Help Me to Help You: Online Educators' Leadership Styles and *Sources of Their Support*

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Abstract

Online education is manifested on three scales: formal, semi-formal and non-formal. The degree of development of each of the scales depends on the socioeconomic, technical, technological development of one country, administrative-legal and political system, its civilization and cultural milieu. It is manifest on platforms and has rules, frameworks, ranges and limitations, which usually is not studied in the formal educational systems, as it is not a part of the curriculum, or is not referred to the system of functioning large and small scales. Thus, as a consequence, educators find themselves in a digital space and become victims with burnout, destroyed knowledge and untapped potential of educational platforms. The subject of this study investigates the relationship between teacher educational background, their leadership styles and support on language teaching platforms. Results showed that educators respond to duty requests, and lead the teaching process in a parallel manner using autocratic, democratic, and liberal leadership styles, and their preferences are not related to educational background. Most of the teachers reported that they have the support from the platform where they teach, educational or other experts' association. In contrast, a small number of participants said they do not receive any support or they have to rely on themselves. The paper discusses the theoretical and practical aspects, in an effort to improve and strengthen program oriented to improvement of online educators' skills and their professional inclusion. Results are useful for policy makers, managers, developers and experts in a field of online education.

Key words: online educators, leadership style, professional support, online platforms

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