OPINION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS TOWARDS USING BLENDED LEARNING

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Abstract

The present study intended to find out the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning. This study belongs to Normative Survey Method. The size of the sample in the study was 102 Teacher Educators who were selected through Random Sampling Technique. The investigators themselves developed the tool, 'Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning'. The Statistical techniques used in this study were Mean, Standard deviation and 't' test to analyse the data. The major findings of the study were i) The level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning among Teacher Educators is high. ii) Both Male and Female Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning. iii) Teacher Educators working in Rural Colleges are having significantly higher level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning than the Teacher Educators working in Urban Colleges. iv) Below 30 and Above 30 age groups of Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning.

Introduction

Blended Learning refers to incorporation of traditional method into electronic-mediated activities to form an integrated instructional approach. It is a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path or pace. Currently, the term 'blended learning' mostly involves "combining Internet and digital media with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students.

Blended Learning (also called hybrid learning) is the term used to describe learning or training events or activities where e-learning, in its various forms, is combined with more traditional forms of training such as "class room" training (Stockley,2005). The goal of a blended approach is to join the best aspects of both face to face and online instruction. Classroom time can be used to engage students in advanced interactive experiences. Hence it is necessary for the teachers to utilize the Blended Learning Approach in teaching learning process to be more effective for classroom instruction.

Research Studies

The investigators have reviewed few studies related to the topic under investigation. Camille Ramsey, et.al (2009) reported that the graduates were meeting the

relevant standards and associated outcomes, and that the blended program was largely responsible for the performance. Debra Mayes Pane (2009) found out that blended teaching and learning that increase significantly reflective interactions supported the development of Third Space Teacher dispositions, Praxis and critical view of literacy. Lesley Tham & Raymond Tham (2009) reported that game based learning can be a useful strategy into motivate students, because challenge of a game fosters competition between groups and collaboration within groups. Mary McVey (2009) concluded that comparisons of exam score indicated no difference on the midterm but blended students out performed those in traditional section on the final exam. It also suggests the integration of online components may help improve student performance. Susan Kirwin, Julie Swan and Dr.Nicholas Break well (2009) stressed that there was a significant difference between responses in online and blended learning courses, with responses for online courses tending to be more favourable.

Need for the Study

Developing Countries like India is not fully equipped with integration of ICT. We are taking efforts in integrating Modern Technologies in another side. Blended Learning will be the best strategy which it include both modern and traditional technologies. It is suitable for India. To overcome the drawbacks of traditional classrooms and fully online course, Blended learning has emerged as a new system of meeting students' requirements. In Blended learning system, the whole course is presented in various formats that are online, in class room teaching/interaction, through discussion etc. In Blended learning system, students are given freedom to choose themselves the content delivery method for each term and topic that suit their needs and learning style. This approach of teaching and learning is referred as hybrid learning. As the Investigators wanted to know level of using Blended Learning in Teaching Learning Process, they have attempted to make a study on "Opinion of Teacher Educators towards Using Blended Learning".

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are
  i)   To find out the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning
  ii) To find out the Mean score on Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to the demographic variables such as Gender, Locality of the College and Age

Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses of the study are
  i.) The level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning is high

ii.) There is no significant difference on the Mean scores on the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to the demographic variables such as Gender, Locality of the College and Age

Methodology of the Study

The present research study belongs to the Normative Survey method.

i) Selection and Size of the Sample

The investigators had selected 102 Teacher Educators as sample by Random Sampling Technique from Trichy District.

ii) Tool Development

The investigators developed the tool for collecting data on the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning. The preliminary draft consist of 58 items were given to the Teacher Educators to review them on the suitability of the related content. Then the draft consists of 50 items with 4 point rating scale were confirmed to the final draft of the study. They are Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree which were scored as 4, 3, 2, 1 for positive questions and 1, 2, 3, 4 for negative questions. The value of correlation co-efficient was 0.83 found through test and re – test method was found to be highly reliable.

iii) Data Analysis

The investigators followed Mean, Standard deviation and 't' test for the analysis of the data. The results were presented in the following tables.

Hypothesis – 1

The level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning is high.

Table – 1
Mean and the Standard Deviation Scores On the Level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards Using Blended Learning in Total

S. No.	Variables		N	Mean	SD
01.	Total		102	82.96	8.14
02.	Gender	Male	51	82.05	8.43
		Female	51	83.87	7.80
03.	Locality of the College	Rural	44	85.32	6.98
		Urban	58	81.17	8.54
04.	Age	Below30	31	81.32	8.84
		Above 30	71	83.68	7.77

It is clearly seen from the Table 1 the obtained Maximum and Minimum Mean and SD values of the Opinion towards using Blended Learning Scores are 85.32 and 81.17 and 8.84 and 6.98. It is also reveal that Mean and SD of the Opinion towards using Blended

Learning Score of the total sample were 82.96 and 8.14. It shows that the level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning among Teacher Educators is high.

Hypothesis – 2

There is no significant difference in Mean scores on the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to their Gender

Table – 2
't' values in the mean scores on the level of opinion of teachers educators towards using blended learning with respect to their gender

S. No	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value
1	Male	51	82.05	8.43	1.13**
2	Female	51	83.87	7.80	

** Not Significant at 0.05 level

From the above Table 2 it is seen that the 't' value, 1.13 is not significant at 0.05 level. It is understood from the result that there is no significant difference in the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to their Gender. Male and Female Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning. Hence the framed null hypothesis is found to be accepted.

Hypothesis – 3

There is no significant difference in Mean scores on the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to their Locality of the College

Table – 3
't' values in the mean scores on the level of opinion of teachers educators towards using blended learning with respect to their locality of the college

S. No	Locality of the College	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value
1	Rural	44	85.32	6.98	2.69*
2	Urban	58	81.17	8.54	

* Significant at 0.05 level

It is understood from the above Table 3 it is seen that the 't' value, 2.69 is significant at 0.05 level. It is understood from the result that there is a significant difference in the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to their Locality of the College. Teacher Educators working in Rural College

are having significantly higher level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning than the Teacher Educators working in Urban College. Hence the framed null hypothesis is found to be rejected.

Hypothesis – 4
There is no significant difference in Mean scores on the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to their Age

Table – 4
't' values in the mean scores on the level of opinion of teachers educators towards using blended learning with respect to their age

S. No	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value
1	Below 30	31	81.32	8.84	1.28**
2	Above 30	71	83.68	7.77	

** Not Significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 reveals that the 't' value, 1.28 is not significant at 0.05 level. It is understood from the result that there is no significant difference in the level of Opinion of Teacher Educators towards using Blended Learning with respect to their Age. Below 30 and Above 30 age groups of Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning. Hence the framed null hypothesis is found to be accepted.

Findings of the Study
The findings of the present study are presented below. They are as followed
   i.   The level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning among Teacher Educators is high.
   ii. Both Male and Female Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning.
   iii. Teacher Educators working in Rural Colleges are having significantly higher level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning than the Teacher Educators working in Urban Colleges.
   iv. Below 30 and Above 30 age groups of Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning.

Discussion of the Study
From the research findings, it is found that the level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning among Teacher Educators is high. The study also found that the Male and Female Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning. Teacher Educators working in Rural Colleges are having significantly higher level

of Opinion towards using Blended Learning than the Teacher Educators working in Urban Colleges. Below 30 and Above 30 age groups of Teacher Educators are having similar level of Opinion towards using Blended Learning.

The following findings are closely associated with the study of Camille Ramsey, et.al (2009) also reported that the graduates were meeting the relevant standards and associated outcomes, and that the blended program was largely responsible for the performance. Debra Mayes Pane (2009) also concluded that blended teaching and learning that increase significantly reflective interactions supported the development of Third Space Teacher dispositions, Praxis and critical view of literacy. Lesley Tham & Raymond Tham (2009) reported that game based learning can be a useful strategy into motivate students, because challenge of a game fosters competition between groups and collaboration within groups. Mary McVey (2009) concluded that comparisons of exam score indicated no difference on the midterm but blended students out performed those in traditional section on the final exam. It also suggests the integration of online components may help improve student performance. Susan Kirwin, Julie Swan and Dr.Nicholas Break well (2009) stressed that there was a significant difference between responses in online and blended learning courses, with responses for online courses tending to be more favourable.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it could be concluded that the Teacher Educators are having favourable attitude towards Blended Learning in the teaching learning process. It reveals that Teacher Educators like to accept the potentialities of modern electronic gadgets in the teaching learning process and the merits of the traditional methods of teaching. One important point to be noted in this study is that the Teacher Educators are having similar type of opinion irrespective of gender and age. At the same time, it is quite interesting to observe that rural Teacher Educators having high opinion towards Blended Learning than the urban Teacher Educators. As our Country and its classroom facilities have not come to the position of equipping modern gadgets, they might have felt that this type of Blended Technology will be more suitable. Hence it is suggested that all educational institutions may follow the Blended Learning method in the teaching learning process.

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