

Blended teaching and psychological well being of educators : A study across commerce and management institutions in Bengaluru

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Abstract

The unanticipated global spread of the COVID-19 virus has posed an extra challenge to the world's educational systems, forcing teachers to adopt online or blended modes of instruction. Teachers face a wide range of difficulties as they adjust to the digital pedagogical style, new pedagogical concepts, and the expectation that they will find creative solutions to meet the academic and personal needs of their pupils. Institutions of higher learning are working to develop programs to help students, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, make up for academic ground they may have lost. In offline, online, and hybrid learning models, there is an increased emphasis being placed not only on the health and safety of instructors, but also on the collaboration between authorities and a wide variety of other stakeholders. While there is a growing body of study being conducted on related goods and initiatives in industrialized nations like the United States, there is a considerably smaller body of information that has been collected on the subject in developing nations like India. There is need for study on the efficacy of blended models as well as the health and happiness of the educators, and this may be done using qualitative, quantitative, or hybrid methods. In fact, there are a variety of assumptions about blended model implementation in education that are worth exploring beyond simple causality. Similarly, it is descriptive and exploratory in character, with the goal of learning how newer and more exact systems should be fashioned. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence that blended teaching can have on the mental health of educators. Convenience sampling was used to obtain the sample for this investigation, and it was distributed throughout the teaching fraternities of commerce and management colleges. For the purpose of the study, a sample size of 150 educators was gathered, with a margin of error of 10% and a confidence interval of 95 percent.

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A qualitative pilot research was done on this topic with a group of fifty instructors, and a well-structured questionnaire was constructed by considering their findings. A statement based on a Likert scale is included in the questionnaire in order to gauge the challenges associated with blended learning as well as the personal wellbeing of the instructors. The statistical analysis of the data will be carried out with the help of the software packages SPSS and AMOS. The findings of the study will be of tremendous use to the teaching community in terms of coping with the obstacles posed by blended learning, and such methods can be widely implemented for the benefit of the students.

Subject Classification: 97D40, 97U70.

Keywords: Blended teaching, Psychological wellbeing, Teachers, Educators, Students.

Introduction

Whenever a society faces new social, political, or economic issues, its educational system adapts to meet the new demands [1]. Together, this driving force and the growing interconnectedness of the world call for constant reassessment and validation of what makes for effective learning and teaching; this, in turn, informs the development of new national curricula and the introduction of creative approaches to education developed at the grassroots level.[2,3]

The incorporation of technology into the curriculum is receiving more and more attention among the many novel concepts that educational institutions must now consider. "The last two decades have seen a shift in educational reform attempts toward a greater focus on curricular standards and the need of having the many components of the education system work together to reinforce one another [4]. Consequently, there has been a resurgence of curiosity in finding ways to integrate technology into educational content." As a result, ICT integration into educational curricula has begun to gain momentum throughout the globe. [5]

Multiple teaching and learning approaches in the subject of Commerce and Management have emerged as a direct result of technological advancements, and they have taken on very various forms at the primary, secondary, and university levels [6]. As noted by Bach, Haynes, and Smith (2006) [2], there is a pressing need to increase access to higher education for people throughout the world, and this has led to a focus on the potential benefits of online learning in the context of tertiary education. The advantages of Blended Teaching in education are discussed in Figure 1.

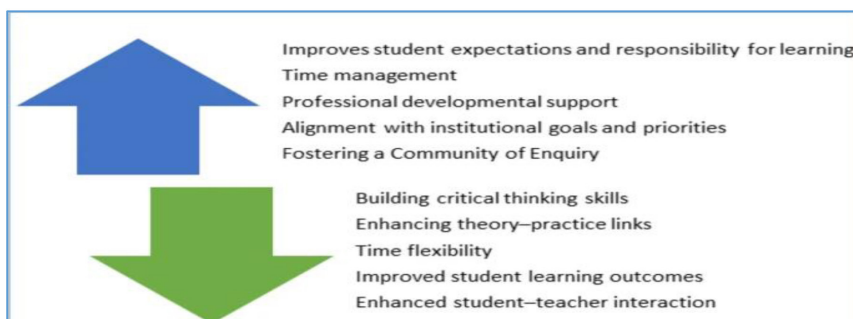


Figure 1

Advantages of Blended Teaching

Source: Anthony Jnr, B. (2022).[15]

Any change has the potential to either pave the way for innovation or mark the end of a long and arduous quest. Covid 19 is more of a lifestyle disruptor than a true epidemic. Everything about how people lived their lives shifted. From getting out of bed to going to sleep, from drinking our morning coffee or tea to reading the news to shopping to adopting a new health regime, everything we did had a touch of originality and an openness to change. [7]. Businesses began to take deliberate measures to cope with this downside once periodic lockdowns became a visible weapon in the fight against Covid 19. Almost every sector took a hit, and the survival of most would depend on a swift recovery. In terms of students' access to classroom discussions, the educational sector saw a dramatic change from a holistic to a minimalistic framework [8]. The use of virtual or online platforms is now widely accepted. Although this decision was seen as groundbreaking, it did not come without its share of difficulties. While the new system of education guaranteed continuity, it sacrificed human efficiency when dealing with difficult subject matter. The quality of information transfer was diminished due to a decrease in student-teacher interactions. Teachers are constantly being assessed, and as a result, many have revised their methods of teaching and set new objectives for themselves. Teachers, who are the backbone of any school, have to adjust their methods of instruction to meet the demands of an online environment [9]. Teaching fundamentals are increasingly centered on the instructor's comfort and competence using technological tools. Technology has opened up new possibilities for expanding one's reach and expanding one's business in this never-ending competition. [10]

The educational sector has adopted the practice of working after normal business hours, which was formerly a phenomena exclusive to other industries. Stress levels among educators have risen dramatically as a result of students' increased reliance on electronic media and the accompanying demands for greater academic achievement. Workplace stress can be mitigated by a combination of physical and mental health[11]. Due to the 24/7 nature of the internet, less time is spent being physically active and more time is spent sitting at a desk, both of which undermine efforts to promote health and wellness. The promotion of positive mental health practices has long been recognized as a very important goal. Covid 19 has dramatically exacerbated the already serious mental health problems that many educators face. It has become a mammoth undertaking to balance teaching, research, and secondary responsibilities; to keep up with the new blended teaching method; to deal with peer pressure; to meet government criteria; and to do any of these things well.[2]

Review of Literature

Research by Rasheed, A. Kamsin, and N. A. Abdullah (2020) [12] the term "blended learning" refers to an approach that combines traditional classroom education with online materials. However, the usefulness of combining online and face-to-face lessons has come under increasing scrutiny. Although the challenges of blended learning as a whole have been the subject of several researches, the online component of this method has been less well investigated. A literature review was performed to gain insight into the challenges of blended learning's online component from the perspectives of students, teachers, and educational institutions. Most pupils have trouble with self-control and with effectively utilizing educational technology. Many teachers struggle with how to effectively integrate technology into the classroom. There are many challenges that higher education institutions must overcome. Two of the most pressing ones are a lack of proper instructional technology and a lack of resources to provide appropriate training aid for teachers. J. Hill & K. Smith (2019) [13] Blended learning has been researched and implemented for nearly two decades, and it is now widely recognized as a crucial component of the future of higher education. This article summarizes the current state of blended learning research by analyzing 97 articles published on the topic in 15 journals between 2012 and mid-2017. There is a growing set of meta-analyses on the effectiveness of blended learning in higher education, of which these publications are a part. Date of publication, country of origin, size, scope, methodology, overarching research themes, and the notion of

blended learning were all taken into account while scoring the articles. Even though blended learning has gained popularity, this review of the literature shows that its definition is broad, its scope is global but its research is dominated by a few major players, its technical interest is narrow, and its studies are conducted on a small scale, with a focus on the individual researcher's quest to provide evidence of the benefits of blended learning. At the end of the essay, several ideas are presented for how research in higher education might provide the proof that institutions need to keep their "best of blends." Bruggemans, Tondeurs, Pynoo, Garones, and Vanslambroucks (2021) [14] Blended learning has several advantages, including as allowing instructors to adjust to students' needs, yet it is still challenging to implement in higher education. Understanding how to implement blended learning requires hearing from experts on what makes an effective teacher. Experts have the knowledge of specific procedures that can lead to measurable outcomes and the capacity to examine the underlying dynamics of complex organizational situations. Anthony, Benjamin B. (2022) [15] Blended learning (BL), a combination of traditional classroom teaching and online materials, has become increasingly common at colleges and universities around the world in recent years. So, it's important to investigate the factors that may influence professors' opinions of BL strategies. The degree to which professors are receptive to incorporating BL projects into their curricula is strongly influenced by social factors such as the ease of use, degree of complexity, suitability to the job, potential for long-term consequences, the presence of favourable environments, and the professor's level of comfort and familiarity with information technology (IT).

Problem Statement

The epidemic prompted a transition to the more difficult blended learning model. Due to the lack of a traditional classroom setting, blended learning necessitates the extensive use of digital resources to meet the needs of students' education. There are perks and downsides to using these digital technologies. The use of such tools has far-reaching implications for education, including the expansion of hybrid and online formats. Therefore, it is helpful to grasp the benefits of mixed teaching approaches by looking at the results of the methods used.

Multiple studies have found that blended learning has a positive effect on students' psychological well-being. In order to know if blended Teaching is harmful to teachers' mental health or supportive, it is important to have a firm grasp on how those involved in education experience the process.

Research Objectives

- To understand the challenges faced by educators in blended teaching.
- To examine the impact of demographic variables of educators on the perception of blended teaching.
- To evaluate how blended learning affects teachers' mental health.

Research Methods

The chosen research methodologies for the study are comprehensively elucidated in Table 1. The table presents a complete summary of the research methodologies utilized in the study, encompassing their underlying justification and practical implementation. The provided material acts as a significant asset for readers seeking to comprehend the methods employed in data collection and analysis.

Table 1
Research Methods

Research Type	The study is descriptive in nature, uses quantitative data from the educators to fulfil the objectives of the study. [16,17]
Data Collection Instrument	A well-structured questionnaire was prepared by taking continuous advice from the subject matter experts. The questionnaire was designed with 5 Demographic variables. 5 statements measuring Challenges of Blended learning and 7 statements measuring psychological wellbeing of the educators in form of Likert scale. Consistency and validity of the scale were confirmed. There was a positive relationship between the square root of the average variance explained and the inter-item correlations, leading to a composite reliability of 0.877. Discriminant validity was confirmed due to a high level of correlation between the constructs that exceeded the square root of the average variance across the samples for each construct.
Sample Size	The current study uses a convenience sample of 150 educators from Commerce and Management degree college across Bangalore city. The sample size was collected from select 15 colleges in Bangalore city and 10 educators per college were selected for the study. The study was based on convenience sampling as most of the colleges restrict their employees from revealing the data of the institutions.
Pilot Study	Pilot study was carried by considering experts in field of education and technology to derive at the questionnaire
Plan of Analysis	ANOVA and Independent t test -SPSS Vers 25 SEM – AMOS r Vers23[18]

Results and Discussion

Blended Learning and Psychological Well Being

The data fit well, as indicated by a Chi-Square value of 321.091 with 97 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.00. The CFA came to this conclusion. Having an RMSEA of 0.054 and a GFI of 0.912 indicates that the model is nearly perfect in terms of fitness, respectively. The Model, a graphical representation of the model's execution, shows standard estimations of relationship parameters.

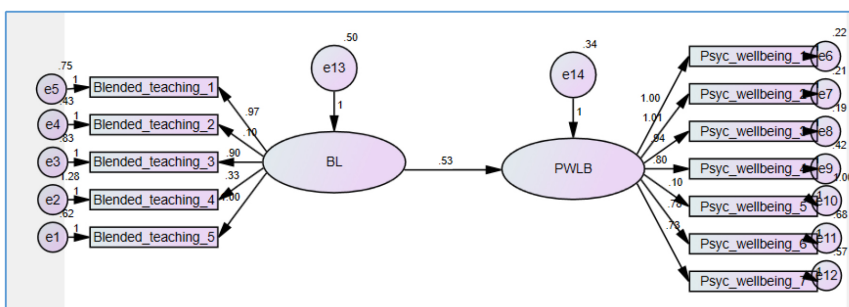


Figure 2

Structural Relationship between Blended Learning and Psychological Well Being

As shown in Figure 2 Time increase in blended learning challenges associated with a 0.532 ($r=0.532$ S.E. = 12.772, C.R. = 6.433, $p=0.05$) rise in the prevalence of issues in Psychological wellbeing. At p 0.05, the effect of COVID-19-related blended teaching is statistically significant and has an effect on negative effect on instructors' well-being.

The experts surveyed in this study found that putting off work on blended learning because of other priorities, such as research or projects, and believing in pedagogy that places the emphasis on the teacher are the most significant challenge to blended learning implementation. Evidence from studies [19, 20, 2] suggests that educators who put the focus on the teachers themselves are less likely to integrate technology in a unified fashion, and therefore might benefit from further guidance if given it. These findings broaden the scope of the work of [19] to include more academic disciplines. When asked about the first challenge, "prioritizing other activities above teaching," all of the experts who were exclusively working in a university teaching setting at the time of the interviews admitted it. It is clear that, when it comes to educational views, advantages

and disadvantages characteristics are mirror images of one another and may be seen as two sides of the same coin.

Second, a firm grasp and depth of familiarity with the pedagogical idea of blended learning is necessary for its successful implementation [20, 22]. Surprisingly, the experts' explicit understanding of blended learning was not conveyed as an adaptable quality. This, however, was highlighted as a critical disadvantage. It is safe to infer that experts' possession of the adaptive quality "being able to creatively integrate tools to learning processes" includes a complete comprehension of the notion. However, it is obvious that "having confused picture of blended learning" is an obstacle to implementing blended learning and impacts psychological well being, as perceived by the experts. Blended learning, according to [21,23], makes extensive use of video and knowledge snippets. As a result, some educators may mistakenly believe that showing a video in class constitutes using blended learning. There is no guarantee of this happening. The danger of making hasty judgments due to a lack of familiarity with the notion of blended learning is clear. [24,25]

Conclusion

Due to the rapid and unexpected global spread of the COVID-19 virus, classrooms have had to switch to online or hybrid learning. The digital pedagogical style, new pedagogical concepts, and the obligation to come up with novel ways to address the academic and social-emotional requirements of students have all presented significant challenges for today's educators. Education institutions, in particular those serving kids from disadvantaged backgrounds, are developing programs to help these students make up for academic loss. Traditional classrooms, online settings, and hybrid forms of education all get increasing focus on teacher welfare and collaboration between authorities and several other stakeholders [26,27]. Similar products and initiatives are the subject of a growing body of research in industrialized countries like the United States, but there is far less information on the topic in emerging markets like India. Research into the efficacy of blended models, as well as the welfare of educators, is warranted, and can take the form of qualitative studies, quantitative studies, or a combination of the two. Beyond simple causal hypotheses, there are many others worth exploring about the application of mixed models in education with the end goal of determining what works. Its purpose is the same, namely, to discover how to design new, more precise systems through observation and description [32,33].

The focus of this study is on the mental health of educators in the classroom when using blended learning strategies. Proponents of blended learning must have a solid grasp of the pedagogical principles underlying the approach in order to put them into practice successfully. Surprisingly, experts' extensive background in integrated learning did not manifest as a malleable quality[28,29]. However, this was highlighted as a significant negative. It is reasonable to infer that experts who have the adaptive skill of "creatively integrating tools to learning processes" also have a deep comprehension of the notion. Researchers have found that teachers' mental health is negatively impacted when they have a "misleading vision of blended learning"[30,31]. The study's findings will greatly aid instructors in addressing the difficulties associated with blended instruction, and these methods can be implemented to the advantage of students at large. There's room for investigation in other places, such universities and schools dedicated to science and technology [33,34].

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