

Impact of School Principals' Leadership on Teachers' Readiness for Virtual Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic at Schools in the United Arab Emirates

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Abstract

This study explored the perceptions of schoolteachers about principals' leadership roles in transforming face-to-face to online learning and investigated teachers' readiness to switch to virtual learning at their schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic that led to a worldwide lockdown. An online survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 64 teachers working at different schools in Al Ain, UAE. The questionnaire focused on their perception of their readiness to change to virtual learning and the principals' leadership with respect to three dimensions: teachers' technical skills, teachers' confidence in their abilities to change, and teachers' perception of the problems they encountered while transitioning to virtual learning when the COVID-19 pandemic caused schools in the UAE to go online in March 2020. The findings showed no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers in their opinions on teachers' technological skills, teacher confidence, perception of challenge, and the principal's leadership roles. Also, there was no statistically significant difference between teachers of different age groups with respect to their perceptions of readiness and the principal's leadership roles for the changes in schools to go e-learning. Teachers' perceived problems were not significantly impacted by gender, age, teaching experience, school type, and teaching cycles (grade levels). However, it was significantly influenced by their technological skills.

Keywords: COVID-19, virtual learning, leadership, teachers' readiness, teachers' technology skills, teachers' confidence