

Challenges to Utilization of Blended Teaching Strategies in Business Education Courses in Universities in Enugu State

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DOI: [10.36348/jaep.2023.v07i04.003](https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2023.v07i04.003)

| Received: 29.02.2023 | Accepted: 02.04.2023 | Published: 19.04.2023

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Abstract

Objectives: The main purpose of the study was to challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. The study was guided by two research questions and four null hypotheses. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population used for the study was 25 Business Educators in two public universities offering Business Education programme in Enugu State. There was no sampling due to the manageable size of the population. The instrument used for data collection was an 18 item questionnaire grouped into two sections according to the research questions that guided the study. The items were structured in four point rating scale. The instrument was validated and the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha which yielded 0.85. Out of 26 copies distributed, 22copies were returned giving 88%return rate. Mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics were the statistical tools used. Based on the data analysis, the study identified that university administrative and lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. Based on the findings of the study recommendations were made among which include; that university administrators should provide the needed ICT facilities for blended teaching strategies in business education and supporting staff should be employed to provide the needed supportive services to the Business Educators while practicing blended teaching strategies.

Keywords: Blended, Teaching, Business education.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in 21st century has been characterized with digitalization and use of innovative electronic based technology. This type of education according to Mbah and Odike (2021) encourages the acquisition and utilization of information communication technology (ICT) skills and innovative pedagogical skills in instructional delivery. In present classroom setting, teachers are required to manage convergence of digital information from a wide range of sources and devices when presenting, discussing and reflecting upon concept with a class group. As stated by Bakare, Okereke and Obe (2017) the demand for teaching skills towards more digital sophisticated tasks suggest that individuals (teachers) with poor ICT skills are more likely to find themselves at risk of unemployment and social exclusion. Teaching is any action geared towards making another person to learn

(Mbah and Umurhurhu, 2016). Teaching in digital era and environment is regarded as e-teaching while addition of few electronic technologies to face-to-face teaching is blended.

E-teaching is a new concept that is referred to as the use of computer, internet and other electronic equipment to transfer knowledge and skills from a teacher to learner(s). The integration of electronic device, online and the conventional face to face teaching is referred to as blended teaching strategies (Odo, 2017).

Blended teaching and learning is described as a range of teaching strategies that combine face-to-face instruction with individual students-directed and computer based learning programs. Bawoanth (2017) stated that blended teaching in university comprises of hard copy study materials, face-to-face contact and a

variety of online resources. It is the combination of multiple teaching approaches to implement instructional contents to students. The adoption of this strategy to teaching is giving institutions new approaches and strategies for addressing the changes of learning in digital era. Okoye and Ifejika (2017) opined that this instructional strategy combines the best practices of both traditional and online education bearing in mind the following factors; specific attribute of course content, available resources level of human resource competency to develop online materials, instructional design, students population, readiness to adoption, accessibility and utilization.

Further, it is important to note that the design of a blended learning environment should respond directly in supporting the schools goals and the desire driving the implementation of a blended curriculum. Blended instructional strategies lies in the increased sensitivity of the needs of learners and greater insight into the advantage and disadvantages of different technologies that can be used in teaching and learning processes. Studies have shown that blended teaching can overcome the gap between traditional and e-learning solutions and also surpass both of those approaches in terms of effectiveness and students satisfaction (Bubas and Kermek, 2017). The application of this blended teaching strategy could be seen in teaching course programmes including business education. Without this blended instructional strategy, the teaching of courses in office technology management and data processing to students in business education would not yield the desired result.

Business Education is a programme of study fashioned to train competent and productive workforce that would be employed or becomes self-employed in business, production and services environment. Idialu (2013) stated that Business Education is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in learning paid employment and self-employment. This type of tertiary institution programme provides the student with the skills and knowledge about business and for business activities. According to Ezeabii (2017) business education is an aspect of vocational education which equips individuals with the necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed for performance in the business world either for job performance or for self-employment. Business education courses are taught by the Business Educators in universities and colleges of education for teaching, entrepreneurship, business and other office related courses. Ndelegkute and Onoh (2018) pointed that the teaching of business education is not gender sensitive as both gender can teach and equally learn the course. Business Education students at the end of their training are expected to be competent and dynamic business teachers, office administrators, business men and women that will effectively function in business world. The acquisition competency in

business education in present society covers digital skills and information system management which the utilization of blended learning can facilitate. Adoption of blended learning was necessitated by the society and economic activities has continue to become more digital and the students train for and about business need to be adequately prepared for quick transition and adaptation in the labour market (Anyakoha and Okanazu, 2017). These could be improved by investigating the challenges to blended teaching strategies faced by the business educator in tertiary institutions especially universities in Enugu State need to adopt.

In Enugu State, there are several tertiary institutions ranging from colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Only the universities and colleges of education offer Business Education programme in Enugu State at Degree and Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level respectively. The study focused on the public (Federal and State) university in Enugu State in order to determine the challenges to the use of blended teaching strategies in business education course delivery. Public university could be defined as the government (federal, state or local government) owned, managed and financed tertiary institution that awards degree to students in different disciplines at sub- professional, professional and training of high level manpower. There are two public universities in Enugu State that offer Business education programme to students. These universities are expected to provide training to the students in contemporary issues, curriculum contents as well as entrepreneurship using blended learning.

The use of blended learning in business education helps the lecturers to train students with digital skills for smooth transition from school to work environment. Business educators irrespective of gender and institution type utilize blended teaching strategies in instructional preparation, presentation and evaluation. Study conducted by Offordile (2018) showed that business educators are facing a lot of challenges in the implementation of blended learning in schools. These challenges may exist as university administrative challenges and lecturers challenges. The university administration according to Obinna (2016) need to support the utilization of ICT in teaching since the innovation in modern education does not support the traditional teaching and learning. As more university courses are introducing blended learning to students, there is need to investigate the challenges the business educators faces. This is pertinent as it has been discovered that blended teaching strategy is more effective and a step to e-learning.

Statement of Problem

Teaching in contemporary society is facing a daunting task of digitalization with human, facilities and environmental challenges. The teaching of students in tertiary especially the university is currently using

blended teaching strategy as most lecturers utilize electronic devices with conventional face-to-face teaching approach. The extent of utilization of the blended learning is low because of the lecturers and school administrative challenges (Odo, 2017). The attempt to utilize blended learning is as a result of lack of resources for full e-learning instructional approaches to all the programmes. The universities offering students business education courses equally face these unidentified challenges therefore affecting the quality of teaching and learning.

These challenges have affected the performance of the graduates in the modern and automated service delivery environment. There is need to change the narrative by investigating on the challenges to teaching and implementing the curriculum content of business education programme in universities to improve the quality of service delivery to students using blended teaching. This would be achieved through the identification of key indicators that affect the blended instruction from the lecturers and university administrative challenges in teaching business education, hence the study.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the;

1. The university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.
2. The lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State?
2. What are the lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significant.

H01: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

H02: A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities.

H03: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

H04: A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities.

METHOD

This study adopted a survey research design. According to Nworgu (2015) survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few of them to represent the entire group. This design was adopted due to the responses from sample of Business Educators used for the study could be generalized to the rest of others teaching programmes in universities. The area of the study was Enugu State of Nigeria. Enugu State is one of the five states in South-East geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The population comprised 25 business educators in two universities (federal and state) offering business education programme in the State. The population was determined from field survey conducted by the researcher. The number was manageable and as such, there was no sampling.

The data collection was carried out using 18 item structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the related literature. The instrument was structured in four point response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1. The instrument was validated by three experts, two from Business and Entrepreneurship Education Department and one from Measurement and Evaluation unit of Mathematics and Computer Education Department, all from Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu. Their corrections and suggestions were used to produce the final instrument used for the study. The instrument was trial tested using 10 business educators in universities in Anambra State who were not part of the population under study. The reliability coefficient yielded 0.75 using Crombach Alpha method. This 0.75 coefficient is in-line with Uzoagulu (2011) that reliability index of 0.60 to 1 shows that the instrument is highly reliable.

Two research assistants were used in the administration of the questionnaire and out of 25 copies distributed 22 copies were returned giving 88.00% return rate. Weighted means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. Decisions

on the research questions were made using the lower and upper limits of the mean based on a four point scale. The standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the opinions of the respondents. The t-test was used to test the null hypotheses. The significant value (at 2-tail) was compared with .05 level of significant at the appropriate degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was not rejected where the significant value was less than the .05 level of significance and at appropriate degree of freedom; otherwise the null hypothesis was rejected.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1

What are the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State?

Table 1: Respondents’ mean ratings on the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State

S/N	university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses includes:	Male N= 9		Female N= 13		Overall		Decision
		X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	X _G	SD _G	
1	Paucity of fund for improving ICT facilities	3.05	0.66	3.19	0.60	3.09	0.64	Agree
2	Lack of administrative interest to improve blended teaching facilities	3.09	0.66	3.19	0.60	3.12	0.64	Agree
3	Poor government allocation	3.14	0.67	3.18	0.58	3.16	0.62	Agree
4	Mismanagement of fund for ICT facilities	3.12	0.64	3.16	0.58	3.13	0.61	Agree
5	Procurement of low quality facilities for teaching	3.05	0.70	3.09	0.65	3.07	0.68	Agree
6	Poor implementation of e-learning policies	3.07	0.68	3.10	0.65	3.08	0.67	Agree
7	Lecturers in ability to implement blended teaching	3.05	0.67	3.09	0.65	3.07	0.66	Agree
8	Lack of administrative policies for blended teaching	3.06	0.66	3.10	0.65	3.08	0.65	Agree
9	Lack of human resources for the maintenance of ICT facilities	3.13	0.58	3.19	0.54	3.15	0.57	Agree
	Cluster Mean/SD	3.08	0.66	3.14	0.61	3.11	0.64	Agree

Note: X = Mean; SD =Standard Deviation

The analysis of data presented in Table 1 shows that the overall mean ratings range from 3.07 to and 3.16 showing agree. This means that Business Educators agree to the items as the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. The overall cluster mean of 3.11 further confirms agree. The low standard deviation of 0.64 indicates that

the respondents have relatively similar opinion itemized challenges.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

Table 2: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State

Variables	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Male	9	0.663	20	0.509	0.27527	0.52033	NS
Female	13						

NS= Not Significant

The result of t-test analysis in Table 2 shows that the t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 20 degree of freedom for the nine items is 0.663 with a significant value of 0.509. Since the significant value of 0.509 is more than the 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis is not significant. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the university administrative challenges of utilization

blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 2

A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities.

Table 3: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities

Variables	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Federal	16	0.591	20	0.556	0.98753	1.67186	NS
State	6						

NS= Not Significant

The result of t-test analysis in Table 3 shows that the t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 20 degree of freedom for the nine items is 0.591 with a significant value of 0.556. Since the significant value of 0.556 is more than the 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis is not significant. This means that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on

university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities.

Research Question 2

What are the lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State?

Table 4: Mean ratings and standard deviation on the lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State

S/N	lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses includes:	Male N= 10		Female N= 14		Overall		Decision
		X ₁	SD ₁	X ₂	SD ₂	X _G	SD _G	
10	Students class size	3.12	0.57	3.19	0.48	3.14	0.54	Agree
11	Lack of supportive staff in the use of blended instructional devices	3.11	0.56	3.19	0.47	3.13	0.53	Agree
12	Nature of curriculum content to deliver	3.04	0.67	3.13	0.62	3.07	0.65	Agree
13	Poor supply of electrical power	3.03	0.68	3.12	0.62	3.06	0.66	Agree
14	Inadequate knowledge of ICT based materials for teaching	3.02	0.65	3.13	0.61	3.05	0.65	Agree
15	Lack of motivational packages for teaching students	3.01	0.67	3.10	0.65	3.04	0.66	Agree
16	Harsh university administrative policy on the use	2.99	0.69	3.03	0.71	3.00	0.69	Agree
17	Inadequate time for using blended learning	3.04	0.60	3.09	0.59	3.06	0.60	Agree
18	Poor maintenance of ICT facilities used in blended teaching	3.08	0.61	3.06	0.63	3.08	0.61	Agree
	Cluster Mean/SD	3.05	0.63	3.12	0.60	3.07	0.62	Agree

Note: X = Mean; SD =Standard Deviation

The data presented in Table 4 indicates that the overall item mean ratings range from 3.00 to 3.14 depicting agree. This shows the respondents agree to the items as the lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. The overall cluster mean rating of 3.07 indicates agree. The low standard deviation of 0.62 shows that the respondent’s opinions is homogenous to the items as lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in

business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

Table 5: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the lecturers’ challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State

Variables	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Male	9	0.028	20	0.978	0.03785	1.34454	NS
Female	13						

NS= Not Significant

The result of t-test analysis in Table 5 shows that the t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 20 degree of freedom for the items is 0.028 with a

significant value of 0.978. As the significant value of 0.978 is more than the 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis is not significant. This means that there is no

significant difference with respect to the items on the mean ratings of male and female business educators in universities on the lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

Hypothesis 4

A significant difference does not exist in the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities Enugu State.

Table 6: Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities Enugu State

Variables	N	t	df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Decision
Federal	16	0.758	20	.450	1.60860	2.12168	NS
State	6						

NS= Not Significant

The result of t-test analysis in Table 6 shows that the t-value at 0.05 level of significance and 20 degree of freedom for the items is 0.758 with a significant value of 0.450. As the significant value of 0.450 is more than the 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis is not significant. This means that there is no significant difference with respect to the items on the mean ratings of business educators in federal and state universities on lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities Enugu State.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study identified the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses. The study found the following, paucity of fund for improving ICT facilities, lack of administrative interest to improve blended teaching facilities, poor government allocation, mismanagement of fund for ICT facilities, procurement of low quality facilities for teaching, poor implementation of e-learning policies, lecturers in ability to implement blended teaching and lack of administrative policies for blended teaching as the university administrative challenges. This means that the identified challenge is hindering the utilization of blended teaching strategies in teaching business education courses in university. This finding is in-line with Obinna (2016) and Bakare, Okereke and Obe (2017) that institution management and government challenges to the utilization of ICT facilities in teaching includes paucity of fund for improving ICT facilities, poor funding and procurement of low quality facilities for teaching. Therefore the introduction of blended teaching strategy together with the provision of needed facilities by university administrators have become imperatives for focusing business education for effective instructional interactions in this digital era. The findings of the study showed that gender and status of institution of the business educators had no influence on the on the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. Therefore, the business educators irrespective of gender

and institution status agree to the findings as the university administrative challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities.

Moreover, the findings of the study on research question two showed that the lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities. The findings identified the lecturers challenges to utilizing blended teaching includes Students class size, lack of supportive staff in the use of blended instructional devices, nature of curriculum content to deliver, poor supply of electrical power, inadequate knowledge of ICT based materials for teaching, lack of motivational packages for teaching students, lack of motivational packages for teaching students, harsh university administrative policy on the use, inadequate time for using blended learning among others. The findings of the study showed the lecturers hindrances to the application of blended teaching. The findings of the study were in consonance with Offodile (2018) that lecturers' challenges to the application of blended ICT teaching include class size, poor funding and remuneration and lack of supporting staff. The implication of the findings was that the identified are the challenges faced by the business educator in using blended teaching strategies teaching business education courses. The findings of the study also showed that the gender and institution status (federal and state) of the respondents had no impact on the identified lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities in Enugu State. The findings of the study were supported by Regha (2015) and Mbah and Odiye (2021) that gender and institution status have no impact on the utilization of ICT facilities in teaching. This is in-line with the findings as gender had no influence on the identified lecturers' challenges of utilization blended teaching strategies in business education courses in universities.

CONCLUSION

In this digital era, teaching and learning require modern approaches to ensure effective delivery

of instruction to the students irrespective of course or discipline. The introduction and innovation in ICT and their utilization challenges has led to the use of instructional strategies called blended learning that bridge the gap between the traditional approaches and the ever-expanding digitalization trend in education. Blended teaching strategies combine face-to-face instruction with individual, student-directed and computer-based learning programs. It is the combination of multiple approaches to learning. The study investigated on the challenges to the utilization of blended teaching strategies in teaching business education courses in universities in Enugu State.

The identified challenges are needed in addressing and providing a lasting solution to teaching of business education in digital era. The identified need to be considered by the university administrators and lecturers as stakeholders to address in the implementation of business education in digital society which blended teaching strategy is the key step to full integration of e-learning. The study therefore concludes that university administrators and Business Educators need to address the identified challenges to achieve the desired success in business education teaching in universities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. University administrators should provide the needed ICT facilities for blended teaching strategies in business education.
2. University administrators should provide motivational packages to business educators for the implementation of blended teaching strategies.
3. Business educators in universities should adopt the use of modern technologies in presentation of instruction, follow-up and feedback to improve participation.
4. Supporting staff should be employed to provide the needed supportive services to the Business Educators while practicing blended teaching strategies.

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