

Review of: "Between Avoidance and the Need to Learn: Emerging Dynamics in the First Weeks of Classes in Higher Education in Angola"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

1. The topic of student absence is a relevant one in multiple (cultural) contexts, such as the Dutch context in which I work. This has been especially a pressing issue since the pandemic in 2020. As such this research is valuable to gain insights in understanding students' perspectives on absence/attendance even if these come from a different cultural context than the one I work in.
2. A question that arose when reading the introduction part was: How does student absence negatively influence teaching and learning in HE in Angola? This is not described. It would serve to understand the relevance and urgency of this specific research focus.

Looking at the context in the Netherlands, in which absence also plays a big role among HE students, the negative influence can be especially observed once students have to do an internship at a company. In that moment it becomes apparent that students who tended to be absent during classes lack the skills and knowledge to tackle a real business problem at the company. Moreover, such students have difficulty in dealing with new unexpected situations. (Is this perhaps also the case in Angola?)

This is one of the reasons why a shift has been made in curricula in Dutch HE so that students are put in the lead, meaning that if they opt to not attend classes they will much sooner feel the consequences of this because rather than being tested through traditional exams which allows them to get away with being absent and still pass, they must engage in projects for actual companies from the start on a day-to-day basis. Being absent for such a project is virtually impossible because of the many checks and balances instilled by both the school, the project groups, and the company.

3. The methodology chosen for this project is sound and well-explained. What measures were put in place to ensure the safety of the research participants? Were they for example informed that they could opt out of the research at any time and without giving any reason for this? This could be explained in the 'ethical procedures' section.
4. It would be interesting to involve perspectives from the work field in Angola to gain an understanding of what they are looking for in fresh graduates. Do they look for the students who academically stand out or not? If they do, is this something that can be used in onboarding days from the beginning of the year to counter absence? This is just a thought for the further expansion of this valuable research.

