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STUDYING TEACHING PRESENCE IN RELATION TO LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN BLENDED LEARNING COURSES IN A TANZANIAN UNIVERSITY: A MIXED DESIGN APPROACH

Abstract:

Teaching presence influences student learning, motivation, satisfaction and performance in blended learning courses. Many studies have focused on understanding teaching presence using quantitative measures only. This study explores perceptions of teaching presence (TP) in relation to academic performance among instructors and students in blended learning (BL) courses in Tanzania. Six instructors and 651 students were involved in the study. We examined student perception of TP, the role of the instructor, and how TP relates to performance. Data were obtained using a TP scale, interviews and focus group discussion. The results of the qualitative data show that all instructors involved in the study regard content delivery as their main teaching presence. Instructors also viewed provision of notes, assignments, and questions (facilitation) as their second main role of TP. Students report a high teaching presence in all BL courses studied. Also, students regarded group discussion as the main teaching presence. They described their instructors as playing roles in facilitating the lessons, delivering content, directing and organizing courses they taught. The study finds no significant gender differences in students' performance. The student reported TP significantly predict their performance scores. While students' characteristics such as gender have shown no influence on students' performance, course type and teaching presence influence students' performance. Instructors favour traditional teaching roles in BL courses and exalt a high teaching presence as reported by students. The implications of the study are discussed.

Keywords:

teaching presence, student performance, blended learning, mixed method, community of inquiry

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