

IMPLEMENTATION OF BLENDED LEARNING FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN HIGHER INSTITUTIONS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

The study focused on examining the implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery of business education in higher institutions in Anambra state, Nigeria. Survey research design study was adopted. The population comprised of all the 158 Business Educators in the four public higher institutions in Anambra state that offer Business Education. They were not sampled. Three research questions guided the study. A 37-item structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Cronbachs' Alpha was used to test for reliability and it gave a coefficient reliability of 0.73. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed the several means through which blended learning can be implemented for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions, among others. It was recommended among others that Business educators should utilize the several means for implementing blended learning for effective instructional delivery of Business Education in higher institutions in Anambra state.

Keywords: Business Education, Blended Learning, Instructional delivery, Effective instructional delivery, Higher institutions.

Introduction

Effective instructional delivery is very vital in the teaching and learning process. Hornby (2015); Temisanren and Adeleke (2024) explained the term instructional as when someone teaches people something through different means to ensure that learning has taken place. Instructional delivery on the other hand is the various methods or an approach a professional teacher adopts that gives him or her ability to explain the lessons to the learner to understand (Ofor, 2022). An effective

instructional delivery is that instructional process that is based on stated objectives of the lesson. It refers to the methods, strategies and techniques used by teachers to impact knowledge, facilitate learning, promote student engagement and understanding (Buck *et al*, 2022)

Instructional delivery in Nigerian higher institutions has traditionally relied on face-to-face teaching methods. However, the socio-political instability and security challenges in recent years have significantly disrupted this approach, particularly in Anambra State. Issues such as kidnappings, assassinations, and violent attacks have instilled fear in students, educators, and parents alike. The enforcement of sit-at-home orders, especially in some parts of the state, further exacerbates the situation, causing irregular attendance, disruption of academic calendars, and a decline in the overall quality of education generally and Business Education specifically. Business education is a programme designed to equip learners with both academic and vocational skills needed for both salaried jobs and self-employment as entrepreneurs (Odiike & Nnaekwe, 2019). It is education that enriches basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office understanding, office environment and vocational practices (Nwokike, Ezeabi & Jim, 2018). Business Education as a course of study is learnt in higher institutions. Higher institutions are educational institutions that provide education and training beyond the secondary level. Higher education students - comprising undergraduates and postgraduates from universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education - are particularly vulnerable to these disruptions. Many of them, balancing academic pursuits with work, businesses, and family responsibilities, find it increasingly difficult to adapt to the uncertainties associated with traditional classroom learning. In response to these challenges, blended learning has emerged as a viable solution for ensuring continuity in instructional delivery despite prevailing socio-political uncertainties (Dhawan, 2020).

Blended learning ensures that teaching and learning is not limited to a physical location. Blended learning incorporates the terms such as online learning, mobile learning, and virtual learning (Ikwuka, 2021). Learning can take place virtually without the teacher and students necessarily coming together. It combines face-to-face teacher-student interactions with online learning resources in carrying out overall instructional delivery process for students (Buck *et al*, 2022). In line with this, Rao and Sekhar (2019); Grahman in Magasu, Lubungu, Mulima, Kamboni, Sakala and Kapanda (2022) defined blended learning as a learning style that combines face-to-face instruction with a computer mediated instruction learning to leverage learning to students. Teaching and learning is aided using electronic media.

In blended learning, all the teaching activities can be done using electronic means. Ezekoka and Anum (2023) gave examples of blended learning as managing the marking, entering and releasing of grades using an online grade centre; delivering lecture to on and off campus students simultaneously using an online virtual classroom tool; small group problem-based learning activities using an online collaborative workspace; online quizzes using automatic marking platform. There ought to be strategies for the implementation of blended learning if it must be effective. Zhou *et al.*, (2024) submitted that the implementation strategy for blended learning includes eight aspects namely: vision and planning, curriculum, professional development, learning support, infrastructure, facilities, resources and support, policy and institution structure, partnership, research, and evaluation. This means that implementing blended learning entails setting goals; developing actions plans to achieve the set goals; setting up organizational structures; enacting policies and norms; establishing technical-support environment as well as staff-support system; designing and redesigning curriculum; improving staff capabilities on information technology and evaluation of the effectiveness of the process. These strategies will ensure the maximization of the benefits of blended learning.

Students can learn at their own pace, anytime, and anywhere. Okoye *et al*, (2024) noted that blended learning enabled learning beyond the classroom through technology. This means that there is will reduced need for physical infrastructures and materials and students can review and learn at their own pace. Dhawa (2020) explained that it allows students to do personalized learning outside the classroom with accessibility to more online materials through the use of computer, mobile phone, etc and to collaborate with their peers and teacher in the real time either online or physical (face-to-face). Students can manage their time more effectively, balancing online and offline learning. Online resources and materials can supplement traditional teaching.

However, despite its potential, the implementation of blended learning in Nigeria seems to be affected by certain factors. Obiakor and Adeniran, 2020; Alonta *et al.*, (2022) opined that limited internet connectivity, unreliable power supply, inadequate digital infrastructure, and poor digital literacy among both students and instructors affect its effectiveness. Some students may not have access to device or internet outside of class and this may hinder their access to study materials. Teachers on the other hand, may struggle to monitor students' progress and engagement and students may require additional support, such as tutoring or counseling. Additionally, the socio-economic divide further limits access to essential technological tools, particularly for students in rural and underserved areas (Ikwuka, 2021).

To address these gaps, this study seeks to examine the means of implementing blended learning, identify its benefits, and highlight the factors affecting its successful deployment in Business Education programs in higher institutions across Anambra State. By doing so, it aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for enhancing instructional delivery through blended learning, ensuring educational resilience amidst socio-political uncertainties.

Statement of the Problem

The persistent socio-political uncertainties and security challenges in Anambra State have disrupted traditional face-to-face instructional delivery in higher institutions. Frequent sit-at-home orders, insecurity, and irregular academic calendars have negatively impacted student attendance, engagement, and overall educational outcomes. Although blended learning offers a promising solution by integrating face-to-face instruction with online resources, its implementation remains inconsistent and fraught with challenges such as poor internet connectivity, lack of digital infrastructure, inadequate technical skills among educators and students, and unreliable power supply.

Additionally, previous attempts at emergency remote teaching during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, revealed gaps in student satisfaction, engagement, and instructional quality. These challenges underscore the need for a structured approach to implementing blended learning to bridge the instructional gap and ensure effective delivery of Business Education in higher institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the means of implementing blended learning, explore its benefits, and identify the factors hindering its successful deployment in Business Education programs in Anambra State. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring instructional continuity, improving academic outcomes, and fostering resilience in Nigeria's higher education sector amidst socio-political instability.

Research Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to examine implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery of business education in higher institutions in Anambra state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought out to:

1. Examine the means of implementation of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state

2. Identify the benefits of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state
3. Identify the factors affecting implementation of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the means of implementation of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state?
2. What are the benefits of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state
3. What are the factors affecting implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state?

Research Method

A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. This was done by seeking the opinions of Business Educators on the problem of the study. The study was carried out in the four public higher institutions in Anambra state that offers Business Education- Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (NAU), Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu university, Igbariam (COOU), Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (NOCEN) and Federal College of Education (Tech), Umuze (FCETU). The population is made up of 158 Business Educators, consisting of 45 Business Educators in NAU; 30 Business Educators in COOU; 66 Business Educators in FCETU and 17 Business Educators in NOCEN. The whole population was used because the size was manageable, hence, no sampling and sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire constructed by the researchers based on the research questions. The questionnaire was made up of 37

items and was divided into three parts 1, 2 and 3. Part 1 with 12 items to elicit information on means of implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery, Part 2 with 10 items to elicit information on benefits of blended learning for effective instructional delivery and part 3 has 15 items which covered factors affecting implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery. The instrument was validated by three experts from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The instrument was pilot tested to ensure its reliability and the data collected was analyzed using Cronbachs' Alpha. This gave a coefficient reliability of 0.73 which was considered to be high. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers using direct administration method. Out of the 158 copies of the questionnaire administered only 155 copies were used for analysis representing about 98.10%. The other 3 copies were either not duly filled or not retrieved.

The data obtained were analyzed using mean based on the 4-point scale ranging from strongly agree of 4 points to strongly disagree of 1 point. Any item with a mean response of 2.50 and above was considered 'agreed' while anyone with a mean response below 2.50 was considered 'disagreed'.

Results

Research Question I: To examine the means of implementation of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state?

Table 1: Mean Rating of Respondents on the Means for Implementation of Blended Learning for Effective Instructional Delivery in the higher institutions in Anambra state

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Upload pre-recorded lesson contents to students through online platform	2.85	.71	Agree
2	Present lesson content synchronously (in the real-time scheduled for the lesson)	3.09	.64	Agree
3	Engage students in, in-class discussion	2.81	.69	Agree
4	Give students written exercises during online learning	2.85	.71	Agree

5	Use video conferencing for lectures	3.09	.64	Agree
6	Use online learning for class discussion	2.89	.67	Agree
7	Host live classes	3.07	.62	Agree
8	Use interactive tools to make sessions engaging	2.84	.70	Agree
9	Assign group projects where students collaborate both online and offline	2.89	.67	Agree
10	Use online tools to facilitate collaboration	3.07	.62	Agree
11	Create discussion boards on online platforms where students can engage in academic debates	2.81	.69	Agree
12	Upload pre-recorded video lessons to YouTube etc	2.85	.71	Agree
	Mean of Means	3.01	.60	Agree

Data in Table 1 indicate that all the twelve items had mean scores above the cut-off mean score of 2.50. This showed that the respondents agreed that they are all means of implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state. The mean of means of 3.01 indicated that they are means of implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state.

Research Question 2: What are the benefits of blended learning in Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state

Table 2: Mean Rating of Respondents on the Benefits of Blended Learning in Business Education for Effective Instructional Delivery in Higher Institutions in Anambra State

S/N	ITEMS	X	SD	REMARK
1	Allows students and teachers to choose between online and face-to-face instruction based on their schedules and preferences.	3.07	.72	Agree
2	Ensures uninterrupted academic activities.	2.75	.68	Agree
3	Enables students to access lesson materials at their own pace.	2.90	.62	Agree
4	Promotes active participation among students through a combination of face-to-face and online interactions.	2.91	.72	Agree
5	Provides access to a variety of learning resources, including pre-recorded videos, e-books, and multimedia content.	3.02	.65	Agree
6	Enhances collaboration among students and teachers through real-time online and face-to-face interactions.	2.81	.69	Agree
7	Reduces costs associated with daily commuting, accommodation, and physical infrastructure.	2.85	.71	Agree

8	Allows teachers to track students' progress using digital tools and provide instant feedback.	3.09	.64	Agree
9	Enables students in remote areas to participate in lessons through online platforms.	3.02	.74	Agree
10	Helps students and teachers develop essential digital literacy skills for academic and professional growth.	2.72	.62	Agree
Mean of means		3.07	.72	Agree

Data in Table 2 indicate that all the items have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50, showing that the respondents agreed that all the items are factors affecting implementation of blended learning in higher institutions. The mean of means of 3.07 indicated that there are factors affecting implementation of blended learning in higher institutions for effective instructional delivery.

Research Question 3: What are the factors affecting implementation of blended learning in higher institutions for effective instructional delivery?

Table 3: Mean Rating of Respondents on the Factors affecting Implementation of Blended Learning Approach in Higher Institutions for Effective Instructional Delivery

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Access to stable internet connectivity.	2.92	.70	Agree
2	Power supply.	3.32	.63	Agree
3	Availability of digital devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones)	3.24	.60	Agree
4	Cost of internet data.	3.24	.60	Agree
5	Digital skills among students.	2.87	.67	Agree
6	Digital skills among lecturers.	3.35	.69	Agree
7	Institutional policies and frameworks.	3.29	.68	Agree
8	Attitude to change among lecturers and students.	3.14	.62	Agree
9	Training for lecturers and students on blended learning platforms.	2.96	.68	Agree
10	Availability of digital learning materials.	3.01	.67	Agree
11	Financial issues	2.87	.62	Agree
12	Technical support services.	2.72	.62	Agree
13	Nature of communication between lecturers and students.	2.81	.69	Agree
14	Socio-economic disparities among students.	2.92	.70	Agree
15	Motivation among students to participate actively in blended learning sessions.	2.87	.67	Agree
Mean of Means		3.29	.68	Agree

Data in Table 3 indicate that all the items have mean scores above the cut-off point of 2.50, showing that the respondents agreed that all the items are factors affecting implementation of blended learning in higher institutions. The mean of means of

3.29 indicated that there are factors affecting implementation of blended learning in higher institutions for effective instructional delivery.

Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed several means through which blended learning can be implemented effectively in higher institutions. Institutions must invest in stable internet infrastructure and ensure the availability of digital devices such as computers, tablets, and smartphones for both students and lecturers. Regular training and workshops should be organized to improve digital literacy and technical proficiency among lecturers and students. Effective implementation also requires developing institutional policies and frameworks to guide blended learning practices, including standardized online platforms and well-structured course designs. Additionally, institutions must adopt asynchronous and synchronous learning models to allow flexibility in instructional delivery. These findings align with studies by Bojovic *et al.* (2020) and Dhawan (2020), who emphasized the importance of robust technical infrastructure and teacher preparedness for successful blended learning implementation. Without these critical enablers, higher institutions in Anambra State will struggle to adopt blended learning as a sustainable instructional model, especially during socio-political crises.

The study identified numerous benefits of blended learning for instructional delivery in Business Education. Blended learning offers flexibility, allowing students and lecturers to engage in learning activities at their convenience, whether online or in person. It ensures the continuity of academic activities even during crises, addressing the disruption caused by socio-political instability. Students also benefit from personalized learning experiences, as they can access recorded lectures, digital resources, and multimedia content at their own pace. Additionally, blended learning fosters collaboration between students and lecturers through real-time online and face-to-face interactions, enhancing engagement and participation. The

findings also highlighted that students in remote or rural areas could access instructional materials online, thereby overcoming geographical barriers. These findings corroborate the work of Zainuddin and Keumala (2018) and Usmani (2021), who emphasized the role of blended learning in promoting accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and the development of digital literacy skills among learners. The flexibility and resourcefulness of blended learning make it an essential model for sustaining quality education amidst challenges.

Despite its numerous benefits, the study revealed factors that affect the effective implementation of blended learning in higher institutions in Anambra State like access to stable internet connectivity and power supply, which can affect online learning activities. Many students and lecturers also lack adequate digital devices and technical knowledge required for active participation in blended learning sessions. The cost of internet data remains a major factor for students, particularly those from low-income households. Institutional support systems, including well-defined policies and frameworks for blended learning, are also insufficient in many institutions. Additionally, resistance to change among some lecturers and students affects the adoption of blended learning platforms. These findings are consistent with previous studies by Obiakor and Adeniran (2020) and Jena (2020), who noted similar infrastructural and socio-economic barriers to blended learning adoption. Addressing these factors will require deliberate efforts from institutional management, government agencies, and stakeholders to provide adequate infrastructure, training programs, and financial support for students and lecturers.

Conclusion

The study examined implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery of business education in higher institutions in Anambra state, Nigeria. Based on the research objectives, data were collected, analyzed and

interpreted. The findings revealed several means through which blended learning can be implemented effectively in higher institutions as well as the benefits and factors that affect the effective implementation of blended learning in higher institutions in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:

1. Business educators should utilize the several means for implementing blended learning for effective instructional delivery of Business Education in higher institutions in Anambra state.
2. Since blending learning has numerous benefits, educators should utilize it in teaching Business Education for effective instructional delivery in higher institutions in Anambra state.
3. Those factors that affect the effective implementation of blended learning in higher institutions in Anambra State should be manipulated in a way that favour the implementation of blended learning for effective instructional delivery of Business Education in higher institutions in Anambra state.

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