likewise, with a mean score of 3.49, participants reflect with a moderate deal on their teaching practices as shown in Table (5) below.

Table 4: The Importance of Reflection during Online Teaching

Do you think it is important to reflect on your teaching practices?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	52	98.1	98.1	98.1
	No	1	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	53	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Frequency of Reflection

Descriptive Statistics		
	N	Mean
How often do you reflect on your online teaching practices?	53	3.49
Valid N (listwise)	53	

Thus, and in response to whether participants experienced Kolb's learning cycle, results showed that 77.4 % did not experience Kolb's model while only 22.6 % declared that they do employ this type of reflection while teaching

Table (6) below presents specific results addressing the elements of the experiential learning cycle revealing that 28.3% experienced concrete experience, 24.4% experienced reflective observation, 18.9 % experienced abstract conceptualization, and 18.9% experienced active experimentation while 60.4 % answered with negation to the question.

Table 6: Implementation of Kolb's Stages of Reflection
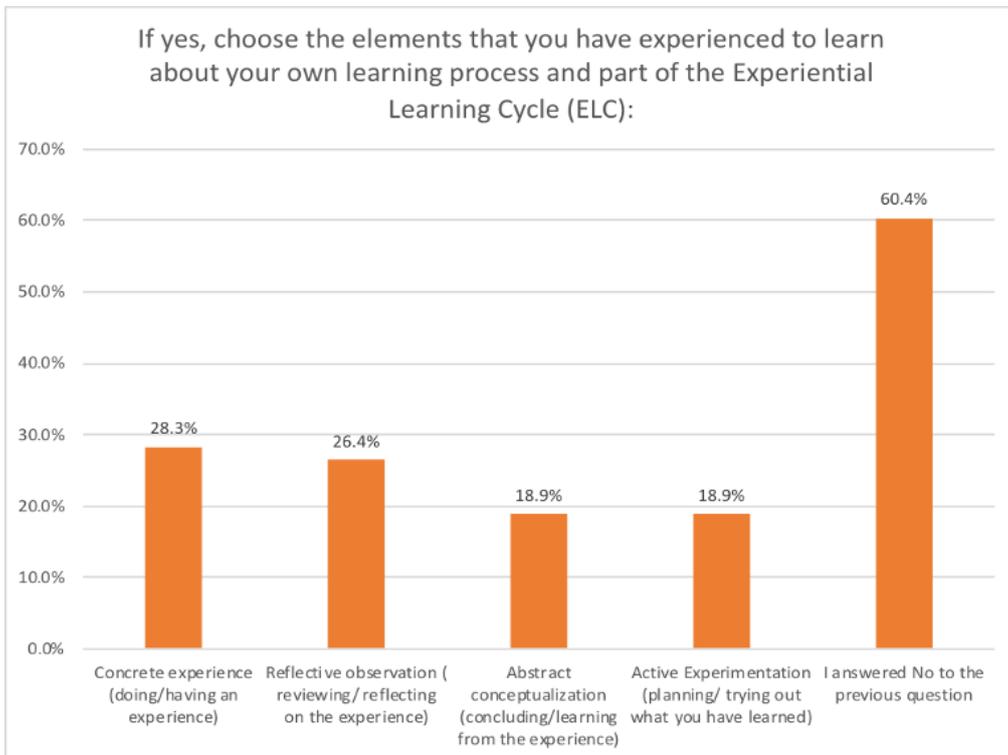
To summarise, about 98% of teachers believe that they adapted new tasks and scaffolding techniques to achieve their objectives. Moreover, about 77% of the participating teachers did not experience Kolb's learning cycle directly, however, they were using techniques and strategies from Kolb's learning cycle without being aware of it. Most teachers spend quite a good time planning and preparing for their lessons. Furthermore, more than half of the teachers stated that teaching practices and processes were affected adversely by Covid-19 and that they received some support from the administration during that time.

Qualitative findings

To further gain explanations of certain questions in the questionnaire, we decided to collect in-depth data using semi-structured interviews with a cohort of Palestinian women educators. The themes that emerged from the interviews focused on the challenges that teachers faced when adapting their teaching to online teaching, the strategies they used to cope with this shift, the level of awareness of reflection, the various strategies used to reflect, and finally, the actions that teachers take after they reflect. The participants were referred to as T1, T2, etc. to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The three major themes are shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7 - Themes and Subthemes

Theme 1: Challenges in coping with online teaching	Theme 2: Pedagogical practices to adapt to online teaching under a pandemic	Theme 3: Kolb's Cycle, use of reflection strategies, and action plan
Suthemes	Subtheme	Subthemes
A. Preparation time **B.** Demotivation of students	**A.** Strategies and support	**A.** Familiarity with Kolb's ELC **B.** Strategies of reflection and revising practices

Theme 1: Challenges in coping to online teaching

While this theme was not directly intended for the research purpose and questions, it has emerged from teachers' answers. This demonstrated that teachers went through challenging times while shifting to online teaching under a pandemic and that related to both the minimal support they received from designated parties as well as the lack of learners' enthusiasm.

A.   Preparation time

Many teachers were neither ready nor well prepared to shift to online teaching as T2 stated *"students and teachers we are ill-prepared"*. Many teachers complained about the fact that they had to create readiness amongst students, which was exhausting, as T5 stated *"the learning environment was not good"*. Most teachers needed more time to adapt and cope to prepare pedagogical strategies to engage students and to plan for assessment tools and strategies. Almost all teachers needed more time to plan and think of ways to accommodate different students' needs during online teaching. As participating teachers come from different experiences and backgrounds, the majority of them needed time to learn about the online platforms and using PowerPoint. They had to learn these while at the same time using them to teach, so no time was left for processing. As for assessments, most teachers opted out of assessments due to the difficulty of conducting them remotely as T5 mentioned *"assessment was a challenge to think of doing, evaluating students remotely was not easy"*, while only a very small number were able to conduct them without further stating whether they were successful or not.

B.   Demotivation of students

Students were unmotivated and uninterested from the teachers' perspective. One teacher mentioned that students were able to get information, but they were not motivated or engaged to participate as T2 mentioned *"students are not interested, and they do not care about the information nor the content "*.

Despite the technical problems and inability to connect to the net many times, a few teachers reported that there was some success in merging synchronous and asynchronous learning.

Theme 2: Pedagogical practices to adapt to online teaching under a pandemic

This theme addresses the strategies that teachers adapted through their online teaching as well as the kind of support they received to help them cope with the adaptations.

A. Strategies and support

As for ways to cope with the online shift in education, most teachers used strategies through the breakout rooms in the online platforms to brainstorm and discuss certain concepts. Many teachers used strategies such as "note taking, summarising, questioning, and modelling" as T1 reported to cope with the shift. Most teachers said they got some support from IT and through collaboration amongst their colleagues. However, almost everyone stated that there was minimal support to their pedagogical practices as T5 reported *"I did not get any help with regards to the pedagogy of teaching online, but we had the IT support needed "*

Theme 3: Kolb's Cycle, use of reflection strategies, and action plans

This theme addresses the use of Kolb's ELC by the teachers and the type of reflection and revising strategies they employed throughout their online teaching.

A. Familiarity with Kolb's ELC

Only a few teachers stated they are familiar with Kolb and his reflection cycle. Those teachers seem to go through the cycle of experiential learning through their teaching. However, the majority were not familiar with Kolb's ELC. They mentioned that they use reflection as a strategy but without being clear about the steps they go through and without documenting their process. In that regard, T2 stated: *"I ask my students to describe, interpret, and evaluate things for me. I use it while teaching and after, but it is not documented"*. Other teachers declared that they lacked knowledge about Kolb and stated that reflection and thinking strategies were neglected and not given priority during online teaching as T4 mentioned: *"the online process and thinking strategies and reflection were the least issues I thought about"*. Many teachers stated they were under a massive burden to teach online and that their focus was on learning the platforms and how to use them and thus there was minimal time to think of reflection or give it any importance.

B. Strategies of reflection and revising practices

Various tools for reflection were employed by teachers. Some examples were cooperating with other colleagues to facilitate the use of online tools including screen sharing, using breakout rooms with students, and adding visuals such as aids. For example, T5 said: *"Mainly, I tend to keep in touch with my colleagues, sharing my concerns with them and discussing possible solutions for new emerging challenges"*. A few teachers stated that they evaluate their own performance when they watch their own video recordings and try to change some things for the upcoming lessons.

Many teachers did not have time to reflect, though it was necessary, especially during online teaching. Some teachers said that they would use the reflection to plan as T3 stated *"My focus was on making connections and associations between each class"*. While others used reflection to adapt their future lessons and their teaching practices, and some mentioned that they rely on their experience to adapt their lessons instead of reflecting. Most of the teachers reported that for ways of reflection, they just used the chatting technique to talk to their students to collect reflection which is more like a discussion form. However, it was not clear whether it was structured or organised. The act of reflection was not a core educational goal, and it was not purposeful. In other words, reflection was not rooted nor planned as a guided action neither individually nor in groups.

Teachers sought solutions to ongoing challenges neglecting the importance of self-reflection as a tool of empowerment. However, a small sample confirmed their implementation of the ELC cycle which immensely affected their teaching practices and that of their students. One participant said: "I *always reflect on my teaching practices. I write down notes, I observe my colleagues' practices and strategies through constant discussions, and I sometimes reflect in a loud voice with my students.*"

To conclude, the main findings of the research that answer the main research question reveal the minimal impact of ELC on Palestinian women educators' online teaching practices despite the changes that occurred during teaching during a pandemic. The signs of reflection that some participants witnessed were not intentional as some teachers do reflect but not in a guided manner. In addition, there is a gap related to the teachers' level of awareness and acquisition of the theoretical construction of the whole cycle.

Findings show that the notion of reflection in its abstract and concrete practice is missing which in turn affects how teachers reflect. Teachers acknowledge the importance of reflection, but it is not applied in a systematic manner despite its importance. Nonetheless, while adapting their teaching practices, teachers used certain teaching strategies such as questioning, modelling, monitoring and evaluation, and giving clear instructions.

Discussion

This section attempts to offer interpretations of the results obtained in this study. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of Kolb's ELC on Palestinian women educators' online pedagogical practices during Covid 19.

Adaptation

*T*eachers were able to adapt their teaching practices and strategies despite the social and administrative challenges they encountered during the pandemic. Thus, teachers resorted to approaches that they already knew and were familiar with; neglecting any new or adaptive strategies related to online teaching as a paradigm. This is confirmed in their responses as they consider modelling, questioning, monitoring and evaluation, and giving clear instructions among the best practices they used. Nevertheless, they were unable to internalise the need to use reflective practices as part of their planning because they were not aware of it. In addition, responses were focused on the content rather than the learners and their needs and wants. This contradicts a study conducted by Lin et al. (1999) that claimed that reflection is an indispensable role in the process of teaching and learning. In our study, teachers were unable to visualise the wider perspective while teaching.

It was clear that women educators tried to alter the design and delivery of content, thus neglecting to add reflection as part of their lesson plans and self-assessment due to their lack of awareness in the discourse of Kolb's ELC. Simply, teachers optimised the use of scaffolded strategies like questioning, modelling, and giving clear instructions as the three most important tools to facilitate learning because they were aware of such practices during the face-to-face sessions. This contradicts Kolb's theory (1984) who believes that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be employed flexibly in a range of situations. Many teachers were not aware of the ELC cycle. The two major key factors in Kolb's ELC cycle are being aware of the subject content and one's own process of learning. Such findings are not aligned with the main theme addressed in Kolb's Learning cycle, both on the surface and at deep levels of thinking. Therefore, results obtained reveal that changes were not grounded in reflective thinking to gain and construct knowledge, but rather as a set of actions that might have occurred in an inconsistent manner that lacked discipline in cultivating a thought-provoking experience. Indeed, such processes were not associated with nor rooted in reflective thinking. According to Dewey, the process of reflection reorganises the experience and directs it. Thus, results in this study indicate that any signs of reflections were neither reciprocal nor meaningful. In addition, a lack of knowledge of entering the cycle at any stage and following a sequential manner is missing. This contradicts with Healey & Jenkins (2000) and Gibbs (1988) who advocated implementing a sequential cycle while starting at any stage.

Awareness

Many Palestinian women educators were not aware of the importance of reflection nor of using reflection strategies in the classrooms. In the cases where reflection was utilised, the focus was merely on the process of teaching online and not on the teachers' pitfalls and successes. That defies the main purpose of reflection that Finlay (2008) referred to as the core part of the teaching process to ensure proper growth of the professional practices of educators. However, participating teachers seem to have focused on themselves rather than on the process itself. There was no pedagogical guidance for teachers and this, in turn, minimised taking reflection into consideration in the teaching process because the focus was on delivery rather than giving meaningful experiences to students. There was a lack of support for teachers during online teaching, especially since there were different methodologies and pedagogies that the administration did not highlight to be used during online teaching. The priority by the administrators was basically the process and not the professional development of teachers during the process which is worrying. There was no modelling nor any teacher support during the lessons. This is in line with Shraim & Cromptom (2020) who voiced the need to address the pedagogical practices during online teaching rather than focusing on content, curriculum, and assessment. These findings correlate with Roberts (2008) who

stated that reflection is the process of thinking critically about behaviours and attitudes and not only about the outcome. That also complies with Wallace (1991) who stressed the importance of reflection for teachers to occur in a cycle based on their practices. The few teachers who were aware of the importance of reflection and employed it did not seem to be aware that reflection needed an action in order to be effective and to cause a change in their practices. There was minimal action taken after reflection and that was due to reasons such as lack of time, demotivation, the class is already over, nobody noticed, and the thinking of teachers that no difference will be made since students are not motivated nor do they care about the class. These findings are not consistent with Lin et al. (1999) who defined reflective thinking as a process of learning through active, intentional, and meaningful explorations. The results of the study indicate that teachers' reflections were mostly not intentional which shows a lack of awareness. Furthermore, due to the overwhelming online tasks, reflection as a component was not integrated as a core part of the lesson plans. This finding is also not consistent with the literature presented by Schon (1983) and Roberts (2008) who emphasised the importance of reflection in professional practices and added that reflection may happen not only after a teaching moment, yet simultaneously within the moment as well. Retrospectively, the use of multiple strategies they already know were simulations that were employed to keep the process of online teaching moving. Hereafter, this finding is consistent with Herman et al. (2020) who alluded to the fact that teachers used multiple strategies to cope with their roles as mothers and educators, they better relate to the students with great awareness and compassion. Moreover, teachers as mothers were exhausted and overburdened with their duties and responsibilities and that correlates with Herman et al. (2020) and his findings that the shift to online teaching put mother teachers under massive stress. That led to minimal effective and quality teaching.

According to Akella (2010), it is imperative for an educator to be critically reflective of their own culture, context, and teaching pedagogies in the classroom based on their needs. This claim is not consistent with this current study. Almost all the teachers agreed that reflection on their teaching practice is imperative. Even though some teachers reflected on their online teaching practices and were aware of the importance of reflection in teaching;, during the pandemic, Palestinian women teachers struggled with manifesting and understanding the modalities of deep reflection, especially that of Kolb's. This was also evident in the interviews as some teachers supported the idea of receiving more training to learn and understand how they can reflect, the stages of Kolb's ELC, and the tools to practise reflection before, during, and after giving the online class.

Strategies and Reflective Practices

Findings revealed that some teachers reflect but in an informal and unguided structure that does not target deep levels of reflection. Although many Palestinian women stated that they revise their practices, they were not able to clarify how they do that and mentioned informal conversations with colleagues as a tool. This can be associated with the study of AmidEast (2015) which proved the importance of Kolb's cycle of reflection and how it can produce reflective practitioners of the teachers' community. This study highlighted the importance of using reflection for ongoing development for teachers and how teachers who have learned and used Kolb's ELC cycle were more aware and could perform with higher quality than those who have not.

Conclusion

This study revealed a significant finding that despite the fact that Palestinian female teachers were not fully aware nor familiar with Kolb's experiential learning cycle, they were able to cope with challenges by creating pathways while experiencing online teaching during Covid-19. The integration of online teaching and learning in a post-pandemic era requires focused attention on reflection scaffolded by praxis for both teachers and learners. Therefore, teachers need to gain insight into the process of reflection and how it can be manipulated to attract learners by experiencing Kolb's ELC in order to improve their teaching pedagogy as reflective practitioners.

Recommendations

This study highlighted the importance of using Kolb's ELC cycle in teaching practices and it also shed the light on the level of awareness of using reflective practices among Palestinian women educators in Palestine during Covid 19. Considering the findings and discussion, we recommend the following:

- The need to integrate reflection as a guided action during the pre- and post-stages as processes of thinking while teaching and planning and infuse reflection in the lesson planning as an educational goal.
- Raise awareness of the importance of reflection as an ongoing linear process, types of reflection, and the strategies needed to properly implement it.
- Create a community of reflective practitioners who can professionally develop and socially interact to achieve better online learning outcomes. In addition, use reciprocal reflection during the process of self-growth and development.
- Engage learners in the process of reflection as part of promoting good thinking and learners' outcomes.

- Motivate teachers to engage in deep levels of reflection both in pre-service and in-service teacher education.
- Further research addressing the implementation and importance of various tools to effectively engage in the reflective process personally, and professionally in a contextualised hub.

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