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Keywords: Technology-Enhanced Learning, student engagement, academic performance, digital learning tools, mixed-methods, TEL integration, higher education, educational technology

Published By

Notation Publishing

wwwnotationpublishing.com

Exploring the Role of Technology-Enhanced Learning in Improving Student Engagement and Academic Performance

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) on student engagement and academic performance among undergraduate students. Using a mixed-methods approach, data was gathered through structured surveys of 300 students and 30 educators, assessing engagement levels, perceived academic impact, and TEL effectiveness. The findings indicate that frequent TEL users report higher engagement and perceived academic benefits compared to those with minimal TEL usage. A t-test confirmed a

statistically significant difference in academic impact scores between high and low TEL users. Educators highlighted the need for structured TEL integration to optimize learning outcomes. These results underscore the potential of TEL to improve educational experiences and suggest that effective implementation strategies can enhance its benefits. Future research should examine longitudinal effects and address accessibility challenges to support inclusive TEL practices.

Introduction

Background

The rapid integration of digital technologies into educational environments has transformed the way students learn and engage with course material. This shift, often referred to as Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL), encompasses a range of tools such as online learning management systems, interactive simulations, collaborative platforms, and mobile learning applications

(Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2013). TEL aims to provide students with flexible, personalized, and interactive learning experiences that encourage engagement and improve academic outcomes (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). In recent years, TEL has seen increased implementation across primary, secondary, and higher education, fueled by the potential to enhance accessibility and support diverse learning styles (Deng & Tavares, 2013).

However, the effectiveness of TEL on student engagement and academic performance remains a topic of debate. While many studies highlight TEL's positive effects, some research suggests that the impact may vary depending on factors such as course design, technology access, and educator expertise (Selwyn, 2016). With student engagement being a key predictor of academic success, exploring how TEL influences engagement and performance is crucial to understanding its role in educational improvement (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Problem Statement

Despite the potential of TEL to enhance educational outcomes, there is a gap in understanding its specific impact on student engagement and academic performance, particularly in diverse and large-scale educational contexts. Existing literature provides mixed results, with some studies reporting positive outcomes and others indicating limited effects (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014). This inconsistency highlights a need for further investigation into how TEL contributes to student engagement and which aspects of TEL are most effective in promoting academic success.

Objectives and Hypotheses

Objectives:

1. To evaluate the impact of TEL on student engagement in academic settings.
2. To analyze the relationship between TEL usage and academic performance.
3. To identify barriers and challenges to effective TEL implementation.

Hypotheses:

1. TEL positively influences student engagement by providing interactive and accessible learning environments.
2. TEL usage is associated with improved academic performance compared to traditional learning methods.
3. The effectiveness of TEL is influenced by technology access, instructor preparedness, and course content design.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it addresses the growing need to understand how TEL can be effectively implemented to maximize educational outcomes. By investigating TEL's impact on engagement and performance, this research provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and institutions aiming to enhance learning experiences in the digital age (Carvalho, Pereira, & Cardoso, 2019). Additionally, identifying the barriers to TEL

implementation can inform policies and training programs that better equip educators to integrate technology into their teaching, ultimately supporting students in achieving academic success (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

Literature Review

Key Concepts/Theoretical Framework

Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) is a broad concept encompassing various digital tools and methods designed to improve learning experiences. Key theories that underpin TEL's effectiveness include the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Constructivist Learning Theory. Self-Determination Theory, proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), suggests that engagement and motivation in learning are significantly influenced by the fulfillment of three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. TEL often supports these needs by allowing learners to take ownership of their learning pace (autonomy), access interactive and varied resources (competence), and engage in collaborative environments (relatedness) (Deng & Tavares, 2013).

Constructivist Learning Theory, developed by Piaget (1972), emphasizes that learners construct knowledge through experiences and reflections. TEL platforms facilitate this active learning process by providing interactive and multimedia-rich resources that enable learners to engage more deeply with the content, supporting the creation of meaningful knowledge. Tools such as gamification (Hamari, Koivisto, & Sarsa, 2014) and social learning platforms (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016) are rooted in constructivist approaches, offering immersive environments that encourage critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving.

Previous Studies on TEL and Student Engagement

Research indicates that TEL positively impacts student engagement by making learning more interactive, accessible, and aligned with modern students' digital preferences. For instance, Means et al. (2013) conducted a meta-analysis on online and blended learning, finding that TEL approaches generally promote higher engagement than traditional methods, particularly in self-paced environments where students can learn flexibly. Similarly, Deng and Tavares (2013) found that online community platforms like Moodle and Facebook provide spaces where students feel encouraged to participate actively, fostering a sense of belonging that contributes to higher engagement.

Studies have shown that gamification techniques, like reward systems, progress tracking, and competition, enhance engagement and motivation in educational settings (Hamari et al., 2014). In addition, Selwyn (2016) argues that social learning tools, such as collaborative forums and discussion boards, provide students with opportunities for meaningful peer interactions, fostering engagement by promoting shared learning and accountability.

Previous Studies on TEL and Academic Performance

The influence of TEL on academic performance has yielded mixed results. Some research highlights TEL's potential to enhance academic outcomes, primarily through personalized and

adaptive learning experiences. Carvalho, Pereira, and Cardoso(2019) indicate that TEL's ability to offer tailored learning paths can help address diverse student needs, leading to improved performance. They highlight that features such as immediate feedback in quizzes, multimedia resources, and self-assessment tools enable students to engage in continuous improvement.

Alrasheedi, Capretz, and Raza (2015) conducted a review focusing on mobile learning, showing that TEL tools can positively impact performance, especially in higher education. However, they caution that TEL's effectiveness largely depends on students' self-regulation skills and technology access. In contrast, Garrison and Kanuka (2004) observed that blended learning, while fostering engagement, did not consistently improve academic performance across all subjects. They suggested that the variability in results could be due to differing levels of integration and effectiveness in TEL implementation.

Gaps in Research

Although TEL shows promising potential in enhancing engagement and academic performance, several gaps remain in the current literature:

1. **Diverse Learning Environments:** Much of the research focuses on TEL's impact in higher education, with limited studies examining its effects on engagement and performance in primary and secondary education (Wong, Chai, & Mokhtar, 2019). This gap highlights the need to understand TEL's influence across different educational levels and settings.
2. **Longitudinal Effects of TEL:** Few studies have explored the long-term effects of TEL on academic performance and engagement. Most research captures short-term impacts, leaving gaps in understanding how sustained TEL use might influence student outcomes over time (Means et al., 2013).
3. **Impact of Educator Preparedness:** The role of educator readiness in TEL implementation is underexplored. Effective use of TEL requires technical and pedagogical skills, and without adequate training, educators may struggle to maximize TEL's potential benefits. Selwyn (2016) points out that TEL effectiveness can be hindered if educators are not equipped to integrate digital tools meaningfully into their teaching.
4. **Impact on Diverse Student Demographics:** Research on TEL often overlooks diverse student demographics and their unique needs, such as low-income students who may face access challenges or students with learning disabilities who might require specialized TEL features (Greenhow & Lewin, 2016).

Summary

This review highlights the theoretical foundation and empirical support for TEL as a tool for enhancing student engagement and potentially improving academic performance. While the positive impacts of TEL on engagement are well-supported, findings on academic performance are mixed, suggesting that outcomes may vary based on factors like implementation quality, technology access, and learner autonomy. This study addresses gaps in TEL literature by examining its impact on engagement and performance within a mixed-methods framework,

exploring the influence of educator readiness, and assessing TEL's application across diverse student demographics. By focusing on these underexplored areas, this study contributes valuable insights for improving TEL strategies and supporting effective, inclusive educational practices.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-methods research design to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights into the effects of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) on student engagement and academic performance. The quantitative component measured changes in engagement levels and academic performance through surveys, while the qualitative component provided in-depth perspectives from participants. This design allowed for a comprehensive analysis of TEL's impact by combining measurable outcomes with personal insights from students and educators.

Sample Size:

The study involved a sample of 300 undergraduate students and 30 educators from various institute

Selection Criteria:

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- **Students** enrolled in courses that actively used TEL tools (e.g., learning management systems, interactive quizzes, collaborative tools).
- **Educators** who integrated TEL tools in their curriculum and had at least one year of experience using TEL in their teaching.

Demographics:

Participants represented diverse academic disciplines, including STEM, humanities, and social sciences, and varied demographic backgrounds. Student participants included individuals from different year levels, ranging from first-year to final-year undergraduates, ensuring a broad representation of TEL's impact across academic stages.

Data Collection

Surveys:

Quantitative data on engagement and perceptions of TEL were collected using structured Likert-scale surveys administered to both students and educators. The survey included questions on:

- **Engagement:** Frequency of interaction with TEL tools, perceived engagement with course content.
- **Academic Impact:** Self-assessed impact of TEL on learning outcomes and grades.
- **Perceptions of TEL:** Ease of use, accessibility, and effectiveness of TEL tools.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis:

The quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with **SPSS software**. Key analyses included:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency counts and means for engagement levels, academic outcomes, and TEL perceptions.
- **Inferential Statistics:** A **t-test** was conducted to compare academic performance between students who used TEL frequently and those who did not. Pearson correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship between TEL engagement and academic performance.

Qualitative Data Analysis:

The qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Coding was conducted to identify recurring themes in participant experiences with TEL, including perceived benefits, challenges, and suggestions for improvement. Common themes such as increased engagement and access issues were categorized to provide deeper insight into TEL's effects.

Limitations

1. Self-Reported Data:

Reliance on self-reported survey data for engagement levels and TEL perceptions may introduce response bias, as students and educators might overestimate or underestimate their engagement with TEL tools.

2. Sample Diversity:

Although the study includes participants from multiple academic disciplines, the sample is limited to one institution, which may affect the generalizability of results across different educational contexts or institutions.

3. Technology Access:

Differences in student access to digital devices or stable internet may have affected the consistency of TEL experiences, potentially impacting engagement and academic outcomes in ways not directly measured.

4. Limited Longitudinal Data:

The study captures only a snapshot of TEL's impact on engagement and performance, lacking longitudinal data to assess TEL's effects over multiple academic terms or years.

Findings

1. Engagement Levels Across TEL Usage Frequency

- **High TEL Users:** Students who frequently used TEL tools reported the highest average engagement score of **4.2** on a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Medium TEL Users:** Students with moderate TEL usage reported an average engagement score of **3.5**.
- **Low TEL Users:** Students who rarely engaged with TEL tools had the lowest engagement score of **2.8**.

2. Academic Impact of TEL Usage

- **High TEL Users:** Reported an average self-assessed academic impact score of **4.1**.
- **Medium TEL Users:** Reported a moderate impact score of **3.3**.
- **Low TEL Users:** Indicated a lower impact score of **2.7**, suggesting less perceived academic benefit.

TEL Usage Frequency	Average Engagement Score	Average Academic Impact Score
High	4.2	4.1
Medium	3.5	3.3
Low	2.8	2.7

Statistical Analysis

T-Test Results for Academic Impact

To evaluate the significance of the difference in academic impact scores between high and low TEL users, a **t-test** was conducted:

- **t-Statistic:** 7.25
- **p-Value:** 0.0001

Interpretation:

The t-test result, with a p-value less than 0.05, indicates a statistically significant difference in perceived academic impact between high and low TEL usage groups. This finding suggests that students with high TEL engagement perceive a significantly greater academic benefit compared to those with low TEL engagement.

Observations

Higher Engagement and Academic Impact for High TEL Users

Students who used TEL tools frequently reported both higher engagement and higher academic impact scores. This trend implies that frequent TEL use fosters a more interactive and engaging learning environment, which positively influences students' perceptions of their academic performance.

Variability Among Usage Groups

There is a notable drop in both engagement and academic impact scores among low TEL users, indicating that minimal use of TEL tools may result in less perceived benefit. This suggests the importance of consistent and meaningful engagement with TEL tools for maximizing educational impact.

Educator Perspective

While students rate TEL highly in terms of engagement and academic impact, educator feedback (gathered qualitatively) shows cautious optimism, emphasizing the need for effective training and integration strategies. Educators noted that TEL's effectiveness depends on structured and intentional implementation, underscoring the importance of strategic TEL integration.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) on student engagement and academic performance, focusing on undergraduate students and educators across various disciplines. The results indicate a positive correlation between frequent TEL use and higher engagement levels, as well as a perceived academic benefit. Students who frequently engaged with TEL tools reported the highest scores in both engagement and academic impact, supporting the hypothesis that TEL can enrich learning experiences by providing interactive, flexible, and personalized resources. The statistically significant difference in academic impact scores between high and low TEL users underscores TEL's potential to enhance educational outcomes. However, educators highlighted the importance of structured integration and strategic implementation, noting that the effectiveness of TEL depends on careful alignment with course objectives and instructor readiness.

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