

**POST COVID-19 EDUCATION CRISIS AND THE NEED TO SUSTAIN
BLENDED LEARNING FOR BETTER PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN
PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ENUGU STATE**

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to determine the needs to sustain blended learning by business educators and law lecturers in post covid-19 era for better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study was made up of 48 respondents (21 Business Educators and 27 Law Lecturers) of University of Nigeria Nsukka and Enugu State University of Science and Technology in this 2020/2021 academic session. No sampling was made since the population is manageable. Therefore the entire population was used for the study. Data for the study were collected through the administration of questionnaire instrument on the respondents. The instrument was subjected to a reliability test after validation through a pilot test administered to ten (10) Business Educators and ten (10) Law Lecturers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Data collected from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The analysis yielded coefficient indices of 0.86 for Cluster A and 0.82 for Cluster B of the Questionnaire respectively. The overall Coefficient index obtained for the instrument was 0.84 which was a strong indicator that the instrument is reliable. Mean and standard

deviation were used to analyze the data in respect of the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses. Findings of the study indicate that Blended Learning skills strategies were found needed by Business Educators and Law Lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. Conclusion was drawn and recommendations were made that Blended Learning skills should be re-emphasized and continually sustained by Business Educators and Law Lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. Blended Learning strategies in the same vein should be continually sustained by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Key Words - COVID-19, BLENDED LEARNING & PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic and its ravaging effect on all spheres of human endeavour, education inclusive is too alarming. Many countries of the world including Nigeria short down every form of business and social activities. Schools, colleges and universities were close down. Education was in huge crisis as a result of the close down, even till today. Online teaching started on an untested and unprecedented scale. Students' assessments also started online, with a lot of trial and error and uncertainty for everyone.

In Nigeria and Enugu State in particular, the case is not different. People thought that the severe disruption in academic activities is going to be short-lived only to discover that the reverse is the case. People were compelled to observe social distancing and high degree of personal hygiene, (Okpalaojiego and Onukwuli 2021). This seriously affected learning environment adversely. People were unprepared. Measures were introduced to checkmate the effect of COVID-19 in so many areas including academics. As a result, so many online teaching and learning activities set in including blended or hybrid learning.

Blended learning, also known as hybrid learning, is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or pace, (Graham, Woodfield & Harrison 2013).

The term "blended learning" was initially vague, encompassing a wide variety of technologies and pedagogical methods in varying combinations (some making no use of technology whatsoever). In 2006, the term became more concrete with the publication of the first *Handbook of Blended Learning* by Bonk and Graham. Graham challenged the breadth and ambiguity of the term's definition, and defined "blended learning systems"

as learning systems that "combine face-to-face instruction with computer mediated instruction" (Bonk & Graham 2006).

In a report titled "Defining Blended Learning", Norm (2012) suggests that, in its current form, blended learning "designates the range of possibilities presented by combining Internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students".

Blended Learning is learning which combines online and face-to-face approaches. By means of online discussion forms, educators can monitor the class discussions. These discussions help teachers or educators identify topics that need clarification or that have captured the interest of students, and they can use the insights gained by them to structure class time.

The emphasis is on digital education where educators and lecturers are pushed to re-conceptualize what it really means to be an educator or lecturer in the post COVID -19 Education crisis.

Technology has become an essential force shaping much of our teaching and pedagogical practices. Pedagogy is a term that refers to the method of how teachers teach, in theory and in practice. Pedagogy is formed by an educator's teaching beliefs and concerns the interplay between culture and different ways to learn. In order to help students to build on prior learning, meaningful classroom relationships must exist.

Pedagogy refers to the study of teaching approaches and how they affect learners. A carefully considered pedagogy is essential in enabling students to learn more effectively and can help them develop high-order thinking skills.

Technology has also placed a number of demands and exigencies on us and to meet these exigencies we need to develop a set of key digital skills. Digital skills are defined as the ability to find, evaluate, use, share, and create content using digital devices, such as computers and smart phones.

With the demands of an increasingly digitized environment occasioned by COVID-19, there is a growing awareness among educators that teaching and learning need to evolve and be sustained in order to prepare educators and students in this post COVID-19 education crisis period.

Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to determine the needs to sustain blended learning by business educators and law lecturers in post covid-19 era for better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. Specifically the study sought to determine the:

1. Blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.
2. Blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Research Questions

1. What are blended Learning skills needed by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.
2. What are blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

Ho₁. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law Lecturers on the blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law Lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Ho₂. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law Lecturers on the blended Learning strategies needed by Business Educators and Law Lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Methods

Survey research design was adopted in the study. This is because the researchers sought the opinions of the respondents on the issues of concern. The study was conducted in the Department of Business Education and Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria Nsukka and Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The population of the study was determined from the survey conducted by the researchers and it is made up of 46 respondents (21 Business Educators and 27 Law Lecturers) from both University of Nigeria Nsukka and Enugu State University of Science and Technology. The whole 48 respondents were used for the study. No sampling was made.

The instrument for data collection was a structured Questionnaire titled “Questionnaire on postcovid-19 education crisis and the need to sustain blended learning for better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State (QPCECNSBLBPPPUES)”. The Questionnaire contains 30 item questions and was structured on a four point rating scale of Very Highly Needed (VHN), Highly Needed (HN), Moderately Needed (MN) and Not Needed (NN) with corresponding value of 4, 3, 2 and 1. The respondents were

requested to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each of the items considered as the need to sustain blended learning for better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. Their suggestions and corrections were used to produce the final instrument used for the study.

The validity of the instrument was established by giving copies of the drafted instrument to three experts, one from the Department of Business Education and one from the Faculty of Law while one is from Measurement and Evaluation Unit of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Education, Enugu State University of Science and Technology.

The instrument was subjected to a reliability test after validation through a pilot test administered to ten (10) Business Educators and ten (10) Law Lecturers in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Data collected from the pilot test were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument. The analysis yielded coefficient indices of 0.86 for Cluster A and 0.82 for Cluster B of the Questionnaire respectively. The overall Coefficient index obtained for the instrument was 0.84 which was a strong indicator that the instrument is reliable. Nworgu 2015 asserts that if a reliability coefficient index of an instrument was 0.60 and above, then the instrument is deemed reliable.

Three research assistants were used in the administration of the instrument and out of 48 copies distributed, 46 copies were returned giving 94.73percent return rate. Weighted means with standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Decisions on the research questions were made using the lower limit and upper limits of the mean based on the four point scale. The standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the opinions of the respondents. The t-test statistics was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer programme was used for data analysis. The null hypothesis was not rejected where the significant value was less than 0.05 level of significance at appropriate degree of freedom, otherwise the hypothesis was rejected.

Results

The results of the study were presented in Tables based on the Research Questions and Hypotheses that guided the study (see table 1-4).

Research Question 1

1. What are blended Learning skills needed by Business Educators and Law Lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State?

Table 1

Mean ratings and standard deviation on the Blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

S/N	Blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities	Business Educators		Law Lecturers		Overall		Decision
		\bar{X}	SD ₁	\bar{X}	SD ₂	\bar{X}	SD	
		\bar{X}	SD ₁	\bar{X}	SD ₂	N = 46		
1		3.48	0.62	3.43	0.76	3.43	0.67	Needed
2	Using	3.25	0.75	3.35	0.62	3.30	0.69	Needed
3	Internet for	3.17	0.84	3.15	0.87	3.16	0.86	Needed
4	Research	3.43	0.76	3.31	0.76	3.27	0.76	Needed
5	Interacting	3.29	0.85	3.35	0.78	3.32	0.82	Needed
6	with	3.09	0.90	3.27	0.71	3.18	0.81	Needed
7	computers	3.38	0.58	3.25	0.85	3.32	0.67	Needed
8	Using Web	3.48	0.62	3.38	0.72	3.43	0.67	Needed
9	Browsers	3.31	0.73	3.21	0.80	3.26	0.77	Needed
10	Cloud	3.02	0.66	3.05	0.66	3.10	0.66	Needed
11	Computing /	3.42	0.50	3.49	0.71	3.49	0.61	Needed
12	AWS Digital	3.05	0.96	3.18	0.81	3.12	0.87	Needed
13	Library	3.48	0.50	3.49	0.71	3.49	0.61	Needed
	PowerPoint							
	Presentation							Needed
	Ability to	3.29	0.71	3.30	0.75	3.29	0.72	
	manipulate							
	Keyboard							

Ability to use Search Engines				
Ability to Scan Documents				
Documenting and recording information				
Collecting data and information				
Send messages through e-mails				
Creating project templates				
Cluster Mean/SD				

Results in Table 1 above showed the overall mean ratings range from 3.10 – 3.49 indicating the agreement of the respondents (Business Educators) and (Law Lecturers) in public universities in Enugu State that the 13 items were Blended Learning skills needed by Business Educators and Law Lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The Cluster Mean of 3.29 also indicates agreement. The low cluster standard deviation of 0.72 showed that the respondents had similar views on the **blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State**

Hypothesis Ho1

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law lecturers on the blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Table 2

Summary Table of t-test analysis of mean ratings of Business Educators and Law lecturers on the blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Business Educators	21	3.29	0.71	249	0.4	1.96	Do not reject H ₀
Law Lecturers	25	3.30	0.75				

Table 2 showed that the calculated t-tables at 0.05 level of significance and 249 degree of freedom was 0.04; while the critical t-value under the same conditions was 1.96. Since the calculated t-value was less than the table value, the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law lecturers in Enugu State on the blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

Research Questions 2

1. What are blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State?

Table 3

Mean ratings and standard deviation on the blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

S/N	blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices	Business Educators		Law Lecturers		Overall		Decision
		\bar{X}	SD ₁	\bar{X}	SD ₂	\bar{X}	SD	
14	Create annotated, interactive and	3.50	0.69	3.51	0.71	3.50	0.70	Needed
15		3.44	0.66	2.75	0.77	3.10	0.72	Needed
16		3.23	0.79	3.21	0.75	3.32	0.77	Needed

17	engaging video	3.28	0.72	3.52	0.54	3.40	0.63	Needed
18	content	3.30	0.73	3.19	0.75	3.29	0.74	Needed
19	Create visually	3.20	0.79	3.12	0.82	3.16	0.81	Needed
20	engaging	2.86	0.97	2.92	0.96	2.89	0.97	Needed
21	contentUse Social	3.15	1.03	3.49	0.71	3.32	0.89	Needed
22	bookmarking	3.18	0.81	3.05	0.96	3.12	0.87	Needed
23	websites curate	3.02	0.66	3.05	0.66	3.10	0.66	Needed
24	and share	3.60	0.66	3.52	0.77	3.56	0.72	Needed
25	resources with	3.14	0.86	3.15	0.86	3.16	0.86	Needed
26	your class	3.20	0.73	3.19	0.72	3.19	0.73	Needed
27	Create digital	3.08	0.91	3.29	0.74	3.19	0.83	Needed
28	portfolios	3.20	0.79	3.12	0.82	3.16	0.81	Needed
29	Create Engaging	3.23	0.79	3.21	0.75	3.32	0.77	Needed
30	presentations	3.17	0.84	3.15	0.87	3.16	0.86	Needed
	Use Right Technology Tools. Choose a Blended Learning Model Start with a description of the Curriculum Outline Your Goals 3. Redefine Your Role In The Classroom. 4. Determine Learning Objectives. Define Learning Outcomes. Use Self-Blend Model Use the Online Driver Model Use the Flex Model The Face-To-Face Driver Model Online Lab School Model.							

	Cluster Mean/SD	3.22 0.79	3.20 0.77	3.23 0.78	Needed

The result in Table 3 above showed the items mean ratings ranging from 2.89 -3.56 depicting agreement. This means that Business Educators and Law lecturers in Enugu State were in agreement that the above blended Learning skills are needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The low Standard Deviation (**0.78**) shows similarity views of the respondents.

Hypothesis Ho2

There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law Lecturers on the blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

Table 4

Summary Table of t-test analysis of mean ratings of Business Educators and Law Lecturers on the blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Business Education Students	21	3.22	0.79	249	1.11	1.96	Do not reject Ho
Law Students	25	3.20	0.77				

The result of the t-test analysis in Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 249 degree of freedom was 1.11; while the critical t-value under the same conditions was 1.96. Since the t-calculated was less than the t-value, the null hypothesis was therefore not rejected.

This means that Business Educators and Law lecturers in Enugu State did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study are discussed in line with the research questions and the hypotheses that guided the study.

Blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

The findings of this study according to research question one indicated that the 13 Blended Learning skills in Table one are needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. Some of those blended learning skills include; ability to use Search Engines, Using Internet for Research, Interacting with computers, Using Web Browsers, Cloud Computing / AWS, etc.

The findings of this study agreed with (Chibuike, 2015) who noted that blended learning has become an important tool and indispensable aid for running today's education. It is one of the most potent forces that have come to prominence as a result of rapid changes in technological innovations occasioned by COVID 19 pandemic.

Blended learning, which mixes traditional face-to-face education with technology, has become increasingly popular in educational institutions today. This style of learning provides a way for educators to engage students through visuals and online interaction. Quite unlike the traditional school, today's school is characterized with computers, word processors, printers, photocopying machines, telephones, fax machines, internet activities etc, that the Business Educator and the Law lecturer preparing for a world of work should be effectively prepared and professionally trained to handle these electronic devices to meet the demands of the present day pedagogical practices.

By using a combination of digital instruction and one-on-one face time, students can work on their own with new concepts which frees teachers up to circulate and support individual students who may need individualized attention. Teachers can now streamline their instruction to help all students reach their full potential," Saritepeci, Mustafa; et al. (2015).

The null hypothesis tested on the blended learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law lecturers in Enugu State. The findings of no significance difference indicated that Business Educators and Law lecturers in Enugu State had no significant difference in their opinion on blended learning skills.

Blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State

The study further found out that all the identified blended learning strategies are needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. Some of those blended learning strategies include; Create annotated, interactive and engaging video content, Create visually engaging content, Use Social bookmarking websites, create and share resources with your class, Create digital portfolios Create Engaging presentations, Use Right Technology Tools etc.

The findings of the study also indicated that a significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law lectures on Blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The result of the study showed that Business Educators and Law lecturers had the same view on the identified Blended Learning skills needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The result of this study is in agreement with that of Graham, Woodfield & Harrison, (2013)who noted that Technology has placed a number of demands and exigencies on us and to meet these exigencies we need to develop a set of key digital skills and strategies.

The findings of the study also indicated that a significant difference does not exist between the mean ratings of Business Educators and Law lectures on Blended Learning strategies needed by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The result of the study showed that Business Educators and Law lecturers had the same view on the identified Blended Learning strategies needed by business educators and law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Conclusion

The study investigated thepost covid-19 education crisis and the need to sustain blended learning for better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The study identified Blended Learning skills and BL strategies needed by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State. The identified BL skills and strategies were found needed by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Blended Learning skills should be re-emphasized and continually sustained by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.
2. Blended Learning strategies in the same vein should be continually sustained by Business Educators and Law lecturers to sustain better pedagogical practices in public universities in Enugu State.
3. Business Educators and Law lecturers in Enugu State that are updated should get themselves acquainted and updated with blended skills and strategies skills to effectively perform and be relevant in their duty post.

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