SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION, ATTITUDE AND READINESS TO ADOPT BLENDED LEARNING IN INSTRUCTION IN OYO METROPOLIS

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Abstract

Blended learning has been proved to bring improvement in the teaching learning process. However, it has been observed that no nation, especially developing countries have adopted this technological innovation for instructional purpose, hence, this study's investigation of the secondary school students' perception, attitude and their readiness to adopt blended learning in instruction. The target population was the senior secondary school students. Three schools were randomly selected from each of the three local government areas in Oyo metropolis. Twenty senior secondary students were randomly selected from each of the school totalling 180 in all. Questionnaires were administered to all the 180 students and the data collected was analysed using frequency counts and means(x). The findings based on the three research questions raised revealed that the student's perception towards the usefulness of blended learning was positive, the attitude was positive and the students were ready to adopt blended learning. It was therefore recommended amongst others that seminars, workshops, in-service trainings and conferences should be organized for teachers for blended learning approach to have a smooth take off.
Keywords: Blended learning, Perception, Attitude, Readiness.

Introduction

Traditionally, Teaching has been viewed as a process of delivering to students what is required without any opportunity for questioning. This means that the teacher has the monopoly of knowledge required to be imparted. However, in the modern sense teaching is an attempt to help someone acquire a change of attitude, knowledge, ideal, skills or appreciation (Adedapo, 2004). Mkpanang (2005) explained that the concept of teaching implies that a set of stimuli is initiated and regulated by an individual who has been professionally trained to do so. Ayodele (2002) opined that what is learnt by students is a function of how it is taught. Successful teaching therefore requires that the students make sense out of what they are taught. There is therefore a growing consensus among education leaders, researchers and educators around the world that teaching and learning must change to help students develop the skills they will need to succeed in the 21st century (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009).

The traditional teaching method as good as it is, has its shortcomings. According to Lalima and Dangwal (2017), traditional teaching is failing to meet the individual needs of all the students in the class basically due to improper pupil teacher ratio and it is not adapting itself to meet the challenge of teaching physically challenged students. Moreover, children from deprived groups, from the areas that are geographically isolated and medically unfit students are not able to gain benefit from this formal traditional mode of teaching. Courses are also not regularly revised; books are not updated and teachers are not interested in upgrading their knowledge and professional skills.

Olasedidun (2014) opined that to address the inadequacies of traditional teaching, innovative tools will have to be used in teaching. The use of innovative methods in educational institutions has the potential not only to improve but also to empower people, strengthen governance and galvanize the effort to achieve the human development for the country. The concepts of paperless and penless classroom are thus emerging as an alternative to the old teaching

learning method. There is now a democratization of knowledge and the role of the teacher is changing to that of facilitator. Technology and ease with which it can be accessed have changed the way we live and work. Today's students will not only compete with students that sit next to them but also with their peers from across the globe.

The educational system at present is in a transition stage. To meet the challenges of expansion and for catering to individual need, it is trying to adopt new technologies and exploring new paths to reach the goal of quality educational opportunities for all. At the same time due to various factors like deficient budgets, lack of facilities, advantages of face-to-face interaction, it is not completely ready to leave the traditional modes of knowledge transfer (Lalima & Dangwal, 2017). The use of technology to augment teaching and learning is therefore inevitable. The increased access to technology in the classroom has improved the potential for teachers to optimize student learning through a combination of both online learning programme and face-to-face student/teacher interaction. Blended learning is therefore an approach that is gaining increased attention by teachers and administrator to optimize the use of technology in their classrooms.

Dziuban, Hartman and Moskal (2004) defined blended learning as a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization opportunities of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment, rather than a ratio of delivery modalities. According to Downes (2008), it is an essentially traditional in-class learning supplemented by online activities and resources. In addition, Stacey and Mackey (2009) defined it as the combination of technology and traditional face to face instruction while Christensen, Horn and Stacker (2003) described it as a formal education programme in which a student learns at least in part through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home. Blended learning is not about technology itself; it is about the shift in the instructional model to personalized, student-centred learning to ensure each student's success (Patrick, Kennedy & Powell, 2013). Adopting a blended learning approach offers the appeal of combining different learning elements using the power of ICT while retaining a human touch (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2012)

Blended learning models, developed from early experimentation, place the student at the centre of the learning process, harnessing the power of technology to create more engaging, efficient and success-oriented learning environments. In these models, educators quickly identify gaps in learning and differentiate instruction to ensure that failure is not an option. The common blended-learning programmes include rotation, flex, A la Carte and enriched virtual. The rotation model has four sub-models which are station rotation, lab rotation, flipped classroom and individual rotation (Horn, staker and Christensen, 2014).

The advantages of blended learning as highlighted by Lalima and Dangwal (2014) are listed as:

a) As part of learning is done through ICT, online or offline mode, so teachers and students get more time in the classroom for creative and cooperative exercise.
b) Students gain advantage of online learning and CAI without losing social interaction element and human touch of traditional teaching
c) It provides more scope for communication.
d) Students become more techno savvy and they gain enhanced digital fluency
e) Students have more strengthened professionalism as they develop qualities like self- motivation, self-responsibility and discipline.
f) It updates course content and so gives new life to established courses.

However, the implementation of blended learning is not an easy task. Certain fundamental preparations in all the teaching learning process elements (teacher, student, content and infrastructure) will be required. Some of the basic requirements include well trained teachers; teachers with the scientific attitude; teacher with wider outlook and positive approach toward change; complete facilities like well-furnished computer laboratory, internet connection, provision for video chatting; students having access to internet on their private computer; flexibility in the system; fully aware and agreed parents; and formative evaluation and continuous internal assessment. (Lalima & Dangwal, 2017).

If blended learning will be relevant within an education context, the students' perception of the usefulness, attitude and their readiness to use it must be looked into. Anderson and Dron (2011) explained that the responsibility of a teacher is not just to define, generate or assign context, but it is to help learners build learning paths and make connections with existing and new knowledge resources. Perception is the process by which organisms intercept and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world (Falade, 2011). Attitude is an accumulation of information about an object, person, situation or experience… a disposition to act in a positive or negative way toward some object. It is the controller of actual behaviour of an individual, consciously or unconsciously (Littlejohn 2002). Readiness means planning to do something. It is a matter of willingness from the heart. Olumorin (2008) explained that successful integration of ICT depends not only on awareness and availability but also on the extent to which instructors are willing to use it. Hence the need for this study, perception, attitude and secondary school students' readiness to use blended learning in teaching.

Statement of the problem

The integration of new mobile technology and online media is proving highly effective in helping schools meet the expectations of 21st century learners while addressing the challenges of limited resources and the special needs of many students. However, not everyone is happy with the term blended learning. Oliver and Tingweln (2003) in their article "Can blended learning be redeemed?" argued that blended learning is ill-defined and muddled as a description of particular forms of teaching with technology. Moreover, there is a growing worldwide trend in initiatives that are explicit about the availability of learning anywhere, anytime. The underpinning notion is that teachers will need to be up-skilled quickly to cope with the virtual learning opportunities in the classroom. This study therefore, sought to find out secondary school students' perception, attitude and readiness to adopt blended learning in instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary school students' perception, attitude and readiness to adopt blended learning. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

1. The perception of secondary school students towards the usefulness of blended learning in instruction.
2. The attitude of secondary school students towards adopting blended learning in instruction.
3. The readiness of secondary school students towards adopting blended learning in instruction.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the perception of secondary school students towards the usefulness of blended learning in instruction?
2. What attitude do secondary school students have towards adopting blended learning in instruction?
3. Are secondary school students ready to adopt blended learning in instruction?

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study to find out the perception, attitude and readiness of secondary school students to adopt blended learning approach in instruction. The target population for the study consisted of all senior secondary school students particularly those in Oyo metropolis comprising of Oyo East, Oyo West and Atiba Local government areas of Oyo State. Three schools were randomly selected from each of the Local government area making nine schools in all. Twenty students were then randomly sampled from each of the school totalling 180 in all. The instrument for this study was a questionnaire tagged Student's Perception, Attitude and Readiness towards Blended Learning Questionnaire adapted from the previous study of Olasedidun (2014). Items were selected based on their relevance to perceived usefulness, attitude and readiness to adopt blended approach in instruction. The questionnaire contained two major sections. Section I dealt with the students' biographical information while section II was sub-divided into three to take care of the three research questions. Each of these sub-divisions contained 5 items. The response mode for the items was likert response modes of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument was given to educational evaluation and computer experts for validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined section by section based on the three major variables. For perceived usefulness, the Cronbach alpha was 0.87, attitude 0.93 and readiness, 0.89.

The researcher personally administered the copies of the questionnaire to senior secondary school students in all the nine sampled secondary schools with the help of the vice-principals and teachers in each of the school. The questionnaire was given to the students and with the assistance of the teachers, the researcher was able to collect back all the questionnaires in each of the schools. The analysis and interpretation of data obtained through the questionnaire was done using descriptive statistical design. The frequencies were converted to mean (x) to answer the research questions. Section II that contained items to answer the research questions was ranked 4 for Strongly Agree, 3 for Agree, 2 for Disagree and 1 for Strongly Disagree for questionnaire items that were positively worded and vice versa for items that were negative worded.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the perception of secondary school students towards the usefulness of blended learning in instruction?

Table 1:

Analysis of students' perception towards the usefulness of blended learning in instruction.

S/N	Perceived usefulness of blended learning	Mean($\bar{x}$)
1.	Blended learning will make me finish the content of each subject early	3.40
2.	The teaching learning process will be easier with the use of blended learning	3.34
3.	Blended learning will reduce stress and tension inherent in classroom teaching	2.98
4.	The use of blended learning will improve my academic performance	3.26
5.	Blended learning will make lesson more interesting	3.29
	Grand mean ($\bar{x}$)	**3.25**

Table 1 reveals that making students complete the content of each subject early was ranked highest having the mean score of 3.40 out of 4. The lowest mean score was 2.98 (approximately 3.00) with the statement that blended learning will reduce stress and tension inherent in classroom teaching. However, the grand total mean score for perceived usefulness was found to be 3.25. Using 2.0 as the average benchmark, it can then be inferred that secondary school students perceived the usefulness of blended learning in instruction positively.

Research question 2: What attitude does secondary school students have towards adopting blended learning in instruction?

Table 2:

Analysis of students' attitude towards adopting blended learning in instruction.

S/N	Attitude towards using blended learning	Mean($\bar{x}$)
1.	Blended learning is not adequate for secondary school	3.06
2.	I will never offer a subject that will force me to use blended learning	3.42
3.	Online environment are not meant for teaching and learning	2.86
4.	Blended learning will make students to become lazy	3.29
5.	Many students will fail if blended learning is adopted in secondary school instruction	3.17
	Grand mean ($\bar{x}$)	**3.16**

Table 2 reveals that students did not agree with the statement that they will never offer a subject that will force them to use blended learning with the highest mean score of 3.42 out of 4. The lowest mean score was 2.86 with the statement that online environment are not meant for teaching and learning. However, the grand mean score for the attitude of students was found to be 3.16. Using 2.0 as the average bench mark, it can be deduced that the students have positive attitude towards adopting blended learning in instruction.

Research Question 3: Are secondary school students ready to adopt blended learning in instruction?

Table 3:
Analysis of students' readiness to adopt blended learning in instruction.

S/N	Readiness to adopt blended learning	Mean($\bar{x}$)
1.	I wish I never have anything to do with blended learning	3.52
2.	I will always prefer normal classroom learning	3.40
3.	I can never be convinced to use blended learning	3.47
4.	I will rather drop out from school than to adopt blended learning	3.61
5.	Atrocities that people perform online will never make me adopt blended learning	3.38
	Grand mean ($\bar{x}$)	3.48

Table 3 reveals that students will never decide to drop out from school because of the adoption of blended learning with the highest mean score of 3.61 out of 4. The lowest mean score of 3.34 with the statement that atrocities that people perform online will never make me adopt blended learning. The grand mean score for the readiness to adopt blended learning was found to be 3.48. With 2.0 as the average bench mark, it can be inferred that secondary school students are ready to adopt blended learning in instruction.

Conclusion

Through a combination of online learning and more customized face-to-face direct instruction, students will be opportune to experience student-centred learning, teacher mentoring as well as the opportunity to self-direct their learning. Moreover, blended learning has a very high potential to help teachers better address the needs of the students. However, teachers must be encouraged to be ready to adopt the blended learning approach to be able to achieve the aforementioned benefits.

Recommendations

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

1. The government should be ready to provide equipment that will make online learning possible in all secondary schools.

2. Seminars, conferences and workshops should be organized for the teachers who are to help in the implementation of the blended learning approach.

3. Students should be encouraged to be focused when online and should strictly use the equipment for academic purposes only.

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