



STRATEGIC EDUCATION POLICY AND DIGITAL LEADERSHIP IN CONFLICT ZONES: A MULTIREGIONAL SYNTHESIS

¹**Khizer Hayat**

¹Master of Arts in Education Study Program, Faculty of Education, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia

*) Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to: E-mail:

khizer.hayat@uiii.ac.id

Abstract: *Over 222 million crisis-affected students worldwide face educational disruption due to armed conflict, displacement, and infrastructure collapse. This study finds determinants of strategic education policy and digital leadership that might guarantee educational continuity during displacement and conflict. The study uses qualitative and desk-based research methodology and four theoretical views to frame the analysis: Human Security Theory, Strategic Educational Leadership, Digital Equity in Crisis between 2018 and 2025, and the Capability Approach. The systematic literature review strategy was applied, as thematic coding was used to select 72 peer-reviewed and institutional sources among some 300 documents reviewed based on a relevant keyword search and relevance criteria. Based on those articles, institutional reports, and corroborating media documents published between 2018 and 2025, the paper provides a synthesis of international experience on the responses of education systems to disruption, political violence, infrastructure breakdown, and digital inequity. Inclusive, trauma-informed models of policy and interventions that a diverse set of blended learning approaches can address can be conceptualized using case examples in Jordan, Colombia, Bangladesh, Gaza, and Ukraine. The findings highlight the limitations of digital tools in fragile contexts marked by connectivity challenges, content bias, and surveillance gaps. The paper argues that emergency education is more of a strategic and moral duty than a noble cause that occurs to fill a service gap based on human rights and development concerns. This study recommends adaptive learning, moral technology use¹, psychological support, and interpersonal education to deal with a crisis. It focuses on conversations about value-based leadership in transforming emergencies into*

¹Moral technology use refers to the deployment of digital tools in a way that prioritizes privacy, inclusion, and contextual appropriateness, particularly in politically volatile or fragile environments.

opportunities and developing context- and resilience-centered educational institutions.

Keywords: *Digital leadership, Displaced learners, Education in emergencies, Human security, Strategic education policy*

Abstrak: *Lebih dari 222 juta siswa yang terkena dampak krisis di seluruh dunia menghadapi gangguan pendidikan akibat konflik bersenjata, pengungsian, dan runtuhnya infrastruktur. Studi ini menemukan faktor-faktor penentu kebijakan pendidikan strategis dan kepemimpinan digital yang dapat menjamin kelangsungan pendidikan selama pengungsian dan konflik. Studi ini menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif dan studi literatur serta empat pandangan teoretis untuk membingkai analisis: Teori Keamanan Manusia, Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Strategis, Kesenjangan Digital dalam Krisis antara tahun 2018 dan 2025, dan Pendekatan Kemampuan. Strategi tinjauan literatur sistematis diterapkan, dengan menggunakan pengkodean tematik untuk memilih 72 sumber tinjauan sejawat dan sumber institusional di antara sekitar 300 dokumen yang ditinjau berdasarkan pencarian kata kunci yang relevan dan kriteria relevansi. Berdasarkan artikel-artikel tersebut, laporan-laporan lembaga, dan dokumen media yang menguatkan yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2018 dan 2025, makalah ini memberikan sintesis pengalaman internasional tentang respons sistem pendidikan terhadap gangguan, kekerasan politik, kerusakan infrastruktur, dan ketidaksetaraan digital. Model kebijakan dan intervensi yang inklusif dan berbasis trauma yang dapat diatasi dengan beragam pendekatan pembelajaran campuran dapat dikonseptualisasikan dengan menggunakan contoh kasus di Yordania, Kolombia, Bangladesh, Gaza, dan Ukraina. Temuan ini menyoroti keterbatasan alat digital dalam konteks yang rapuh yang ditandai dengan tantangan konektivitas, bias konten, dan kesenjangan pengawasan. Makalah ini berargumen bahwa pendidikan darurat lebih merupakan tugas strategis dan moral daripada tujuan mulia yang terjadi untuk mengisi kesenjangan layanan berdasarkan hak asasi manusia dan masalah pembangunan. Studi ini merekomendasikan pembelajaran adaptif, penggunaan teknologi moral, dukungan psikologis, dan pendidikan interpersonal untuk menghadapi krisis. Studi ini berfokus pada diskusi tentang kepemimpinan berbasis nilai dalam mengubah keadaan darurat menjadi peluang dan mengembangkan lembaga pendidikan yang berpusat pada konteks dan ketahanan.*

Kata-kata kunci: *Kepemimpinan digital, Peserta didik yang terlantar, Pendidikan dalam keadaan darurat, Keamanan manusia, Kebijakan pendidikan strategis.*

INTRODUCTION

By 2023, more than 222 million children and adolescents living in crisis-hit regions needed an urgent educational response (Education Cannot Wait, 2024). Along with the ongoing battles in Ukraine, Gaza, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen, as well as Iran and Israel's missile strikes in June 2025, education is increasingly caught in the crossfire of geopolitical warfare. This upheaval not only interferes with the physical infrastructure but also threatens cognitive, emotional, and developmental child welfare. Emergency education has been described as one of the strategic pillars of the human security program, beyond being a development service established earlier. UNICEF (2024) stated that children living in conflict zones have less than half the chance to be enrolled in school, and many of them have to deal with extreme trauma, learning disruption, and unsafe conditions.

Governments and humanitarian institutions are increasingly keen on using digital platforms and mobile tools to continue education, e.g., mobile learning platforms and radio, AI education systems, and WhatsApp classrooms. These solutions are, however, significantly predetermined by the digital equity, political stability, and infrastructure capacity. For example, Ukraine switched to distance learning with a speedy implementation of the online platform (OECD, 2024; Times of India, 2025).

In this study, three theoretical perspectives are used. To begin with, Human Security Theory redefines education as an enabling right in vulnerable environments by avoiding radicalization and cross-generational poverty (UNESCO, 2023). Second, Strategic Educational Leadership focuses on the anticipatory plan, crisis decision-making planning, and adaptive governance (Dryden-Peterson, 2021). Third, a Digital Equity in Crisis agenda cautions against techno-solutionism and advocates broad and low-technology solutions that can work in unstable states (OECD, 2024; UNHCR, 2024). The Capability Approach proposed by Sen provides an additional supplement to the described frameworks, emphasizing that access is not the sole component of learning ability but is also associated with other factors such as dignity, autonomy, and psychological safety.

Table 1: Summary of Theoretical Frameworks Used in The Study

Theory	Focus	Relevance to Conflict Zones
Human Security	Education as a protective right	Reduces radicalization, fosters stability
Strategic Educational Leadership	Crisis planning, local leadership	Encourages flexible, adaptive governance
Digital Equity in Crisis	Tech access in emergencies	Warns against techno-solutionism
Capability Approach	Dignity, agency, autonomy	Emphasizes inclusion and learner well-being

The most recent studies also indicate the increasing overlap between climate-generated catastrophes and armed conflict, particularly in countries such as the Sahel and Horn of Africa. Instability is frequently worsened by drought, displacement, and resource conflict, making education more urgent and challenging. Education systems are forced not only to react to the existing acute crisis but also to the evolution of a new system of disruption that is difficult to distinguish between a humanitarian crisis and an environmental one.

This study aims to discuss the role strategic education policy and digital leadership can play in the conflict-ridden areas, and it will focus on the latest events in the regions of Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and the conflict between Iran and Israel. It is aimed to answer these questions:

1. What digital and non-digital strategies have governments and NGOs adopted to ensure the continuity of education?
2. Which leadership styles and policies have been indicated to be most viable?
3. What are some remainders of ensuring trauma-informed and inclusive learning in times of crisis?

This paper adds to an emerging discussion of the importance of protecting education in conflict areas, not just as a developmental requirement of concerned individuals but also as a human security essentiality, by assessing reports, policy arrangements, and case-based literature around the globe.

Conflict situations tend to impact any education system, directly damaging infrastructures, causing the displacement of learners and teachers, and having long-term psychosocial implications. Conflict areas also have a long-term discontinuity in education, and only every three out of 10 children in the refugee camp access primary education, and fewer than 10 access secondary education (INEE, 2023). These interruptions are more than just physical safety, and in the form of cognitive development, emotional stability, and future socioeconomic mobility, they interfere with (Dryden-Peterson, 2021).

The education system in some countries, such as Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan, has broken down following the ongoing civil wars and collapse of governance in the countries, as well as displacement. Here, the educational services end up being fragmented or duplicated due to the absence of cooperation between humanitarian aid and ministries of education (Brookings, 2022).

Electronic technology has been characterized as an essential means of continuing education in crisis conditions. Despite their promise, digital solutions often reveal pre-existing inequalities in fragile settings. (OECD, 2024; World Bank, 2023). For example, the Ministry of Education in Ukraine quickly switched to online platforms after the Russian invasion, building on previous investments in a digital infrastructure (World Bank, 2023). Nevertheless, digital learning reveals already pre-existing injustices. Students in rural areas, refugees, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) usually do not have access to the internet, electricity, or devices. According to UNHCR (2024), digital education tends to exacerbate the digital divide instead of reducing it and fails to support the most vulnerable learners unless planning is inclusive. In addition, the internet has sometimes been blocked by authoritarian regimes, including Iran, especially during political unrest. This factor has contributed significantly to stalling the educational process (Times of India, 2025).

Hybrid and low-tech have been suggested as answers to this. In Yemen, Gaza, and Sudan, principles apply printed learning kits, radio learning, and solar-operated learning systems to guarantee access to an offline environment (Save the Children, 2023). Such methods also recognize the necessity of digital equity, which is access

to technology and the ability to apply the technology in different settings (OECD, 2024).

Effective emergency leadership necessitates quick decisions and coordinated multi-sectoral planning. A hierarchical approach to leadership is usually unreliable in a crisis environment caused by bureaucracy and unresponsiveness on a local scale. Other researchers like Dryden-Peterson (2021) support a more decentralized system that would empower local educators, community leaders, and non-profit organizations to address the emerging needs flexibly. Lebanon and Jordan case studies show how well the multi-stakeholder governance principle works, through which the national education plans are co-designed with humanitarian agencies and local actors. The above models are distinctly different from the fractured leadership that has become prevalent in a country such as Afghanistan or Yemen, where the institution of state control has lost its ability to exercise planning and implementation in education (Brookings, 2022). Trauma-informed management and Digital ethics are also included in strategic educational leadership. The imposition of AI and digital surveillance instruments under ongoing conflict conditions poses the question of data protection, particularly in those cases where education data can be accessed by an objectionable regime or a malicious party (Winthrop & Ziegler, 2022). Leaders should also be oriented in pedagogy and curriculum, and ethically make decisions in times of crisis.

In emergency education, one of the issues is equity. Research articles have also indicated that girls, children with disabilities, and minority ethnic groups are disproportionately out of education during crises (UNICEF, 2024). In the Gaza Strip, the girls in particular attended less during outbreaks of high conflict because of girls' norms, protection, and facilities (Taub & Rubin, 2024). According to the UNHCR (2024), inclusive design of educational interventions is vital, i.e., the linguistic and cultural relevance of educational materials and the versatility of educational delivery instruction. As part of this, programs such as the Connected Education program have introduced community-focused models of providing refugees a voice in creating the curriculum and policy planning, improving their relevance and inclusiveness. Lastly, the Capability Approach suggested by Amartya

Sen provides a normative point of view for comprehending educational equity during times of crisis. It suffices that availability is not enough; learners need to be equipped with the skills, such as autonomy, agency, and resilience, to enjoy education (Sen, 1999). This system correlates with the increasing demand to develop education systems devoted to cognitive materials, psychosocial well-being, and social inclusion in emergencies.

Conflict situations in schools usually occur through the direct destruction of systems, displacement of educators and students, and lasting psychosocial impacts. Viewed through the lens of the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE, 2023), conflict-affected areas are characterized by the persistence of a severe educational instability, with only 30 percent of children affected by emergencies in refugee camps and fewer than 10 percent in secondary school. Such disruptions are not limited to physical safety and span into cognitive development, emotional stability, and long-term socioeconomic mobility (Dryden-Peterson, 2021). In other nations, such as Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan, education systems have been destroyed because of persistent civil wars, maladministration, and forced migration. The result in such contexts is disparate or redundant educational services provided by the humanitarian aid and the national ministries of education, who lack relevant coordination (Brookings, 2022). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023), education is one of the fundamental items in human security during emergencies, and one of its potential features can be the impact on the process of preventing radicalization, reducing the age of marriage, and encouraging peace.

Education in crisis has adopted digital technology to ensure that an education facility resumes. Many studies use EdTech platforms, mobile learning applications, or AI tutors in war-torn regions (OECD, 2024; World Bank, 2023). For instance, the Ministry of Education in Ukraine shifted to online resources quickly due to the invasion by the Russians, where investment in connectivity had already been made beforehand (World Bank, 2023). Nonetheless, Systematic inequalities in precarious environments tend to become apparent in digital learning, as it reveals existing inequalities. People who have become refugees, internally displaced persons

(IDPs), and rural students do not have electricity, internet, or gadgets. According to UNHCR (2024), inclusive planning is necessary to ensure that digital learning does not increase the digital divide and alienate the most vulnerable learners. Besides, dictatorial states, including Iran, have occasionally blocked the internet during a political crisis, yet another hindrance to education (Times of India, 2025). To defend against this, hybrid and low-tech types have come up. The organizations in Yemen, Gaza, and Sudan deliver printed learning kits, radio education, and solar-powered learning devices to guarantee offline access (Save the Children, 2023). Such methods focus on introducing digital equity as more than access to the technology, but rather the ability to utilize it in many different contexts (OECD, 2024).

Educational leadership involves adaptable decision-making abilities and proactive and intersectoral coordination during emergencies. The conventional top leadership models are characterized by a lack of responsiveness at the local level and bureaucratic inertia, making them ineffective in a crisis. Some scholars (Dryden-Peterson, 2021) propose the decentralized model, according to which local educators, community leaders, and non-governmental organizations could also be discovered, which can be receptive to changing needs. Lebanon and Jordan case studies indicate the efficiency of multi-stakeholder governance, where national education plans are elaborated in collaboration with the humanitarian agencies and local actors. Such models starkly contrast to a disintegrated leadership system in other nations, such as Afghanistan or Yemen, where the loss of state control has created immobility in education planning and execution (Brookings, 2022). Trauma-informed management and digital ethics are also part of strategic educational leadership. Data privacy issues arise when using AI and digital surveillance tools in conflict areas, potentially available to authoritarian governments or other antagonistic groups (Winthrop & Ziegler, 2022). Leaders should also be prepared regarding ethical decision making, curriculum, and pedagogy when in crisis.

Equity is a significant issue in emergency learning. It has been revealed that girls, children with disabilities, and minority ethnic groups disproportionately lack

access to education during a crisis (UNICEF, 2024). In the Gaza Strip, enrolment of girls declined when there were intensified conflicts because of gender norms, concerns on safety, and non-availability of facilities (Taub & Rubin, 2024). The UNHCR (2024) reminds us about including everyone in the design of any educational intervention, including providing the most linguistically and culturally relevant materials and teaching methods that can effectively consider learners' needs. Such initiatives as the Connected Education program have tested community-based approaches that represent the voices of refugees in curriculum design and policies, thereby making them more down-to-earth and inclusive. Lastly, we get the Capability Approach by Amartya Sen, which also gives a normative perspective to learning about educational equity during the crises. In essence, it posits that accessibility is not enough; learners should be put in a position to enjoy the benefits of schooling, which entails the endowment of capabilities, such as autonomy, agency, and the ability to withstand adversity, among others (Sen, 1999). The framework aligns with the increased request to change the perception of an education system focusing only on academic content to systems focusing on psychosocial well-being and social inclusion in an emergency.

In addressing the need to increase the educational resilience of conflict regions, the present research proposes the following policy initiatives:

1. Emergency response modules need to be institutionalized in governments' national strategies. Such frameworks should describe steps to follow in responding immediately (e.g., SMS messages, learning continuity kits), short-term transitions (e.g, mobile schools, radio learning), and long-term recovery (e.g, infrastructure construction, trauma counseling). The innovative system of Ukraine to develop online learning in a very short time is an example, and the inability to organize solutions in Yemen demonstrates the price of not having a policy.
2. The technology interventions have to use offline and low-power solutions specific to fragile situations. These are solar-powered devices, preloaded USBs, print material, and community-based centers. The success of using community radios and WhatsApp in Gaza, in case of the infrastructure

collapse, has shown that scalable, inclusive solutions, which demand few resources, have low connectivity requirements.

3. The training on trauma-informed planning, psychosocial support, and conflict-sensitive pedagogy should be done at the national, district, and school leadership levels. In this case, the training should comprise modules on how to go about grief management, accommodate displaced learners, and safeguard learner privacy in an online environment. With little support, the local educators in Sudan were also critical playmakers in the safe learning provision, and therefore, grassroots leadership development is necessary.
4. The education ministries must collaborate with humanitarian groups, technology companies, local non-governmental organizations, and community leaders to coordinate resources and plans. In Lebanon, the close cooperation between the Ministry of Education and UNHCR resulted in an inclusive system among the citizens and refugees. Such a shared responsibility model guarantees sustainability and reduces redundancy.
5. The foreign policy, particularly humanitarian diplomacy, should remember that education is a strategic component of peacebuilding and social cohesion. Global organizations and donor agencies have to be keen on prioritizing education spending in the crisis destination. Global support in the case of Gaza or Yemen can depoliticize and stabilize interventions because education is usually politicized there.
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METHODS

Methodology: Systematic Literature Review and Thematic coding

The study has a qualitative tone and a desk-based design, with the systematic literature review (SLR) approach and thematic coding serving as the study methodology. This study, which took place between February and June 2025, intends to synthesize international education policy and practice in conflict situations.

Sources Identification and Selection:

Reliable media outlets (Reuters, New York Times, Times of India) and platform databases (Scopus, JSTOR, SpringerLink) were also queried with specific keywords, e.g., education in emergencies, digital learning in conflict areas, trauma-informed leadership, crisis education policy, and hybrid learning in fragile states. Documents were required to meet the inclusion criteria, including the following:

1. Be published between 2025 to 2018
2. Be relevant to both conflict-related and displacement-oriented learning
3. Provide policy prescriptions or facts

Among about 300 preliminarily scanned texts, 72 final documents were limited to the thematic investigation. These included peer-reviewed outputs in journals, institutional reports, working papers, and news media, in the field.

Thematic Coding Technique:

A thematic coding was performed using an inductive method. The identified patterns that are recurring in the literature were determined and grouped into four principal themes:

1. Human Security and Psychosocial Effects
2. ICT Digital equity and infrastructure
3. Strategic Educational Leadership
4. Emergency Educational, Ethical, and Governance Matters

These were then projected onto the study's four underlying theories: Human Security Theory, Strategic Educational Leadership, Digital Equity in Crisis, and the Capability Approach.

Limitations:

As a desk-level study, the research is limited by secondary data, which can be biased regarding the institution (for example, donor-generated reports or state-sponsored media). Due to a paucity of fieldwork, triangulation and local validation

are not possible. Furthermore, due to the language limitations of the templates, only English-language sources were assessed, ruling out any local or grassroots perspectives. Despite these limitations, this synthesis can provide a broad overview of the multiregional panorama of emergency education practices, which is intended to be viewed as a conceptual and policy-based input rather than a finer-scale in-field study.

This section is marked by a discussion of how three countries, namely, Jordan, Colombia, and Bangladesh, have been integrating education in emergencies in meaningful ways that pertain to context-sensitive approaches. Jordan has been a pioneer in including Syrian refugee learners in public schools. Following the Syrian civil war that displaced millions of people, the Ministry of Education in Jordan, in collaboration with Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and UNICEF, initiated a system of schools that operate on a double-shift basis. This would have enabled Arab students living in Jordan to study both in the morning and afternoon, and Syrian refugees to be accommodated in the afternoon without depriving either of the two groups of people. Besides accessibility in physical terms, the government also rolled out a Catch-Up Programme aimed at helping older children who had years of schooling in their backgrounds. The psychosocial support and inclusive pedagogy training of the teachers and non-formal education and counseling services provided by the NGOs were also carried out. The GEM Report (2022) has also highlighted that Jordan's model teaches that the capacity of cross-sectoral collaborations can stretch from education to major protracted displacement cases.

Colombia was confronted by the crisis of access to education among 2 million Venezuelan migrants and refugees, which had manifested itself mainly in rural and underserved areas. The Colombian Ministry of Education, UNESCO, and Fundación Saldarriaga Concha rolled out a radio-based education program to respond to this. A lessons-on-air scheme was implemented with the “Escuela en Casa” program that aired daily with instruction connecting to the national curriculum on over 400 community stations. This was useful in accessing indigenous people and the Afro-Colombian community with poor internet connectivity. Furthermore, the teachers received training, and some of them were

to follow up through WhatsApp or home visits, combining them to produce hybrid support. This project demonstrated the applicability of low-tech interventions in continuity and inclusion in the case of a humanitarian crisis.

Bangladesh has received approximately 1 million displaced individuals in Cox Bazar since the influx of refugees of Rohingya ethnicity that happened in 2017 in Myanmar. The government, the BRAC, UNICEF, and Save the Children developed the Learning Competency Framework and Approach (LCFA) as a substitute for formal schooling, making organized and structured, non-formal, and multilingual education available within the camps. Teaching is done in Burmese and English to target numeracy, literacy, and life skills. The recruited teachers belong to the Rohingya ethnic group and are trained in terms of child protection and interactive training. According to UNICEF, as of 2023, more than 300,000 children are in LCFA programs, but there are still difficulties in providing a transition to formal secondary education.

Such cases confirm that flexible and community-based multisector strategies that use localized multisectoral means of delivering education effectively can implement education policies in even the most adverse humanitarian conditions. As illustrated in these case studies, emergency education needs to be beyond policy making; it requires a flexible delivery paradigm, local involvement, and interlevel coordination. Riding on these practical scenarios, the following section provides a thematic reading of cross-regional reactions towards conflict-related disruption of education. Based on international literature and statistics, it points out major trends, issues, and leadership approaches that characterize resiliency to crisis in education systems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The literature and global case studies identified four key findings that represent the crisis responsiveness capacity of education systems and leadership, which are themes that a reader may analyze. They are reported using Ukrainian, Gaza, Sudan, Iran, Israeli, and Yemen examples. Armed conflict usually causes the physical destruction of schools as well as psychological damage to learners. This

theme illustrates Human Security Theory, which views education as a right and protection that reduces vulnerability to violence and promotes long-term stability. In Gaza and Ukraine, thousands of schools were damaged or turned into shelters (UNESCO, 2023). The psychological disturbance of the children because of the trauma of the war has contributed to higher dropout rates and even loss of learning (Save the Children, 2023). Such conclusions indicate the significance of trauma-informed policy and leadership during emergencies. The trend also demonstrates the topicality of human security theory, which states that education can become a source of psychological safety and community stability. Learning continuity is drastically impaired without physical and emotional infrastructure, which is not considered by a holistic approach.

A mobile app, WhatsApp groups, radio transmissions, and AI tutors were critical to facilitating continued education access in regions such as Syria, Lebanon, and Ukraine (Khalil, 2023; World Bank, 2023). The rapid transition to remote learning in Ukraine following the Russian invasion can be explained by the fact that resilience is achieved through investing in digital infrastructure in advance. The theme is linked to the Digital Equity in Crisis framework since excessive use of high-tech tools in weak or dictatorial countries may interfere with access to education. There continue to be hybrid, offline-compatible models that remain imperative to resilience and inclusion.

Many education ministries do not have a crisis plan and multisector coordination. Poorly integrated humanitarian systems in Yemen and South Sudan mean that service delivery has been duplicated, there is ambiguity in their curriculum, and the resources are not utilized efficiently (INEE, 2023; Brookings, 2022). The example of Afghanistan is most vivid: since the Taliban once regained power in 2021, education planning failed, and the education of girls was suspended. On the other hand, Lebanon and Jordan have been prosperous in aligning their national education plans with those of the humanitarian stakeholders, and this has indicated that cross-sectoral partnership is possible. Such examples indicate that educational continuity depends almost as heavily on vision as leadership as on material provisions. Such a finding is based on the necessity of Strategic

Educational Leadership, which promotes multi-stakeholder coordination. Without anticipatory planning, education systems cannot be adaptive to conflict zones.

Though the possibilities of technology are immense, not every learner can enjoy the same. Devices, the internet, or electricity are usually not present in refugees, girls, rural students, and children with disabilities (UNHCR, 2024). In Palestine, hundreds of students did not receive any remote learning during bombardments because electricity and digital tools were unavailable (Taub & Rubin, 2024). The OECD (2024) prescribes low-tech and offline-compatible solutions, which can be installed quickly in fragile settings. Digital learning can increase the disparity between connected and disconnected students unless designed in an equity-sensitive way. The policies need to be inclusive, not only in investing in tech. This supports the Capability Approach that Sen presents, which means that substantial access to education should incorporate autonomy, safety, and equity, in addition to connectivity. Technological applications should also be created with the consideration of marginalized learners.

Table 2. Comparative Overview of Education Responses in Conflict Zones

Country/Region	Type of Conflict	Education Strategy	Key Challenges	Notable Outcomes
Ukraine	Foreign invasion	Government-led digital platforms, mobile apps	Infrastructure loss, trauma	Rapid shift to remote learning
Gaza	Military occupation	WhatsApp groups, community radio	Power cuts, device gaps	Irregular access, urban-rural exclusion
Sudan	Civil conflict/displacement	Mobile schools, NGO informal centers	Coordination gaps, mass displacement	Localized learning, limited national oversight
Iran–Israel	Missile warfare	Emergency closures, No digital backup	Internet shutdowns, political disruption	Complete education halt in June 2025

Yemen	Prolonged civil war	Printed kits, radio, and community hubs	Gender bias, infrastructure collapse	High dropout, increased early marriage risks
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Note. Data obtained and presented in the tables are based on a variety of sources, namely UNESCO (2023), UNICEF (2024), GEM Report (2022), and Times of India (2025). This table illustrates the overview of strategic responses to education disruptions in five significant conflict-affected areas.

The ethical issues about conducting emergency education in conflict areas are complicated and under-analyzed. Whether it concerns which learning is made an educational priority, data collection on vulnerable learners, or many other questions, educators and policymakers must undertake a delicate set of ethical considerations. Data privacy is one of the key issues. The use of AI-based platforms in authoritarian states (like Iran) has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of students, since such systems could obtain sensitive personal information. Winthrop and Ziegler (2022) argue that education technologies lack strict safety measures, and in their absence, they may turn into surveillance apparatuses, which expose learners to traumatization and political oppression. Also, there are ethical concerns regarding its resource allocation. Humanitarian organizations are under pressure to lean towards scalable options in education technology, which can be apt to favor urban or evening learners in a way that is out of proportion, leaving rural learners and those with disabilities in a disadvantaged position. This prejudice contradicts Sen's principle of equity in the Capability Approach. Another dilemma includes language and cultural adjustment. There are emergency programs that introduce foreign pedagogical models, ignoring local traditions, rendering learners and teachers powerless, unknowingly. To overcome such dilemmas, a scaffold of ethical educational leadership is necessary: there is a need to equilibrate the urgency and inclusivity, innovation and protection, donor expectations and community values. Moral technology uses digital tools prioritizing privacy, inclusivity, and contextual compatibility, particularly in politically sensitive or fragile environments.

However, in addition to technical challenges, there are ethical quandaries in emergency education that must be investigated further along the lines of stakeholder and normative ethics. Right-based morality underlines the idea by stating that just

including learners is insufficient, as they risk being exploited, monitored, or excluded. It is especially relevant in the case of deploying AI-based education tools in totalitarian environments (e.g., Iran) because the accompanying surveillance technologies are likely to be employed as security devices rather than learning aids. The consequentialist logic can lead donors or agencies to prioritize efficiency and scalability, such as urban digital hubs, while excluding rural or minority learners. The stakeholder analysis reveals a contradiction between donor objectives (cost-efficiency, expediency of results) and local community-oriented goals (cultural protection, trauma treatment for minorities, and language representation). Such decisions ignore instructors and students, who are the most affected. Ethical school governance must therefore be prospective, inclusive, and flexible, implying a balance of urgency and equity, inventiveness and protection. Following the Sen Capability Approach, ethical practices must enhance learners' ability to better their dignity, agency, and cultural belonging--rather than simply supplying content.

As a study done in the education in emergencies field, this paper is of benefit as four theoretical perspectives: Human Security Theory, Strategic Educational Leadership, Digital Equity in Crises, and Capability Approach of Sen were applied and coined to understand the responses concerning the policies in conflict areas. The placement of digital education and leadership in the context of human security enables the research to broaden the framework of education as a right of defence and not simply as development. It also depicts that strategic leadership cannot be used effectively without trauma sensitivity and ethical governance. Included in digital equity and capability theory is a normative component that introduces the dignity and free thinking of the learner to the marginalized and displaced groups. It is also an integrative approach that provides the conceptual basis of future research and policy development that can be carried out in fragile and crisis-affected education systems.

This paper argues that learning in conflict zones should be informed by flexible and ethically driven techniques beyond infrastructure, including dignity, trauma assistance, and community engagement. Governments and humanitarian organizations could provide education in emergency planning systems, provide

offline alternatives, and make digital tools more human rights-compliant. Learning must be sustained during crises through multi-sectoral collaboration and inclusive planning.

CONCLUSIONS

This research validates that education systems in conflict-stricken areas experience physical and psychological disruptions and digital interruptions. By using the literature analysis of cases in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, and the Iran-Israel conflict, one can observe that the temporary school shutdown, destruction of the infrastructure, and psychological traumas highly affect the learners. Technology has also opened up new possibilities for continuing learning; yet, it is inextricably linked to digital equity, political character, and current leadership skills.

It is not enough that strategic education leadership shifts to reactive measures, as strategic education planning has to be proactive and inclusive. The nations that had previously invested in digital infrastructure- the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Brazil- were more resilient, and other countries that had not developed coordination mechanisms- Yemen and Sudan- experienced fragmented or failed education responses. There should be a balance between low-tech and offline solutions on the one hand and high-tech tools on the other hand to support marginalized learners.

1. In enhancing educational continuity throughout a crisis, the following are some of the recommendations:
2. Embrace the Federal Education Emergency Framework
3. In the context of the education strategy, ministries should institutionalize national planning modules related to crisis responses, such as hybrid, digital, and offline learning options.
4. Safe and Robust Infrastructure Investment
5. Offer learning gadgets powered by the sun, learning apps without internet, and physical learning kits that guarantee continuity among rural and displaced communities.
6. Educate the Leaders in Crisis and Trauma-Informed Management

7. Provide national, district, and school leaders with the abilities to prepare emergency plans, use mental health mindfulness, and flexibly mobilize resources.
8. Develop Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships
9. Promote collaboration between education ministries, humanitarian groups, technology companies, and local communities to maximize resources and touch.
10. Make Align Education consistent with Human Security and Diplomacy Objectives.

Value learning as a central lobby of peacebuilding and resilience. Incorporate it in foreign policy, aid programs, and conflict resolution. Education should no longer be considered a minor issue, but a savvy one in humanitarian, development, and security strategies. Future efforts to arrive at SDG 4 (ensure inclusive and quality education) would remain out of reach as long as the international community does not focus its policies and funding on supporting conflict-affected learners. In the aftermath, the global education policy cannot afford to deal with emergency measures anymore, but must transform them to ensure the long-term sustainability of the educational system. Education is critical to tackling causative factors of disruption, given the incorporation of education in the national security strategies, climate change adaptation plans, and migration management. The areas of future research interest can be listed as real-time impact assessment of hybrid learning models during emergencies and ethical implications of AI in weak scenarios. In addition, enrollment cannot be of sufficient value to gauge the progress of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) regarding serious access, inclusion, and psychosocial prevalence in conflict zones. Alignment of the cross-sector to the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) frameworks will play a key role in maintaining education as the facilitator of stability, dignity, and recovery.

Although this paper presents a complete desk-based research on policy in conflict areas about education, it is essential to conduct further empirical research. In the future, the following studies are to be prioritized:

1. Case studies focused on applying emergency strategies by local educators and school leaders.
2. Prolonged longitudinal research analyzing the long-term effect of the hybrid learning models in the post-conflict setting on educational achievement.
3. Comparative study of AI-based learning in authoritarian and democratic crises, focusing on the issue of data confidentiality and the dangers of surveillance.
4. To learn about the intersectional exclusion, gender, and adaptive pedagogies in displacement conditions, research on gender and disability is required.
5. Policy experimentation of the effectiveness of mobile schools, offline-first application, and trauma-informed teacher training in fragile settings.

Closing these gaps will enable future research to support more realistic, comprehensive, and ethical education systems that adapt to short-term shocks and more gradual disruptions.

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