NIGERIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY
nojest.unilag.edu.ng
nojest@unilag.edu.ng

REVOLUTIONIZING EDUCATION: LECTURERS' COMPETENCY AND BLENDED LEARNING IN THE NEW NORMAL

GANIYU, Rasidat Sade
OLASEDIDUN, Olutoye Kunle
Educational technology Unit,
Faculty of Specialized and Professional Education,
Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo
ganiyurs@eauedoyo.edu.ng

To cite this article:
Ganiyu, R. S. & Olasedidun, O. K (2024). revolutionizing education: lecturers' competency and blended learning in the new normal. *Nigerian Online Journal of Educational Sciences and Technology (NOJEST), 6* (1), 474-484

Nigerian Online Journal of Educational Sciences and Technology (NOJEST)

Volume 6, Number 1,2024

REVOLUTIONIZING EDUCATION: LECTURERS' COMPETENCY AND BLENDED LEARNING IN THE NEW NORMAL

Ganiyu, Rasidat Sade & Olasedidun, Olutoye Kunle

Article Infor

Article History

Received:
05 May 2024

Accepted:
June 07, 2024

Keywords

Colleges of Education, lecturers' readiness, blended learning, new normal

Abstract

This study seeks to explore the readiness of colleges of education lecturers for blended learning in the new normal. This study examined colleges of education lecturers' readiness for blended learning in the new normal. The study adopted the descriptive research design. Two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. All colleges of education lecturers served as respondents through stratified random sampling technique. A self-designed instrument titled Assessment of College of Education Lecturers Readiness for blended learning in the new normal was used for data collection. Mean scores were used to answer research questions and t-test was used to test the four research hypotheses. Findings from the study revealed that COE lecturers were not adequately ready for the blended learning in the new normal in terms of online teaching tools and skills/competencies needed. Also, there was no significant difference between experienced and less-experienced lecturers in their readiness for blended learning $t(1105) = 37.70$, $p<0.05$ and that no significant difference was established between the male and female competency level of COE lecturers in blended learning $t(1105) = 37.70$. $p<0.05$; No significant difference was established between male and female lecturers in their readiness for blended learning, $t (1105)$ $p>0.05$. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others, that all COE lecturers should be trained on blended learning usage in case of any pandemic.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused global disruption, affecting every aspect of human life in many ways. A telling example of the disruption caused by COVID-19 is the temporary closure of educational institutions worldwide. To ensure the continuity of education for students, face-to-face classes have been moved online, ushering a new version of online learning in which lectures,

lessons, and all learning activities are conducted remotely. In developed societies, online learning is not new. It is part of the curriculum and students are generally familiar with different aspects of online learning through the use of Moodle, Blackboard, and other learning management systems. However, in developing societies such as Nigeria, online learning is not common, and there are many issues when it comes to implementing this learning mode (Dube, 2020). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the concept of blended learning, a combination of face-to-face learning and online learning was introduced at some Nigerian universities such as university of Ilorin and University of Ibadan, but it was not really a common learning method. With the unprecedented shift towards hybrid educational models, it becomes imperative to assess the preparedness of educators in integrating traditional and digital teaching methods. This study delved into factors such as technological proficiency, pedagogical adaptation and institutional support that influence the capability of lecturers to effectively navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by blended learning (Khan, 2020).

More and more people are becoming aware of the multiple roles that schools play in providing for the well-being of children and youth, and in ensuring health and nutrition, alongside academic learning. This increased awareness and appreciation can serve as the basis for a new revival of public education. The pandemic has forced a massive shift from learning and teaching in traditional settings with physical interactions. This is a major problem for children living in poverty worldwide, who often rely on the physical setting of their schools to provide educational materials, guidance, and, sometimes, the only decent meal of the day. A big concern amid COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdown is education, which is at standstill affecting learning of millions of students worldwide. In the absence of any medical treatment and vaccine, social distancing emerged as a potent mitigating factor. The public places across nations have been shut to prevent the spread of this deadly disease and amid all institutionalized education becomes the biggest casualty.

Schools and higher education institutions across the globe have been shut, impacting the learning of over 90% of world's student population. As per United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) estimates, COVID-19 related closure impacted the study of 1540 million students across 191 nations. In India, COVID-19 related educational institutions closure affected the learning of over 320 million students (UNESCO, 2020).

E-learning readiness refers to the state of mental, physical and material preparedness of stakeholders of an e-learning project for fruitful e-learning experience and action. When introducing e-learning, institutions are expected to be prepared with adequate environmental, technological and other facilities. By providing the necessary environment and appropriate tools for task-oriented, up-to-date and continuous learning (Alias & Zainuddin, 2005). The outbreak of the pandemic in late 2019 and its impacts in the year 2020 has affected education in a most significant way that the world will not forget in a hurry. The total lockdown that the world experienced before June 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic is better imagined. Kolawole & Kolawole (2021) described the impact of Covid-19 as the beginning of wisdom for those who are wise. In addition to the pandemic being devastating, it has seriously affected the education sector in ways that school calendars, curricular, pedagogy, infrastructural facilities and personnel can no longer be what they were before the outbreak of the virus in 2020 (Kolawole et al 2021).

The fact that Covid-19 pandemic has affected language and education is never in doubt. The institutions across 100 countries and 900 million students across the world were affected by the pandemic. The situation in Nigeria is not in any way different from what the world experienced. In fact, it is far worse in Nigeria than in other countries because it exposed all the problems facing education to the whole world. E-learning enables open and flexible learning, and in turn, allows mature students and those already in employment to access education (Kharve & Gogia, 2016). Moreover, e-learning provides a cost-effective way of providing school-based education and preparing students to participate in the global information society, expanding educational opportunities to overcome the barriers of time and space.

The use of ICT in education is at a particularly dynamic stage in Africa. The issues of Internet access, connectivity and users' Internet skills are dynamic and vary greatly from one locality to another (Thakrar, Zinn and Wolfenden, 2009). Moreover, the example of mobile phones illustrates how countries can sometimes skip over technologies (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2011), thereby enabling them to gain rapid strides in the adoption of newer technologies. Recently, there has been rapid growth in the telecommunication sector in Nigeria; it is the fastest growing on the African continent, with over 100 million mobile lines, according to the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC, 2011). New technologies are complex, and acceptance may be hindered by elements of uncertainty, determined by people's attitudes and the level of motivation towards usage.

Statement of the Problem

Existing literature showed that socio-demographic factors such as gender and age could influence users' participation in technology-mediated learning (Kedia and Bhagat, 1988; Surry, Ensminger and Haab, 2005). Thus, it is generally accepted that gender is an issue in technology acceptance; that males are more enthusiastic and more positive than females; that men and women experience learning technologies differently (Burge, 1998) and that women often tend to lag behind in Internet adoption (Greenspan, 2004). However, developing countries in general, and Nigeria in particular, may not be exceptions; hence, assessing the influence of gender on the level of ICT skills could not be overlooked. Specifically, this research will survey lecturers from three colleges of education in Oyo State in Nigeria, assessing the level of Internet access, degree of deployment of instructional design principles, level of ICT skills, and influence of gender on ICT skills required for online teaching in Nigeria. Although previous studies have provided exhaustive effects on the instructional delivery via e-learning, it seems that the online instructional delivery (remote teaching) needs further studies in investigating this issue more deeply particularly in colleges of education. Hence, the need for this study. This study thus sought the assessment of lecturers' colleges of education English lecturers' readiness for blended learning in the new normal.

Research question

1. What is the competency level of colleges of education lecturers for blended learning in the new normal?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level significance:

Ho_1. There is no significant difference in colleges of education lecturers' competency level in blended learning based on gender in the new nornal.

H_{02}. There is no significant difference in colleges of education lecturers' competency level in blended learning based on years of experience in the new normal.

Methodology

The descriptive study of the survey type was adopted in the study. The study was designed to assess the colleges of Education lecturers' readiness for blended learning in the new normal in Oyo State colleges of education. The population of the study comprised all the colleges of education lecturers in all colleges of education in Oyo state. The total population used for the study was 108 respondents in all the three colleges of education in Oyo state. Multi-stage sampling technique was

used for this study. In stage one, purposive sampling technique was used to select the three colleges of education in Oyo State that are government owned while in stage two proportionate sampling technique was used to select 35% of lecturers in all government owned colleges of education in South-west, Nigeria. Furthermore, in stage three, stratified sampling technique was used to stratify respondents along the gender and years of experience lines.

The researcher designed questionnaire was as instruments for the study as a tool to gather data for the study. This research design was therefore, considered appropriate because the study involved studying and describing the existing conditions in the areas of implementation of ICT for learning support using the NCCE's policy and guidelines as a yardstick. The instrument is titled "Questionnaire on Assessment of Colleges of Education Lecturers Readiness for Blended Learning in the New Normal (QACELRBLITNN). The instrument was divided into 2 sections. Section I contains information on biodata of the respondents such as institutions, gender, years of teaching experience.

To test the reliability of the instrument, the prepared questionnaire was administered on Osun State College of Education lecturers, Ilesha, which is not part of the selected Colleges of Education (outside the coverage of the study). Reliability is necessary to ascertain whether the instruments can reproduce consistent or similar results after several repeated administrations. At the end of administration, the data collected were analyzed with Cronbach's alpha and the reliability coefficient index of 0.84 was obtained. This implied that the instrument is reliable and capable of collecting expected data for this study. The instrument for the study was validated by the experts in the Department of Educational Technology, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education and two other experts from computer science department for face and content validity, correction on the suitability of content, language of presentation and sequence of the instrument. The data collected for this study were analyzed using inferential statistics (*t*-test) was used to test the two research hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the competency level of Colleges of Education lecturers for blended learning in the new normal?

Table 1: Checklist of Competency Levels of Colleges of Education Lecturers.

S/N	Statements	Very Competent (%)	Competent (%)	Fairly Competent (%)	Not Competent (%)
1	I do basic computer skills(e.g. typing and editing)	5(3.40)	21(14.20)	46(31.10)	76(51.40)
2	I manage multimedia contents skills (power point, keynote)	9(6.10)	22(14.90)	46(31.10)	71(48.00)
3	I use the Web for education skills (Screen recording	15(10.00)	31(20.90)	34(23.00)	68(45.90)
4	I use online tools in education skills: Video chat (e.g., Skype) Web Video (e.g., YouTube)	6(4.10)	32(21.60)	42(28.40)	68(45.90)
5	I design online contents skills (Google Drive, forums)	22(14.90)	23(15.50)	46(31.10)	57(38.50)
6	I do online communication skills: Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, E-mail)	3(2.00)	7(4.70)	66(44.60)	72(48.60)
7	I design active learning activities that allow students to interact with their peers and instructors	6(4.10)	32(21.60)	42(28.40)	68(45.90)
8	I write measurable learning objectives based on Bloom's taxonomy	22(14.90)	23(15.50)	46(31.10)	57(38.80)
9	I use LMS assessment tools to evaluate student performance	3(2.00)	7(4.70)	66(44.60)	72(48.60)
10	I use technology to keep track all students activities and progress	16(10.80)	32(21.60)	37(25.00)	63(42.60)
11	I use technology to develop student abilities to undertake independent learning	16(10.80)	27(18.20)	32(21.60)	84(56.80)
12	I use technology to develop certain skills in students	15(10.10)	31(20.90)	34(23.00)	68(45.90)

Table 1 shows the College of Education lecturers' competency in blended learning in the new normal. To better understand the extent of readiness of the Colleges of Education lecturers towards blended learning approach, their skills and competencies were assessed to determine their level of competency in the use of blended learning. Basic computer skills of the respondents that involved ability to type and edit was the first to be identified. Majority of the lecturers 76(51.4%) claimed to be "not competent" followed by 46(31.1%) who indicated that they are competent. 21(14.2%) and 5(3.4%) of the respondents fell into the category of competent and very competent respectively. Advanced computer skills involving the use of internet was also accessed where many the respondent 75(50.7%) indicated having the skills. 41(27.7%) said they are very competent while 28(18.9%) and 4(2.7%) fell into this category of competent and not competent respectively.

Skills for managing multimedia content such as PowerPoint, keynote and so on, also has number of the respondent 71(48.0%) being competent in those skills. At extremely are respondent 22(14.9%) and 9(6.1%) who indicated very competent and not competent respectively. Using the web for educational activities such as screen recording is also another important skill, of which 31(20.9%) indicated that they are very competent while 15(10.1%) said they are not competent. However, majority of the respondent 68(45.9%) are competent while 32(21.6%) are competent. Skills for using online tools such as Skype, Zoom, Web video, Youtube etc, for educational activities are some of the required skills for effective use of blended learning. 42(28.4%) of the respondent are very competent 68(45.9%) are competent, 32(21.6%) are fairly competent while 6(4.1%) are not competent. Responses for designing online content skills such as Google drive forums and so on indicated that 23(15.5%) are very competent 57(38.5%) are competent 46(31.1%) are fairly competent, and 22(14.9%) are not competent. Online communication skills that requires the use of Facebook, twitter, E-mail and so on, had majority of the respondents 72(48.6%) being very competent, 66(44..6%) are competent, 7(4.7%) are fairly competent, and 3(2.0%) Not competent.

Use of online resources such as database, OPAC and so on. The responses indicated that 32(21.6%) are very competent, this was followed by 63(42.6%) who indicated to be proficient, 37(25.0%) competent and 16(10.8%) not competent. Time management is an important factor for blended learning as it involves the use of scarce resources to achieve set goals. Majority of the respondent;

84(56.8%) are competent followed by 32(21.6%) being very competent 27(18.2%) fairly competent and 5(3.4%) not competent.

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between experienced and non-experienced lecturers' competency level in blended learning in the new normal.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of experienced and non-experienced COE Lecturers' competency level for blended learning in the new normal

Gender	N	M	SD	Df	t-cal.	t-tab.	R
Experienced	68	3.30	.33	106	.20	.92	NS
Non-experienced	40	3.30	.32				

$P < 0.05$

From Table 2 it was revealed that the calculated t-value of 0.20 was lesser than the tabulated t-value of 0.92 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the stated null hypothesis was not rejected. By implication, the stated null hypothesis was established and held. It means that there is no significant difference between experienced and non-experienced COE lecturers' competency level for online teaching. Based on the earlier mean score of the lecturers' readiness for blended learning, this means that both experienced and non-experienced COE lecturers were not ready for blended learning during and after Covid-19 pandemic.

Ho^2: There is no significant difference between female and male COE lecturers on competency level in blended learning in the new normal.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of male and female COE Lecturers on Competency Level in blended learning in the new normal

Gender	N	M	SD	Df	t- cal.	t-t- tab.	R
Male	68	1.06	.59	106	.21	.83	NS
Female	40	1.05	.59				

$P < 0.05$

Table 3: Specified difference between female and male lecturers on competency level in blended learning in the new normal. It was found that the calculated t-value of 0.21 was lesser than the tabulated t-value of 0.83 at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the stated null hypothesis was not rejected. By implication, this means that the stated null hypothesis was upheld and established. Thus, there was no significant difference between male and female COE lecturers on competency level. In other words, based on the earlier mean score of the lecturers' general competency level in blended learning both male and female *lecturers* were at the same level.

Conclusion

Amidst Covid-19 pandemic, internet has become mitigating tool to rescue education from severe effects of worldwide lockdown and closure. By closing the gates of many educational institutions around the globe, coronavirus pandemic has provided an opportunity to practise digital form of teaching and learning. This much needed but suddenly imposed online teaching started unplanned in hurry to safeguard academic life of millions of students affected by this worldwide pandemic. The research explored COE lecturers' readiness and proficiency in online teaching in Nigeria. The results obtained from data gathered and analysed in this study indicated that the readiness to online teaching by COE lecturers was positively moderate.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made as follows:

1. The government should invest more in the area of blended learning tools as well as partnering with telecommunication companies for free internet service to the Colleges of Education lecturers and students during online teaching classes.
2. The Colleges of Education management should inculcate blended learning practices as this will further accelerate the pursuit of aspects of technology-based teaching that would be found most useful.
3. The governments must ensure the availability of reliable and adequate online tools, high quality digital academic experience, and promote technology-enabled learning for lecturers to bridge the disparities originated in the education system before and after COVID-19 catastrophe which is also inevitably necessitated for uninterrupted learning.
4. Government should equip the college of education lecturers with adequate blended learning tools and retrained on the use of these tools for any inevitability.

References

Alias, N. A., & Zainuddin, A. M. (2005). Innovation for Better Teaching and Learning: Adopting the Learning Management System. *Malaysian Online Journal of Instructional Technology, 2(2), 27–40*

Burge, E. (1998). Gender in distance education. In *Distance learners in higher education: Institutional responses for quality outcomes*, ed. C. Gibson, 25–85. Madison, WI: Atwood.

Dube, B. (2020). Rural online learning in the context of COVID-19 in South Africa: Evoking an inclusive education approach. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research, 10*(2), 135-157. doi: 10.4471/remie.2020.5607.

Greenspan, R. (2004). Europe, US, on different sides of the gender divide. http://www.clickz.com/stats/big_picture/demographics/article.php/3095681

Khan, I. A. (2020). Electronic learning management system: Relevance, challenges and preparedness. *J. Emerg. Technol. Innov. Res, 7(5),* 471–480. https:// www.jetir.org/papers/JETIR2005072.pdf.

Kedia, B. L. and Bhagat, R. S. (1988). Cultural constraints on transfer of technology across nations: Implication for international and comparative management. *Academy of Management Review* 13(4): 559–71.

Kharve, D., & Gogia, A. (2016). E-learning: Student's perception in developing countries like India. *Advances in Computer Science and Information Technology*, *3*(5), 389-395

Kolawole, C. O. O. & Kolawole, A. O. (2021). *Language, Education and Covid-19 pandemic.* In Education Re-Engineering in the New Normal World. Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan.

Surry, D., Ensminger, D. and Haab, M. (2005). A Model for integrating instructional technology into higher education. *British Journal of Educational Technology* 36(2): 327–329.