

BLENDING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Today, educational landscape in the higher learning has changed because of the concept of blended education. Communication and information technologies provide a great impact by means of access to digital devices and collaborative communication in all courses. This new concept has formed diverse methodologies aimed at an enhanced education. This paper evaluated on the educators and learners' insight on the achievement and challenges of Blended Learning Environment(BLE). The survey questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. A total of 25 teachers and 156 students out of 327 of Colegio ng Lungsod ng Batangas enrolled in courses of Bachelor of Elementary and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration for the period of 2018-2019 served as the respondents of this study. The BLE is found to have more success rather than challenges based from the results of the study. Positive results were revealed from the data analysed based on the respondents' perception regardless of their age, gender and number of years using BLE. To promote BLE in teaching and learning in the Institution, an action plan was crafted by the researcher. Revisiting and intricate revision is recommended for the viability of the said action plan for future academic endeavours.

Keywords: blended learning, learning environment, information technologies, perspectives

INTRODUCTION

Education today has gained more positive stimulation from the utilization of modern communication technology. The motivation most higher education institutions exerted on the lecturers to use the mixed or blended instruction has altered the way learners communicate. Likewise, the use of the modern communication technology brings change in the behaviour and attitudes of the learners. Thus, "instructors are required to reorganize the learning process and alter their classroom material to accommodate such change or else lectures will appear uninteresting to most students." Okaz [11].

The rapid technological advancement has led to influence and change the educational field by presenting supplementary instructive approaches. Blended learning is widely used in the academic world to express a mixture of in person learning and distributed learning environments to create an active learning experience than either medium can produce alone as Brew mentioned [1]. Old-style face to face instruction is when the instructors or teachers interact with the students in the same time and place [5]. Whereas distributed learning environments practices information and communication technologies (ICT) without requiring teachers and learners to have a face to face teaching [9]. Blended learning combines the time and location flexibility of distributed learning environment and the social interaction of the face to face education environment [2], [15] to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Ma'arop & Embi [10] also defined it as learner centered education that is flexible, self-paced and has multimodality approach in learning.

Although there are many positive researches on blended learning, still there are lot of issues about it. The issue of learners' right of entry is indispensable to blended learning. Philippines is regarded to have one of the slowest and expensive internet in the world. Since, internet is an important factor in blended learning, it may impede the application of blended learning in schools. Also, the issue of quality is critical as Shea [14] emphasizes "If quality suffers, increases access is of no benefit. Students don't want access to low quality programs, faculty do not wish to teach in such programs and alumni do not wish to support such programs."

In undertaking innovative pedagogical approaches, an active blended learning environment is crucial. Deep and thorough examination of learner's and teachers' background, characteristics and perceptions will help to enlighten the scheme of an effective learning environment. The use of unified learning using modern communication technologies, entails the contemplation on its implications and the interplay between different indicators to assure its efficacy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study examined the educators' and learners' perceptions on the effectiveness of an educational atmosphere utilizing mixed methodologies that includes modern communication technologies with the end view of developing an action plan for the enhancement of the learning environment. The researcher chose a quantitative research design, which allowed the research problem to be directed in a very specific and set terms [4]. Likewise, the study made use of descriptive type of quantitative research to become more familiar and gain more insight with the perceptions of educators and learners on blended learning educational setting.

The research participants included all the teachers, the third and fourth year Bachelor of Elementary Education and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration students of the Colegio ng Lungsod ng Batangas. The researchers used the Raosoft sample size calculator to determine the sample size of the respondents. After determining the sample size, fishbowl technique was used to come up with 25 teacher-respondents and 156 out of 327 student-respondents. For the purposes of collecting the necessary data, the researcher prepared survey questionnaires which were personally distributed to the target respondents.

The information gathered were organized, analysed and interpreted with the aide of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The frequency, weighted mean and ANOVA were computed in order to test whether the perceptions of the students' and teachers' in using blended education have significant difference with their demographic profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the consequence of the data gathered. Interpretation are offered to validate results of the study. The results then form basis for the conceptualization of an action plan to enhance educational setting centered on the use of mixed or blended methodologies.

Respondents' Perception on the Success of Blended Learning Environment (BLE)

Table 1 shows the reply of the respondents regarding the successes of BLE in teaching and learning. As shown in table, all the statements are approved by the respondents. It is important to note that BLE increases information technology skills and it allows students to learn and access materials in a variety of modes got the highest mean of 4.45 and 4.40. This shows that respondents agreed that those were positive results of using BLE in the

educational setting. The findings show relationship in the study of Chandra [3] whereas the use of web-based learning instruction has a helpful effect on the perception of a blended learning environment. It also enhances the technology skills, learning opportunities, sustained the interest of the students, and promote enjoyment and positive interaction.

Table 1: Respondents’ Perception on the success of BLE

Statements	Weighted Mean			VI
	Teachers	Students	Overall	
1.It provides more educational opportunities	4.08	4.10	4.09	Approve
2. It potentially minimize forgetting	3.72	3.71	3.72	Approve
3. It increases information technology skills	4.44	4.46	4.45	Approve
4. It enables learners to develop social skills	4.04	3.96	4.00	Approve
5. It recognizes different learning styles of learners	4.00	3.90	3.95	Approve
6. It promotes self-paced learning.	4.16	4.17	4.17	Approve
7. It enhances individualization, personalization and relevance	4.24	4.26	4.25	Approve
8. It allows learning and access materials in a variety of modes	4.40	4.39	4.40	Approve
9. It creates high level of interest, accountability and assessment.	4.04	4.00	4.02	Approve
10. It increases the critical thinking of the students as well as the teachers.	4.08	4.04	4.06	Approve
Composite Mean	4.12	4.10	4.11	Approve

Legend: 5.00 Strongly Approve 4.0-4.99 Approve, 3.0-3.99 impartial, 2.00-2.99 Disapprove, 1.00-1.99 Strongly Disapprove

Respondents’ Perception on the Challenges of Blended Learning Environment (BLE)

Table 2 shows the summary of the respondents’ retort concerning the challenges of BLE in teaching and learning. As shown in the table, almost all statements are impartial and two statements are approved by the respondents as challenges in their teaching and learning. Under the statements that BLE is technology dependent in terms of internet and broadband provision which obtained the highest weighted mean of 4.43 and BLE reduce non –verbal cues such as facial manifestation and voice inflections generate misunderstanding which obtained a weighted mean of 3.58 are approved upon as the most challenging part in using BLE in teaching and learning. The finding shows similar results in the study of Porter [12] that one of the challenges in BLE is providing the core technological infrastructure to enable increase online activity that accompanies blended learning coursework. Likewise, in the study of Johnson [17] and Eryilmaz [5] shows that the absence of contact between teachers and students may be a cause for students to drop out or stop online courses. The feeling of isolation, disconnectedness and the lack of connectedness during a blended learning experience may affect the effectiveness of a blended environment

Table 2: Respondents' Perception on the Challenges of BLE

Statements	Weighted Mean			Verbal Interpretation
	Teachers	Students	Overall	
1. It is technology dependent in terms of internet and broadband provision	4.40	4.46	4.43	Approve
2. I have difficulty in adjusting to the structure of online courses	3.40	3.46	3.43	Impartial
3. I have difficulty of managing my time using blended learning	3.04	2.97	3.01	Impartial
4. The reduction of non-verbal cues such as facial expression and voice inflections generate misunderstanding	3.52	3.63	3.58	Approve
5. I have feelings of confusion and anxiety while using blended learning	2.92	2.86	2.89	Impartial
6. It is difficult to match the best delivery medium to the performance objectives	3.20	3.19	3.20	Impartial
7. It is difficult to ensure participants' commitment and follow through	3.04	3.16	3.10	Impartial
8. It is difficult to keep the online offerings interactive.	3.20	3.18	3.19	Impartial
9. It is inappropriate to use in some areas of education	2.92	3.03	2.98	Impartial
10. It is difficult to design teaching materials for effective learning	2.88	3.02	2.95	Impartial
11. Computer design of the content and layout of the software is not user friendly and hard to use and understand	2.52	2.57	2.55	Impartial
Composite Mean	3.19	3.23	3.21	Impartial

Legend: 5.00 Strongly Approve 4.0-4.99 Approve, 3.0-3.99 impartial, 2.00-2.99 Disapprove, 1.00-1.99 Strongly Disapprove

Teachers' Perception on the Successes of BLE according to their Profile

The table 3 shows the teachers' perception on the successes and challenges of BLE according to their profile. As depicted in the table, the P value on the successes of BLE is .657 in terms of age, .065 in terms of gender and .793 in terms of the number of years using BLE therefore it means that regardless of their age, gender and number of years using BLE respondents have the same perception regarding the use of BLE in their instruction. Same results were revealed in the study of Vo [16] that age and gender of instructor had been found non-significant in the use of blended learning environment in teaching.

Table 3: Teachers' Perception on the Successes of BLE according to their Profile

Variables	Success		Decision on Ho	Interpretation
	F	Sig.		
Age	.755	.657	Accepted	There is no significant difference
Gender	2.390	.065	Accepted	There is no significant difference
No. of Years Using BLE	.581	.793	Accepted	There is no significant difference

Level of Significance=0.05

Teachers' Perception on the Challenges of BLE according to their Profile

As shown in the table, the P value in terms of age is .491, in terms of gender is .799 and in terms of number using BLE is .547 which are all greater than 0.05. level of significance, therefore, it demonstrates that perceptions of teachers on the success of BLE do not differ according to their profile; that is regardless of their age, gender and number of years using BLE they have the same perception regarding the use of BLE in their teaching.

Table 4: Teachers' Perception on the Challenges of BLE according to their Profile

Variables	Challenges		Decision on Ho	Interpretation
	F	Sig.		
Age	1.033	.491	Accepted	There is no significant difference
Gender	.620	.799	Accepted	There is no significant difference
No. of Years Using BLE	.951	.547	Accepted	There is no significant difference

Level of Significance=0.05

Students' Perception on the Success of BLE according to their Profile

Table 5 shows the students' perception on the successes and challenges of BLE according to their profile. As shown in the table below the P value is .372 in terms of age, .065 in terms of gender and .678 in terms of the number of years using BLE on the success of BLE, which are all greater than 0.05. level of significance, therefore, perceptions of students on the success of BLE do not differ according to their profile. This indicates that regardless of their age, gender and number of years using BLE they have the same perception regarding the use of BLE in their learning. This contradicts on the study of Gawande [7] that posited that factors such as age, gender and the computer experience plays a significant role on blended learning adoption.

Table 5: Students' Perception on the Successes of BLE according to their Profile

Variables	Successes		Decision on Ho	Interpretation
	F	Sig.		
Age	1.106	.372	Accepted	There is no significant difference
Gender	1.930	.065	Accepted	There is no significant difference
No. of Years Using BLE	.732	.678	Accepted	There is no significant difference

Level of Significance=0.05

Students' Perception on the Challenges of BLE according to their Profile

Table 6 on the other hand for challenges on BLE according to the students, P value in terms of age is .770, in terms of gender is .167 and .865 in terms of number of years using BLE, which are all greater than 0.05. level of significance, therefore, perceptions of students on the challenges of BLE do not differ according to their profile. This indicates that regardless of their age, gender and number of years using BLE they have the same perception regarding the use of BLE in their learning.

Table 6: Students' Perception on the Challenges of BLE according to their Profile

Variables	Challenges		Decision on Ho	Interpretation
	F	Sig.		
Age	.694	.770	Accepted	There is no significant difference
Gender	1.439	.167	Accepted	There is no significant difference
No. of Years Using BLE	.585	.865	Accepted	There is no significant difference

Level of Significance=0.05

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Blended learning environment to be effective is dependent on many factors such as student and faculty satisfaction and perception, student individualities, design structures and student outcomes. The impact of workload and impact on student learning are some issues that affect the acceptance or implementation of the mixed educational methodologies. While students consider a blended learning environment to be effective because electronic devices are their way of life still, they value a more collaborative and active learning opportunities.

Implementation strategies and a good technological infrastructure are some of the challenges in an effective blended learning environment. The advocacy of the management is also a factor to be considered in the implementation of a blended learning environment, if the administration is willing to support innovative pedagogies then, a blended learning environment would be effective and vice versa.

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