UTILIZATION OF BLENDED- LEARNING TECHNIQUES BY BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS IN TEACHING IN POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC: EVIDENCE OF GODFREY OKOYE UNIVERSITY, ENUGU, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study focuses on Business Education lecturers' utilization of Blended-Learning Techniques in the Post Covid -19 pandemic at Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu Nigeria. The objective of this study was to determine the extent Business Education lecturers in Godfrey Okoye University utilize blended learning techniques in teaching in this post COVID-19 pandemic era. Descriptive survey research design was utilized. The population of the study consists of thirty-one (31) lecturers teaching Business Education students in Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu. The whole population was studied. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Utilization of Blended Learning Techniques by Business Education Lecturers" (UBLTBEL)) developed by the researchers. A Cronbach Alpha reliability index of 0.75 was obtained. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test statistic. The research results revealed that Business Education lecturers utilize Blended learning to a high extent in teaching during post COVID-19 pandemic. Some hindrances to effective utilization of blended learning by business education lecturers were identified, which include poor internet connectivity, lack of ICT skills, lack of proper digital services, and poor electricity. The result of null hypothesis one reveals that there is no significant difference in the extent of utilization of blended learning by Business Education lecturers based on gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. The results of the null hypothesis two reveals that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on

challenges to effective utilization of blended in teaching in post COVID-19 pandemic era. The null hypothesis two was accepted. It was recommended that Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University Enugu should strive to acquire more digital skills and knowledge to enhance their application of blended learning techniques in teaching their students. The university should endeavor to provide the necessary Information and communication technology (I C T) facilities needed for effective utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching and learning during this post covid-19 era.

KEYWORDS: Blended Learning, Post -COVID-19 Pandemic, Business Education, Business Education Lecturers, ICT Skills, Godfrey Okoye University.

INTRODUCTION

There is a saying that necessity is the mother of invention. The worldwide corona virus disease COVID-19 pandemic that claimed numerous lives in many countries of the world between 2019 and 2021 has spurred every country into action in a bid to devise a means of eradicating or more importantly stopping the spreading of the corona virus disease. This has forced many educational institutions in most countries, including Nigeria to resort to distance or online learning to ensure that teaching and learning continue in educational institutions despite the lockdown. Wei Zheng and Hung-Lung (2021) noted that the world -wide lockdown which started since the last part of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic compelled teachers in many educational institutions to start using many technological tools for conducting classes for the learners who also accessed the contents online to cope with the changing situation in the environment.   According to Asogwa, Nwahunanya, Onyeidu, Odike, and Attah (2020) COVID-19 pandemic has forced learning to evolve from the traditional classroom to internet based classroom such as online learning. Online learning (OL) is an education that takes place over the internet between two individuals or groups. Online learning is often referred to as electronic learning (e- learning) Despite the fact that the incident of corona virus pandemic seems to have been brought under control worldwide, including Nigeria, some tertiary institutions like Godfrey Okoye University still engage in online teaching, only that this time it is mostly Blended learning.

Godfrey Okoye University is one of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It is equally a Catholic University in Enugu State of Nigeria. It was founded in 2009. It is the first University in Africa that is being owned by a Catholic Diocese (Anieke 2023). As at the time of this research, Godfrey Okoye University has five faculties; namely, Faculties of Arts; Education; Law; Natural and Applied Sciences, Management and Social Sciences and College of Medicine. Undergraduate and postgraduates courses are offered in theses faculties. During the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2020, when there was total lock down and compulsory social distancing, Godfrey Okoye University educational activities were not

interrupted. All teaching and learning were done online. During this post COVID-19 pandemic era, Godfrey Okoye University engaged in hybrid teaching techniques otherwise known as Blended Learning Technique (BLT).

Furthermore, utilization of blended learning by Godfrey Okoye University was also necessitated by the compulsory incessant sit-at-home order imposed on the South Easterners every Monday that jeopardizes the Monday lectures. Consequently, all the lectures scheduled on Mondays are taught online. Even lecturers who do not have lectures on Mondays equally use online learning alongside physical classroom teaching to ensure that they cover their courses' contents. This combination of online learning and offline physical classroom leaning approach is called Blended learning or hybrid learning. According to Wei Zheng and Hung-Lung (2021) blended learning is a combination of face-to-face and online learning experiences that utilize mostly 45% of online learning and the rest of face-to-face learning. Ganiyu and Ojelewla (2018) explained that blended learning is a student-centered approach to creating learning experiences whereby the learner interacts with instructor, and with content through thoughtful integration of online and face-to-face environments.

Many benefits have been credited to blended learning approach to teaching by many researchers, including, Wei,Zheng and Hung-Hung (2021), and Pitaloka, Angraini, Kurniawan, Erlina, & Jaya, (2020) . According to these scholars, blended learning makes it easy for students to access course materials online, the students can read upcoming lesson materials beforehand, and prepare to discuss it during face to face physical classroom lecture. Other benefits include its usefulness, easiness, flexibility, satisfaction, and effectiveness. Olelewe (2019) explained that blended learning is essential for the following reasons: it can keep learners focused for longer period of time, the use of computers to lookup information or data is a tremendous time saver, it makes learners more excited to learn, it enables learners to learn at their own pace. With the integration of technology, students are able to get direct individualized instruction from the computer. By learning to use technology in the classroom, both the facilitators and learners will develop skills essential to the 21st century which include: communication skills, technology literacy skills and finally the students will be able to learn critical thinking and workplace skills they will need to be successful in their future. (Olelewe 2019).

Blended learning technique has been found as a useful approach in present-day education (Friatin, Rachmawati, and Ratnawati, (2017); Kosar, (2016); Altıner, (2015); Mohsen and Shafeeq,(2014). Friatin, Rachmawati, and Ratnawati (2017) maintained that blended learning increases utility, motivation, and satisfaction of students in private universities in Ciamis, West Java. In addition, Kosar (2016) found that blended learning was flexible and increased learners' motivation. It was further argued that blended learning makes the learner more autonomous than the use of only face-to-face approach. Altıner (2015) argued that there should be combination of online and traditional learning approach to impact on English students of universities in Turkey. Mohsen and Shafeeq (2014) found that the use of blackboard to

complement online teaching enhances students' motivation to learn the subject. According to them blended learning is easy and supports students' communication with teachers.

Utilization of blended learning is also of great benefit to both teachers and students especially during this post COVID-19 pandemic era. This is because it allows learning to take place through face to face physical classroom setting and through virtual classroom such as Zoom platform, or any other available Learning Management System (LMS). When it is not possible or convenient for both Business Education lecturers and students to engage in physical classroom teaching and learning, they can utilize online learning as alternative method and vice versa. Another important benefit of utilizing blended learning is that it gives room for Business Education lecturers to choose the best means of teaching a particular topic. For instance, topic that requires practical demonstration to students should be better taught offline in physical classroom. More importantly, it will enable the lecturers to cover their course outline, since their lectures can go on uninterrupted. The incessant strikes of the Academic staff Union of University (ASUU) of Nigeria also calls for the utilization of blended learning by Business Education lecturers. This will enable them cover their course outline when they eventually resume work if they so desire.

On the other hand, if this hybrid learning is not utilized by lecturers it will affect curriculum implementation, because most of the lecturers including Business Education lecturers will not be able to cover their course contents. Consequently, the students will eventually graduate without being adequately equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge expected of them. This can definitely affect their job or employment opportunity after graduation. Those who have the opportunity to gain employment may not efficiently discharge their duties. This will culminate in poor quality products and low productivity. On the other hand, those that could not be gainfully employed after graduation may engage in various illegal means of earning a living, which will be detrimental to them and the society in general

However, for any lecturer to employ blended learning technique effectively, he or she must be information and communication technology (ICT) compliance. Knowledge of information and Communication Technology (ICT) is highly needed for effective utilization of Blended Learning Technique. Information and communication technology (ICT) is a diverse set of technological tools and resources used to transmit, store, create, share or exchange information. Widyawan, Hardiani and Muhammed (2020)) opined that the COVID-19 lockdown measures have made digital skills even more relevant. The use of digital technologies has substantially increased largely because many people now work and learn from home, and manage health, social life, and household chores (for example shopping in a digital environment). At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the gaps in digital skills as well as the existing risks and limited knowledge in using a range of digital technologies for different purposes. During the lockdown in 2020, teachers, parents, and students found remote schooling extremely challenging, partly due to their low level of digital skills; not to mention the inequalities in access to digital devices and infrastructure (Widyawan, Hardiani and Muhammed 2020).

Without adequate possession of ICT skills by both lecturers and students, there will not be effective blended learning techniques utilization. Asogwa, Nwahunanya, Onyeidu, Odike, and Attah (2020), discovered that for lecturers to engage in blended learning techniques in teaching they needed to possess the following ICT skills: ability to create an online classroom, add students, designate a presenter, troubleshoot minor technical issues during lectures, connect ICT and Internet resources for online classes, download and install applications that support online learning, share screen with students during online learning. Equally, lecturers have to prepare lecture materials for online teaching; manage lecture time; accurately assess student performance using online assessment tools; moderate the class for effective lecture delivery; take attendance and track student participation.

In spite of all the many benefits of blended learning, its utilization in teaching however poses various challenges to both teachers and students. Due to the requisite digital skills and I C T facilities needed for effective utilization of blended learning techniques many lecturers may find it uncomfortable using, it in teaching their students. Some researchers including
Widyawan Hardiani, and Muhammad, (2020) , Ezeokoka (2023) and Ritimoni, Krishna, Guwahati, and Krishna (2021) reported that Blended Learning has some challenges militating against its utilization which include poor internet connection, time consuming, and inadequate possession of digital skills by teachers. Devi, Muhammad,and Berchah,   (2020) noted that from the teachers' perspective, the challenge of blended learning mainly lies in the application of technology in teaching, including the presentation of diversified teaching content and overcoming the technology and environment of information system platform.

Considering the obvious benefits of blended learning techniques in teaching and learning, it is expected that all Business Education lecturers irrespective of gender should utilize it in teaching in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. They are also expected to have possessed the requisite digital and other Blended Learning skills to be able to effectively utilize it in teaching their students. Business Education lecturers in this context refer to all lecturers in Godfrey Okoye University that teach Business Education students their courses. Business Education is one of the Vocational education programs in the curriculum of Nigerian University and colleges of education. It is education for and about business (Odike and Nnaekwe 2018).Business Education is a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry and the pedagogy needed for inculcating the knowledge in students. Business Education prepares individuals for gainful employment through acquisition of skills and knowledge that are relevant for the world of work. According to Ademiluyi, Bello and Akande(2019) Business Education is a self-reliance course that offers job opportunities in marketing, secretarial, accounting, management among others. It equips the individual with skills to be self-reliant and prepares students to handle their own businesses and function effectively as producers or consumers in the contemporary world.

It can be rightly said that Business Education is a conglomeration of many business courses. Its curriculum content is an integration of many business related courses, such as Accounting, Economics, Marketing, Computer, Information and Communication Technology and Law, including Education and General studies (GST) courses. This explains why many of the courses in Business Education curriculum are being taught by both business educators and non-business educators from other departments such as departments of Accountancy, Economics, Business management and computer education in various universities including Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu.

Business Education students do not only need to be taught with ICT facilities but they need to know how to operate them themselves in other to apply the knowledge they acquire in their places of work. However, it has been observed by many researchers including Ezekoka (2020) that the challenges of blended learning are mainly on the application of technology in teaching, which involve the presentation of diversified teaching content and overcoming the technology and environment of information system platform. Therefore, both male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University must be ICT compliant in order to employ the blended learning technique in teaching their students which is inevitable in Godfrey Okoye University. Therefore , it is against this backdrop that this study is being conducted to investigate the extent Godfrey Okoye University Business Education lecturers utilize Blended learning techniques during this post COVID-19 pandemic era in teaching their students.

Statement of Problem

 Utilization of blended learning has been found to be of great benefit to both teachers and students especially during this post COVID-19 pandemic era. This is because it allows learning to take place through face to face physical classroom setting and through online teaching. When it is not possible or convenient for both Business Education lecturers and their students to engage in physical classroom teaching and learning, they can utilize online learning as alternative method of teaching and learning and vice versa.

The recent emphasis on utilization of blended learning technique is necessitated by the compulsory incessant sit at home order imposed on South Easterners every Monday. This has no doubt jeopardized Monday lectures in all educational institutions in the region. If this hybrid learning is not utilized by lecturers it will no doubt affect their curriculum implementation. Most of the lecturers including Business Education lecturers will not be able to cover their courses contents. Consequently, the students will eventually graduate without being adequately equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge expected of them to be functional in the world of work. This can result in producing half-baked graduates thereby jeopardizing their employment opportunities. As a result, those who will have the opportunity to gain employment after graduation may not efficiently discharge their duties creditably. This will culminate in poor quality products, low productivity and eventual loss of job. Those that could not be gainfully

employed after graduation may decide to engage in nefarious activities as a means of earning a living, which will be detrimental to them and the society in general.

It is therefore imperative that Godfrey Okoye University Business Education lecturers irrespective of gender should effectively utilize Blended learning technique to enable them deliver their lectures to their students irrespective of their location at any point in time to ensure adequate coverage of their course contents.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Some related empirical studies to this work were hereby reviewed.

Okoli, and Ikpat,. (2021) carried out a study on the level of application of blended learning pedagogical design by Business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State. One research question and two null hypotheses guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 99 Business educators from public tertiary institution in Anambra State. No sampling was drawn due to the relatively small size of the population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire.

The results of the study indicated that Business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State moderately applied blended learning in instructional delivery. The result of hypotheses showed that male and female business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State do not differ significantly on their level of application of blended learning for instructional delivery. This study is related to the present study except that they differ in scope, and it was carried out in another state with different educational environment, hence cannot be generalized to Enugu State where the present study is being conducted.

Ritimoni, Krishna, Guwahati, and Krishna (2021) studied the Perception towards online /blended learning at the time of COVID-19 pandemic: an academic analytics in the Indian context. It was seen that poor internet connectivity, lack of ICT skills, lack of proper digital services poor electricity in the localities are some of the other major problems in accessing online resources. It has been found that in India online/blended learning had received new impetus during the Covid- 19 pandemic. The study is related to the present one, but it was conducted in a foreign country, therefore, this present study is justifiable.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent of utilization of blended learning technique by Business Education lecturers at Godfrey Okoye University Enugu in teaching during the post Covid– 19 pandemic era.

Specifically, the study aimed to determine the:

1. extent male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, utilize blended learning techniques in teaching; during the post COVID-19 pandemic era

2. Challenges to utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching by male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

 1 To what extent do male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University Enugu utilize blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era?

 2 What are the challenges to utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching by male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu during the post COVID-19 pandemic era?

Null Hypotheses

The following Null hypotheses were formulated for the study

$H0_1$ There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on the extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

$H0_2$ There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on challenges of blended learning techniques utilization in teaching in Post COVID-19 pandemic era.

METHOD

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Godfrey Okoye University in Enugu State. Godfrey Okoye University is one of the private Universities in Nigeria. It is located in Enugu state of Nigeria**.** The population for study was 31 consisting of 18 males and 13 females Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University. The whole population was studied. The instrument for data collection was a structured Questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Utilization of Blended Learning Techniques by Business Education lecturers" (UBLTBEL)). Four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE) 4points; High Extent (HE) 3 points; Low Extent (LE) 2points; and Very Low Extent) (VLE) 1point was used for research questions one. While Four-point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) 4points; Agreed (A) 3 points; Disagreed (D) 2points: and strongly disagreed (SD) 1point was used for research questions two. The instrument was face-validated by three specialists, one from the Department of Measurement and Evaluation and two from the Department of Science and Computer Education, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu. The reliability analysis of the instrument was determined with Cronbach Alpha and indicated high internal consistency. The alpha coefficients showed that blended learning techniques activities and Challenges to blended learning techniques utilization are 0.743, and 0.805, respectively. Thirty one (31) copies of the questionnaire were distributed and all of them retrieved by the researchers representing 100% return rate. The two Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. While t-test statistical tool was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level of significance. A mean score that has up to 2.50 and above was

accepted, while a mean score that has less than 2.5 was rejected. The null hypothesis was accepted where t-calculated at 0.05 was greater than the table t. while if otherwise was rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent do male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University Enugu, utilize blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of the responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye university, Enugu on the extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

S/N	Extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.	Male (n_m = 18)		Female (n_f = 13)		$\overline{GX}$	GSD	Dec
		$\overline{X}_M$	SD$_M$	$\overline{X}_F$	SD$_M$			
1	Upload your lecture materials online for your students to read	3.72	0.66	3.76	0.43	3.74	0.57	VHE
2	Give students hardcopy of your lecture materials	2.88	0.75	3.38	0.76	3.09	0.78	HE
3	Teach some aspect of your lessons to student online and some offline (physical class)	3.38	0.50	3.38	0.50	3.38	0.49	HE
4	Teach all your lessons online	2.40	0.68	2.23	0.83	2.31	0.76	LE
5	Teach all your lessons offline (physical class)	2.24	0.74	2.25	0.72	2.24	0.85	LE
6	Give assignments to students both online/offline	3.55	0.70	3.23	0.43	3.41	0.62	HE
7	Give all assignments to students online.	2.22	0.73	2.07	0.95	2.14	0.79	LE
8	Give all assignment to students offline (physical class)	3.66	0.59	3.00	0.57	3.38	0.66	HE
9	Read and correct students project both online and offline	2.22	0.73	2.00	0.70	2.12	0.71	LE
10	Read and correct students project online only	2.55	0.92	3.38	0.50	2.90	0.87	HE
	Cluster Mean/SD	**3.01**	**0.52**	**2.96**	**0.49**	**2.99**	**0.50**	**HE**

Key:$\overline{X}_M$ = Mean for males, $\overline{X}_F$ = Mean for females, SD$_M$ = Standard Deviation for males, SD$_F$ = Standard Deviation for females, $\overline{X}_C$ = Cluster mean, SD$_C$= Cluster Standard Deviation, VHE = Very High Extent, HE = High Extent, LE = Low Extent, n_m = number of males, n_f = number of females.

The data presented in table 1 shows that out of the 10 listed items for determining the extent of utilization of blended learning techniques by male and female business education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, both male and female lecturers rated item 1 as "being performed to a very highly extent" with mean score of 3.72 and3.74 and standard deviation (SD) of 0.66 and 0.57 respectively. While 5 items (2, 3, 6, 8, and 10) were rated as performed to "high extent" with mean scores ranging from 2.90 to 3.41 by both male and female lecturers. On the other hand 4 items (4, 5, 7 and 9) were rated as performed to a "low extent "with mean score ranging from 2.12 to 2.41. The clusters mean of 2.99 shows that Business Education Lecturers utilize blended learning to a high extent in teaching in POST COVID-19 era. The cluster standard deviation of 0.50 shows that the respondents were homogenous.

Research Question 2: What are the challenges to utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching by male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, in post COVID-19 pandemic era?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of the responses of male and female business education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu on the challenges of utilization of blended learning techniques during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

S/N	Challenges of utilization of blended learning techniques during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.	Male (n$_m$ = 18)		Female (n$_f$ = 13)		$\bar{X}_C$	SD$_C$	Decision
		$\bar{X}_M$	SD$_M$	$\bar{X}_F$	SD$_M$			
1	Inadequate ICT facilities in the institution	3.16	0.70	3.38	1.04	3.25	0.85	Agree
2	Lack of digital skills by some lecturers	3.50	0.61	3.23	0.72	3.38	0.66	Agree
3	Inadequate ICT skills by learners for online teaching	3.22	0.80	2.76	0.72	3.03	0.79	Agree
4	Poor internet services/Poor internet connection	3.66	0.59	3.69	0.48	3.67	0.54	Agree
5	Unstable power supply	3.44	0.85	2.92	1.11	3.22	0.99	Agree
6	Students frequent offline in online learning	3.22	0.64	2.92	0.64	3.09	0.65	Agree
7	Lack of laptop or smart phone by some students	3.44	0.61	3.00	1.00	3.25	0.81	Agree
8	Time consuming	3.00	1.08	2.30	1.25	2.70	1.18	Agree
9	Lack of network coverage in some areas.	3.55	0.61	3.23	0.92	3.41	0.76	Agree
10	High cost of internet data bundles	3.33	0.59	3.53	0.87	3.41	0.71	Agree
	Cluster Mean/SD	**3.35**	**0.65**	**3.10**	**0.80**	**3.24**	**0.71**	**Agree**

Key: $\bar{X}_M$ = *Mean for males,* $\bar{X}_F$ = *Mean for females, SD$_M$ = Standard Deviation for males, SD$_F$ = Standard Deviation for females,* $\bar{X}_C$ = *Cluster mean, SD$_C$= Cluster Standard Deviation*

The data presented in table 2 revealed that the identified 10 items are the challenges to utilization of blended learning techniques by male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye in post COVID-19 era. This implies that the respondents agreed that the items are among the challenges to utilization of blended learning techniques during the post COVID-19 pandemic era. The standard deviation of 0.71 shows that the respondents were homogenous in their responses.

H0$_1$: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on the extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

Table 3:t-test Analysis of the responses of male and female business education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye university, Enugu, on the extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

S/N	Extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.	Male (n$_m$ = 18)		Female (n$_f$ = 13)		Df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
		$\bar{X}_M$	SD$_M$	$\bar{X}_F$	SD$_M$				
1	Upload your lecture materials online for your students to read	3.72	0.66	3.76	0.43	29	-0.221	0.827	NS
2	Give students hardcopy of your lecture materials	2.88	0.75	3.38	0.76	29	-1.787	0.084	NS
3	Teach some aspect of your lessons to student online and some offline (physical class)	3.38	0.50	3.38	0.50	29	0.023	0.982	NS
4	Teach all your lessons online	2.40	0.68	2.23	0.83	29	1.597	0.121	NS
5	Teach all your lessons offline (physical	2.24	0.73	2.23	0.83	29	-0.919	0.366	NS

	class)								
6	Give assignments to students both online/offline	3.55	0.70	3.23	0.43	29	1.465	0.154	NS
7	Give all assignments to students online.	2.22	0.73	2.07	0.95	29	1.500	0.145	NS
8	Give all assignment to students offline (physical class)	3.66	0.59	3.00	0.57	29	3.119	0.004	S
9	Read and correct students project both online and offline	2.22	0.73	2.00	0.70	29	0.846	0.405	NS
10	Read and correct students project online only	2.55	0.92	3.38	0.50	29	-2.930	0.007	S
	Cluster Summary	**3.01**	**0.52**	**2.96**	**0.49**	**29**	**0.224**	**0.824**	**NS**

Key: $\bar{X}_M$ = *Mean for males,* $\bar{X}_F$ = *Mean for females,* SD_M = *Standard Deviation for males,* SD_F = *Standard Deviation for females,* $\bar{X}_C$ = *Cluster mean,* SD_C = *Cluster Standard Deviation, df = Degree of Freedom, t-cal = Calculated t-value, Sig. = probability value, NS = Non-Significant, S = Significant, N = Total number of respondents = 31,* n_m = *number of males,* n_f = *number of females.*

Results presented in Table 3 revealed that the probability values for items 8 and 10 are 0.004 and 0.007 respectively, which are less than the stated probability value of 0.05.This means that significant difference exists in the responses of male and female Business Education lecturers on items 8 and 10. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is not accepted for those items. Also, results in Table 3 revealed that the probability values for items 1 to 7 as well as item 9 ranges from 0.84 to 0.982.This means that there was no significant difference in the responses of male and female Business Education lecturers for items 1 to 7 as well as item 9. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld for those items. The result also revealed that the cluster has a probability value of 0.824 which is above the stated probability value of 0.05. This means that there is no significant difference in the responses of the respondents for the cluster. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld for the cluster.

H0₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on challenges to utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching in post COVID-19 pandemic era.

Table 4: t-test analysis of the responses of male and female business education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on challenges of blended learning techniques utilization in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

S/N	Challenges of utilization of blended learning techniques during the post COVID-19 pandemic era.	Male (nₘ = 18)		Female (n_f = 13)		Df	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
		$\bar{X}_M$	SD_M	$\bar{X}_F$	SD_M				
1	Inadequate ICT facilities in the institution	3.16	0.70	3.38	1.04	29	-0.694	0.493	NS
2	Lack of digital skills by some lecturers	3.50	0.61	3.23	0.72	29	1.113	0.275	NS
3	Inadequate ICT skills by learners for online teaching	3.22	0.80	2.76	0.72	29	1.606	0.119	NS
4	Poor internet services/Poor internet connection	3.66	0.59	3.69	0.48	29	-0.128	0.899	NS
5	Unstable power supply	3.44	0.85	2.92	1.11	29	1.475	0.151	NS
6	Students frequent offline in online learning	3.22	0.64	2.92	0.64	29	1.276	0.212	NS
7	Lack of laptop or smart phone by some students	3.44	0.61	3.00	1.00	29	1.531	0.137	NS
8	Time consuming	3.00	1.08	2.30	1.25	29	1.645	0.111	NS
9	Lack of network coverage in some areas.	3.55	0.61	3.23	0.92	29	1.174	0.250	NS
10	High cost of internet data bundles	3.33	0.59	3.53	0.87	29	-0.778	0.443	NS

Cluster Summary	3.35	0.65	3.10	0.80	29	0.977	0.336	NS

Key: $\bar{x}_M$ = *Mean for males*, $\bar{x}_F$ = *Mean for females*, SD_M = *Standard Deviation for males*, SD_F = *Standard Deviation for females*, $\bar{x}_C$ = *Cluster mean*, SD_C= *Cluster Standard Deviation*, df = *Degree of Freedom*, t-cal = *Calculated t-value*, Sig. = *probability value*, NS = *Non-Significant*, S = *Significant*, N = *Total number of respondents = 31*, n_m = *number of males*, n_f = *number of females.*

Results presented in Table 4 reveals that the probability values for items 1 to 10 ranges from 0.111 to 0.899. This means that there was no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers for items 1 to 10. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld for those items. The result also revealed that the cluster has a probability value of 0.336 which is above the stated probability value of 0.05. This means that there is no significant difference in the responses of the respondents for the cluster. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld for the cluster.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

  The first research question was to determine the extent male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University Enugu, utilize blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era. The data in table one revealed that both male and female Business education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye university utilize blended learning techniques in teaching during the post Covid pandemic era to a high extent. The finding is in contrary to that of Ndirika, (2020) who investigated the extent of usage of blended techniques in teaching Biology in secondary schools and found out that Biology teachers were not trained for blended learning hence were not using it to teach their students. The finding, however, agreed with that of Okoli, and Ikpat (2021) who carried out a study on the level of application of blended learning pedagogical design by Business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra state and found out they moderately applied blended in teaching.

The high extent utilization of blended learning techniques by the Business Education lecturers in the present study may be due to the fact that all the lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University including Business Education lecturers were trained by the University on usage of online teaching even before the Covid- 19 pandemic lock down. The training received by the lecturers made them to teach their students online during covid- 19 pandemic lock without any interruption of the university calendar. Blended learning technique has been found as a useful approach in present-day education.

The second research objective was to examine the challenges of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching by male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. The result revealed that Inadequate ICT facilities in the institution, lack of digital skills by some lecturers, inadequate ICT skills by lecturers for online teaching, poor internet services/ poor internet connection, unstable power supply, students frequent offline in online learning, lack of laptop or smart phone by some students, time wasting, lack of network coverage in some areas and high cost of data bundles are among the challenges to utilization of blended learning by business education lecturers. The finding agreed with that of Ritimoni, Krishna, Guwahati, and Krishna (2021) that poor internet connectivity, lack of ICT skills, lack of proper digital services, and poor electricity, were the challenges of blended learning during COVID-19 pandemic in India. Similarly, the finding also is in congruence with that of Widyawan, Hardiani and Muhammed (2020) that poor internet connection, time Publication of Association of Business Educators of Nigeria, Enugu State chapter

wastage, and inexperience were the challenges of blended learning among Parahitkma Institute of Indonesia teachers and students.

The results of the null hypothesis one revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on the extent of utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is upheld for the cluster. The finding also agreed with that of Okoli, and Ikpat (2021), who carried out a study on the level of application of blended learning pedagogical design by Business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State and found out that male and female business educators in tertiary institutions in Anambra State do not differ significantly on their level of application of blended learning for instructional delivery.

The results of the null hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of male and female Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, on challenges of blended learning techniques utilization in teaching during the post COVID-19 pandemic era. This implies that both groups of respondents encounter the same listed challenges that hindered their effective utilization of blended learning techniques during post COVID-19 era. Many researchers including Ritimoni, Krishna, Guwahati and Krishna (2021) and Widyawan, Hardiani and Muhammed (2020) reported such challenges.

Due to the newness of ICT in the academic world online, learning is associated with many digital skills problems especially among the older lecturers that are trying to adapt to the changes in information technology. With time all these challenges will be overcome by constant update of digital skills acquisition by lecturers and students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussions of the finding, the researchers concluded that both male and female Business education lecturers of Godrey Okoye University utilize blended learning techniques to a high extent in teaching during this current post COVID-19 era. They, however, encounter many challenges that hinder their effective utilization of blended learning to a very high extent. Utilization of blended learning technique is very important in teaching and learning in this post Covid -19era. It will help both male and female lecturers to effectively achieve their objective of covering their course contents within the stipulated time frame. The students will also benefit because employment of both online and offline in teaching give them the opportunity to be fully engage in their study in spite of their location at any point in time. This will facilitate their achievement of their educational object which is the acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for life as educated citizen.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the findings and conclusions, the researchers recommended that:

1. Business Education lecturers of Godfrey Okoye University Enugu should strive to acquire more digital skills and knowledge to enhance their application of blended learning techniques in teaching their students during this post COVID-19 pandemic era.

2. The university should endeavor to provide the necessary Information and communication technology (I C T) facilities needed for effective utilization of blended learning techniques in teaching and learning during this post covid- 19 era.

3. The University should also subsidize the cost of data bundle for the lecturers to enable them spend less on data and be motivated to use bended learning techniques in teaching.

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