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Correlation Between Blended Learning Strategy and Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition among Business Education Students in University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined blended learning technologies as correlates of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students at the University of Benin. Specifically, it determined the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition and examined the relationships between face-to-face classroom instruction, online learning platforms, digital collaboration tools, and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 300- and 400-level Business Education students in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin. Because the population was manageable, a census sampling technique was used. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Blended Learning Technologies and Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Questionnaire *(BLTESAQ), validated by three experts, with a Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.70. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a high level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among students (cluster mean = 3.24). Significant positive relationships were found between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition ($r = .489$, $p < .05$), online learning platforms and entrepreneurial skills acquisition ($r = .467$, $p < .05$), and digital collaboration tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition ($r = .546$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that blended learning technologies significantly enhance entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students. It recommended that lecturers strengthen the integration of blended learning technologies into entrepreneurship instruction, while university management should provide digital infrastructure and capacity-building programmes to support effective implementation.*

Keywords: Blended learning technologies, entrepreneurial skills acquisition, Business Education.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The integration of digital technologies into higher education has fundamentally transformed teaching and learning processes across the world. Advances in information and communication technologies (ICTs), increased internet accessibility, and the growing demand for flexible learning environments have encouraged universities to adopt innovative instructional approaches that promote active learning and improve educational outcomes. Rather than relying solely on traditional face-to-face instruction, higher education institutions now increasingly incorporate digital technologies to facilitate teaching, learning, assessment, and academic interaction. This transformation has accelerated the adoption of blended learning, which combines conventional classroom instruction with technology-mediated learning experiences to create more flexible, interactive, and student-centred learning environments (Boelens et al., 2017; Rasheed et al., 2020). The widespread adoption of blended learning has been further stimulated by rapid digitalization and the educational disruptions occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic. These developments compelled universities to rethink traditional instructional approaches and invest in technology-supported learning systems capable of sustaining quality education regardless of time and location. Consequently, blended learning has evolved from being an optional instructional innovation to becoming an integral component of higher education delivery in many countries. Recent empirical studies have shown that blended learning enhances students' engagement, encourages collaborative learning, promotes learner autonomy, and improves academic achievement when effectively implemented (Limniou et al., 2022; Müller & Mildenberger, 2021). Likewise, research indicates that the integration of digital technologies into classroom instruction

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provides students with greater flexibility to learn at their own pace while enabling instructors to diversify instructional strategies and monitor students' learning progress more effectively (Alammary, 2019; Rasheed et al., 2020). Blended learning refers to an instructional approach that deliberately integrates traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with online or technology-mediated learning activities in ways that complement and reinforce one another. Unlike fully online or conventional classroom instruction, blended learning allows students to participate in classroom interactions while simultaneously accessing digital learning resources through computers, mobile devices, learning management systems, and internet-based platforms. The combination of physical and virtual learning environments provides opportunities for students to engage with learning materials before, during, and after classroom sessions, thereby promoting active participation, self-directed learning, and continuous academic engagement (Hrastinski, 2019; Müller & Mildenberger, 2021). The effectiveness of blended learning depends largely on the availability and appropriate utilization of blended learning technologies that facilitate communication, collaboration, instructional delivery, assessment, and learner support. These technologies include learning management systems, virtual classrooms, online learning platforms, digital collaboration tools, multimedia instructional applications, and digital assessment systems. Together, these technological resources support both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities, improve access to educational resources, and strengthen interactions among lecturers and students regardless of geographical location (Bond et al., 2020; Rasheed et al., 2020). For the purpose of this study, emphasis is placed on three major blended learning technologies, namely face-to-face classroom learning management systems, online learning platforms, and digital collaboration tools.

Face-to-face classroom learning management systems serve as digital support mechanisms that enhance the planning, organization, and management of classroom instruction. They enable lecturers to coordinate instructional activities by managing attendance records, distributing learning materials, scheduling academic tasks, monitoring students' progress, administering assessments, and facilitating communication between lecturers and students. By integrating these digital management functions into conventional classroom teaching, learning management systems improve instructional efficiency and create more organized learning environments that support students' academic success (Almaiah et al., 2020; Turnbull et al., 2021). Closely related to learning management systems are virtual classrooms, which provide online environments where teaching and learning activities can occur synchronously despite geographical separation. Virtual classrooms incorporate technologies such as video conferencing, screen sharing, live chats, digital whiteboards, breakout rooms, and lecture recording to facilitate real-time interaction between lecturers and students. These features enable learners to participate actively in lectures, discussions, presentations, and collaborative activities irrespective of their physical locations. As a result, virtual classrooms enhance instructional continuity, increase learner participation, and provide flexible learning opportunities that complement traditional classroom experiences (Dhawan, 2020; Bond et al., 2020). Another important component of blended learning is the use of online learning platforms. These platforms are digital environments designed to deliver instructional content, facilitate learning activities, administer assessments, and support communication between instructors and learners. Online learning platforms provide students with continuous access to lecture notes, multimedia instructional resources, assignments, quizzes, discussion forums, and recorded lectures at their convenience. Common examples include Moodle, Google Classroom, Canvas, Blackboard, and Schoology, all of which enable students to learn beyond the boundaries of the conventional classroom. The flexibility offered by these platforms encourages self-directed learning, enables students to revisit learning materials whenever necessary, and supports individualized learning according to students' needs and learning pace. Furthermore, lecturers can monitor students' academic progress, provide timely feedback, and encourage meaningful participation through online discussions and digital assessments, thereby enhancing the quality and effectiveness of instructional delivery (Almaiah et al., 2020; Turnbull et al., 2021). Digital collaboration tools also play a vital role in blended learning environments.

Digital collaboration tools are technological applications that enable students and lecturers to communicate, interact, and work together effectively in both physical and virtual settings. They facilitate communication, interaction, teamwork, and knowledge sharing among students and lecturers. Tools such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, Slack, and other collaborative platforms enable learners to participate in group discussions, share files, coordinate projects, exchange ideas,

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and receive feedback irrespective of their physical locations. Their use can promote active participation, peer learning, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills (Martin et al., 2022; Bond et al., 2020). The growing use of blended learning technologies in higher education has also increased provided opportunities for students to engage with digital resources, collaborate with peers, communicate with instructors, and participate in flexible learning activities. These experiences can support the development of creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills that are relevant to employment and entrepreneurship (Ifenthaler & Schumacher, 2023; Chen et al., 2021). In developing economies such as Nigeria, entrepreneurship education is particularly important because of graduate unemployment and the need to prepare young people for self-employment and enterprise development. Nigerian universities are consequently expected to develop graduates who possess not only academic knowledge but also entrepreneurial competencies that can enhance their employability and capacity for venture creation (Okolie et al., 2021; OECD, 2023). This is known as Entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

Entrepreneurial skills acquisition refers to the development of competencies that enable individuals to identify opportunities, generate ideas, solve problems, make decisions, manage risks, communicate effectively, demonstrate creativity and innovation, and establish or manage business ventures. Contemporary entrepreneurship education increasingly emphasizes experiential and learner-centred approaches that enable students to apply knowledge through practical activities, projects, collaboration, and problem-solving rather than relying solely on theoretical instruction (Lackéus, 2020; Kuratko, 2020). Entrepreneurship education should recreate real-world business settings to effectively equip students for practical challenges of entrepreneurial ventures. In this regard, Business Education plays a crucial role in equipping students with both theoretical and practical knowledge and competencies required for employment, self-reliance, and entrepreneurial activities. The programme provides students with knowledge in areas such as management, marketing, accounting, information and communication technology, and business communication. Beyond theoretical knowledge, Business Education is increasingly expected to develop graduates' entrepreneurial and employability competencies needed to function effectively in changing economic and technological environments (Okoro, 2021; Ingwe et al., 2023). since contemporary entrepreneurship education therefore emphasizes practical and experiential approaches that allow students to apply knowledge rather than merely receive theoretical information (Tittel & Terzidis, 2020; Bell & Bell, 2020). Such approaches are particularly relevant to Business Education because students require opportunities to develop competencies that can be applied to real-life business situations. Blended learning technologies appears to be innovative instructional tools capable of enhancing active learning experiences. Thus, the integration of these technologies in Business Education may not only enhance students' engagement with learning content but also serve as a driving force for for entrepreneurial skills acquisition.

Statement of the Problem

Entrepreneurship education has been widely acknowledged as a key strategy for addressing youth unemployment and promoting economic development in Nigeria. Universities, particularly through Business Education programmes, are expected to equip students with entrepreneurial skills such as creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and business management skills that enable them to create employment and become self-reliant after graduation. However, many graduates appear to lack the practical entrepreneurial competencies needed for business creation, suggesting that current lecture-based instructional methods seem to be inadequate. In response to these challenges, universities have adopted blended learning technologies to enhance active learning and practical engagement. however, it seems unclear whether this adoption has improved entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students, especially given challenges of poor connectivity, unstable power, limited digital literacy, and weak integration into course objectives. If unaddressed, these gaps will perpetuate graduate unemployment and constrain economic development. This study therefore examines the influence of blended learning technologies on entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to assess blended learning technologies as correlates of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in university of Benin. Specifically, the study examined:

1. The level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.

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2. The relationship between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in university of Benin.
3. The relationship between online learning and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in university of Benin.
4. The relationship between digital collaboration tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in university of Benin.

Research Questions

The following research questions have been raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin?
2. What is the relationship between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin?
3. What is the relationship between online learning platforms and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin?
4. What is the relationship between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin?

Null Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.
2. There is no significant relationship between online learning platforms and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.
3. There is no significant relationship between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.

Significance of the Study

This finding of this study will be significant to business education students, business educators, curriculum developers and educational planners, educational policy maker, researchers and the broader society. For Business Education students, the findings will highlight digital tools and blended learning approaches that enhance creativity, business planning, teamwork, and problem-solving. This will improve their digital competence and readiness for self-employment. Business educators will benefit from evidence-based strategies for integrating blended learning into entrepreneurship instruction, enabling more practical and engaging teaching methods. Curriculum developers and educational planners will gain insights for designing more skill-oriented Business Education curricula that align technology with entrepreneurial objectives. Educational policymakers will be provided with data to support policies on digital learning and entrepreneurship education aimed at reducing graduate unemployment. Researchers will benefit from context-specific evidence on blended learning and skills acquisition, providing a basis for further studies. The broader society and Nigerian economy will benefit through the production of innovative, self-reliant graduates capable of creating jobs and driving economic growth.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey research design. It determines the extent of the relationship between blended learning technologies and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students without manipulating any variable. The design facilitates the collection of data from a representative sample of the population and provides information on the existing conditions and relationships among the variables under investigation.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all Business Education students in 300 and 400 levels in the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin. The total population consists of one hundred and thirty-eight (138) students. The population distribution is shown in the table below:

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Table 1: Population Distribution of Business Education Students in University of Benin

S/N	Level	Number of Students
1.	100 Level	110
2.	200 Level	160
3.	300 level	64
4.	400 level	46
	Total	**380**

Source: Office of the Heads of Department, Business Education, university of benin, (2026).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The entire population of 380 business education students was used for the study due to its relatively small and manageable size, hence a census.

Research Instrument

The instrument that employed for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire designed by the researcher titled "Blended Learning Technologies and Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Questionnaire (BLTESAQ)". The questionnaire consisted two sections: A and B. Section A elicited demographic information of the respondents such as level of study. Section B contained item statements designed to gather information on blended learning technologies, while Section C contained item statements that measured the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students. Responses to each item statement was scored on a four-point rating scale; Strongly Agree (SD), 4 points, agree (A), 3 points, Disagree (D), 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD), a point.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by three experts, from the University of Benin, Benin City. Two from the Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation form the Faculty of Education. Their observations, suggestions, and corrections regarding the relevance, clarity, and adequacy of the items was incorporated to produce the final version of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was employed. A pilot test was conducted using twenty (20) Business Education students from Adeyemi university of education. The questionnaire was administered once, and the responses obtained was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha statistics to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained which was considered adequate for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher with the help of a research assistant to facilitate easy distribution and retrieval of the instrument. The researcher made use of the departmental lecture timetable to identify periods when students were free from lectures. This enabled the respondents to complete the questionnaire conveniently and enhanced the rate of return.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using Mean ($\bar{x}$) and Standard Deviation (SD) to answer the research questions. The mean was used to determine the respondents' level of agreement or disagreement with each questionnaire item, while the standard deviation indicated the degree of dispersion of responses. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance in order to determine the relationship between blended learning technologies and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students. The decision rule for the research questions will be based on a criterion mean of 2.50 such that the Mean score of 2.50 and above is Agree while Mean score of less than 2.50 is Disagree. For the hypothesis, the null hypothesis will be rejected if the p-value is less than 0.05, and accepted if the p-value is greater than 0.05

Presentation of Results

Research Question One

What is the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin?

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Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing the level of business educators' job performance in colleges of education

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	I can prepare simple financial records such as cash books and income statements for a business.	380	3.17	.707	Agreed
2	I have acquired effective communication and negotiation skills needed for business success.	380	3.21	.692	Agreed
3	I can apply problem-solving and decision-making skills in entrepreneurial activities.	380	3.12	.672	Agreed
4	I have acquired marketing skills needed to promote business products and services.	380	3.41	.671	Agreed
5	I can use digital technologies and social media platforms to market business products and services.	380	3.17	.654	Agreed
6	I have acquired customer relations skills necessary for building and maintaining customer loyalty.	380	3.61	.624	Agreed
7	I have developed creativity and innovation skills for generating new business ideas.	380	3.21	.630	Agreed
8	I have acquired leadership and teamwork skills needed to manage entrepreneurial activities.	380	3.45	.608	Agreed
9	I can effectively assess business risks and make appropriate entrepreneurial decisions.	380	3.26	.627	Agreed
10	I have acquired the confidence required to establish and manage my own business after graduation.	380	3.24	.668	Agreed
	Cluster Mean			**3.29**	

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; N = Sample Size.

In response to research question one, Table 2 shows the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin. The respondents rated item 1 to 15 as agreed with a mean rating ranging from 3.11 to 3.61 while the standard deviation also ranges from .608 to .717. The cluster mean showed a mean of 3.24. With these results, the above mean score shows that the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin is high.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.

Table 2: Pearson r showing the relationship between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Face-to-face classroom instruction	380	3.24	0.69	.498	.000	Significant
Entrepreneurial skills acquisition		3.20	0.53			

The data presented in Table 2 depicts significant relationship between between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin. The Table shows that the correlation coefficient between classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students is .489 and it is positive and moderate. The data analysis also shows that mean of 3.24 and 3.32 as well as standard deviation of 0.69 and 0.53 were obtained for classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students respectively. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Consequently, there is a significant relationship between classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between online learning platforms and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.

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Table 3: Pearson r showing the relationship between online learning platform and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Online learning platform	380	3.18	0.68	.467	.000	Significant
Entrepreneurial skills acquisition		3.20	0.53			

Table 3 shows the significant relationship between online learning platform and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin. The Table shows a mean of 3.18 and 3.20, as well as standard deviation of 0.68 and 0.53 for online learning platform and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students respectively. The correlation coefficient between online learning platform and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students is .467 which is positive and moderate. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore connotes that there is a relationship between online learning platform and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students **in** the University of Benin

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin.

Table 4: Pearson r showing the relationship between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	R	p-value	Decision
Digital collaborations tools	380	3.25	0.69	.546	.000	Significant
Entrepreneurial skills acquisition		3.20	0.53			

Table 8 shows the significant relationship between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin. The Table shows a mean of 3.25 and 3.20, as well as standard deviation of 0.69 and 0.53 for digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students respectively. The correlation coefficient between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students is .546 which is positive and moderate. Since the p-value of .000 is less than 0.05, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. This therefore connotes that there is a significant relationship between digital collaborations tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition among business education students in the University of Benin

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study generally revealed that blended learning technologies have significant relationships with entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students in the University of Benin. Specifically, the study revealed that the level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students was high. This suggests that the students had developed competencies such as creativity, innovation, communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. This finding agrees with Ifenthaler and Schumacher (2023) and Chen et al. (2021), who noted that digital learning experiences can promote creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills relevant to entrepreneurship. It also supports Lackéus (2020) and Kuratko (2020), who emphasized practical, experiential, and learner-centred approaches to entrepreneurship education. The study further found a significant positive relationship between face-to-face classroom instruction and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This indicates that classroom interaction, discussions, practical activities, and immediate feedback can support the development of entrepreneurial competencies. The finding agrees with Boelens et al. (2017) and Müller and Mildenberger (2021), who reported that blended learning combines classroom instruction with technology-supported learning to promote active participation and effective learning. The study also established a significant positive relationship between online learning platforms and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This suggests that access to online learning materials, assignments, discussions, and assessments enhances students' opportunities for independent and continuous learning. This finding is consistent with Almaiah et al. (2020), Turnbull et al. (2021), and Rasheed et al. (2020), who noted that online platforms provide flexible access to learning resources and support students' learning progress. Finally, the study revealed a significant positive relationship between digital

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collaboration tools and entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This implies that digital tools that facilitate communication, teamwork, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem-solving can enhance entrepreneurial competencies. The finding supports Martin et al. (2022) and Bond et al. (2020), who emphasized the contribution of digital collaboration tools to communication, teamwork, and knowledge sharing. It also agrees with Ifenthaler and Schumacher (2023), who linked digital learning experiences with the development of competencies relevant to entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that blended learning technologies are significant correlates of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among Business Education students in the University of Benin. The study established that the students possess a high level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition and that face-to-face classroom instruction, online learning platforms, and digital collaboration tools each have significant positive relationships with entrepreneurial skills acquisition. This suggests that the effective integration of blended learning technologies into Business Education enhances students' engagement, collaboration, independent learning, and practical entrepreneurial competencies.

Recommendations

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

1. Business Education lecturers should continue to adopt practical and learner-centred instructional approaches that combine face-to-face classroom teaching with experiential learning activities to sustain and further improve the high level of entrepreneurial skills acquisition among students.
2. The University management and Business Education lecturers should strengthen the integration of face-to-face classroom instruction with blended learning strategies by encouraging interactive teaching methods such as demonstrations, case studies, business simulations, and classroom discussions that promote entrepreneurial thinking and practical skill development.
3. The University should provide adequate support for the effective use of online learning platforms by improving internet connectivity, ensuring access to digital learning resources, and training both lecturers and students on the effective utilization of online learning technologies for entrepreneurship education.
4. Business Education lecturers should increase the use of digital collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Zoom, and Google Workspace for group projects, virtual discussions, collaborative problem-solving, and business simulations to further enhance students' teamwork, communication, creativity, and entrepreneurial competencies.

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