

While the evidence is convincing, Okonta's 'blueprint for Africa's development' (Chapter 6) is lacking. Okonta argues that industrial development is not contradictory to African culture, but he falls short in suggesting a conciliatory path. Okonta's blueprint is highly reliant on Eric Reinhart's 'toolbox' of development, which is, quite simply, to industrialize. Okonta argues, in passing, that a strong central state with a strong mandate to industrialize is necessary for African countries to develop; and, to achieve that, mass political mobilization is necessary. In that sense, there is nothing new. In summary, the book's major contribution is a historical examination of Africa's persistent underdevelopment. With insightful examples of how other regions managed to avoid Africa's reality, it offers an alternative explanation that is worth thinking about.

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Areej ElSayary and Abdurashed Olowoselu (eds), *Overcoming Challenges in Online Learning: Perspectives from Asia and Africa*. London: Routledge (hb £100 – 978 1 032 37867 1). 2023, 196 pp.

The advancement of science and technology in Asia and Africa is proceeding at an accelerated pace. The internet and artificial intelligence, in particular, enable a quantum leap in the quality and accessibility of learning resources. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic dealt a severe blow to conventional educational models, prompting a widespread shift to virtual classrooms. This promoted the popularization of digital learning and distance education. Nevertheless, people are also facing many new challenges in the post-pandemic era. This raises a critical question: how can educators and students effectively navigate the newfound challenges in the educational landscape? *Overcoming Challenges in Online Learning: Perspectives from Asia and Africa* examines four distinct areas of education in Asian and African regions that were adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and addresses the challenges and barriers arising from the transition to online learning. It offers a visionary perspective that aims to inform and prepare educators, policymakers and researchers for the road ahead, ensuring that they are equipped to harness the potential of digital education while addressing the inherent challenges.


By artfully weaving together insights from China, Malaysia, Nigeria and UAE on online education and by analysing the current problems of online education, the book proposes creative solutions to learning challenges during and in the aftermath of a pandemic. It consists of four parts, each comprising four chapters. Part 1 explores situational leadership theory and its practical application in the field of educational management and leadership and discusses the challenges of and barriers to managing education for school improvement. Part 2 investigates aspects relevant to teaching practices and teachers' knowledge, beliefs, autonomy, meta-cognition, etc., and

highlights the obstacles, challenges and limitations of online learning. Part 3 delves into issues of instructional design and tools, online learning and blended learning and raises questions around technical challenges, methodological issues, behavioural challenges, and the lack of ICT resources and applications in Africa and Asia. Part 4 turns the book's focus to the management of learning environments, the design of e-learning courses and the different platforms used, with an emphasis on the application of micro-learning technologies.

In sum, *Overcoming Challenges in Online Learning* situates the research in the context of 'innovation experiences', explores theories of transformative learning, and delineates the ways in which leaders, educators, students and parents adapt to learning during a pandemic. The book elaborates on the challenges administrators in the education sector faced during the pandemic and the situational leadership approaches they adopted to deal with them. It aims not only to revolutionize education but also to enhance students' skills and empower teachers and students to set and achieve learning goals that align with their individual needs. The book also outlines some interactive learning communication methods and offers a variety of possibilities for virtual educational environments.

However, it is evident that the virtual lab cannot provide actual practical experience as students do not get the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the equipment. This is a widespread challenge in online education across Asia and Africa. Therefore, the best approach to education is to combine traditional and virtual labs, urging scholars to research further in this area and explore the benefits in various educational contexts. In some parts of the research for this book, the research situation resulted in uncertain assessments because of the pandemic and the relatively limited number of participants. With the development of education from traditional to computer-aided education and the addition of mobile internet, technology-assisted education has been an irreversible trend. Against this background, how to integrate education and technology well is a question that countries in Asia and Africa need to keep exploring in the future.

Overcoming Challenges in Online Learning: Perspectives from Asia and Africa explores online learning challenges and solutions in different Asian and African countries. The book not only provides a panoramic view of online learning, but also offers many practical insights and strategies as well as a clear vision for post-pandemic online education. It is highly informative and would be an essential book for educators, policymakers and researchers alike.

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