

EXPLORING THE EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS IN AN ONLINE LEARNING COURSE

Background

Today, educators recognize that well-designed online environments can facilitate quality education, promote student engagement, and ensure student satisfaction. As digital technologies continue to play a critical role in the educational landscape, educators need to advocate for the intentional design of study environments that incorporate these technologies [1]. By emphasizing the importance of intentionally integrating digital tools, educators can optimize the learning experience and realize the full potential of educational initiatives in the digital age.

Aim

This research aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of lessons learned in implementing digital learning strategies achieved through the online learning course.

Methods

This nonexperimental quantitative descriptive research study aimed to evaluate online learning course using the Evaluation Toolkit to Appraise eLearning Courses (Cronbach $\alpha = 0.94$). The sample comprised 33 academics selected from a university in Slovenia, with preference given to educators who exhibited a strong interest in collaborative endeavors and expanding their expertise in designing, implementing, and assessing online learning units. Data were collected in May 2022 through an online questionnaire, and subsequent analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 26.0. The quantitative data were examined using descriptive statistics and linear regression analysis, with statistical significance determined at a threshold of $p \leq 0.05$.

Results

Participants rated the online course highly ($\bar{x} = 4.37$, $SD = 0.511$ [95% CI 4.19, 4.47], $p < 0.001$), indicating a positive learning experience. The domains with the highest ratings were outcomes, structures, and community ($\bar{x} = 4.59$, 4.47 and 4.32, respectively). Items with high ratings included effective organization of course content ($\bar{x} = 4.64$), facilitating learning and reflection through discussion forums ($\bar{x} = 4.69$), and creating engaging learning activities for online delivery ($\bar{x} = 4.74$). The lowest rated items also received relatively high scores, such as appropriateness of allotted time ($\bar{x} = 3.55$) and providing useful feedback and opportunities for collaborative learning ($\bar{x} = 3.89$ and $\bar{x} = 4.71$, respectively). No significant regression equation ($p > 0.05$) was found between participants' length of service and course evaluations.

Discussion

The shift from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered pedagogy is a complex and gradual one. It depends on factors such as educational policy, teaching culture, the willingness of institutions to invest in digital technologies, and the knowledge and willingness of teachers to embrace this new teaching paradigm [2].

Implications and future perspectives

To facilitate the transition from the traditional teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered pedagogy, teacher training is crucial. It is essential to equip educators with a solid understanding of the fundamentals of digital learning so that they can develop and implement strategies that meet the needs of 21st century learners.

References

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2. Alenezi M. Digital Learning and Digital Institution in Higher Education. *Educ Sci*, 13:88, 2023.