

## **ONLINE LEARNING IN A HEALTH PANDEMIC ERA AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION LECTURERS IN SOUTH-SOUTH NIGERIA**

**Prof. Sam Otamiri and Amuchie, Chisom Anita**  
**Department of Office and Information Management,**  
**Faculty of Management Sciences, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,**  
**Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria**

*Email: [amuchiesnita@gmail.com](mailto:amuchiesnita@gmail.com)*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The Study Investigated 'Online Learning in a Health Pandemic Era and Job Performance of Business Education Lecturers in South-South Universities of Nigeria'. The study adopted a correlational research design. A population of 202 business education lecturers was selected for the study consisting of Lecturers in selected universities in the south-south zone. The study involved the total number of populations in the study by employing the census sampling technique for the study". A structured instrument titled: A self-structured questionnaire titled: "Blended Learning and Job Performance Questionnaire (BLJPQ) was used for the study "The instrument was validated by the researcher's supervisor and two other experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt". The Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument. Twenty copies of the instrument were administered to 202 lecturers at Imo State University who were not part of the study. Findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between online learning and job performance in a health pandemic era. It was therefore recommended among others that institutions offering business education should invest in robust online platforms that can accommodate a wide range of teaching and learning styles. Heads of the Department should provide the necessary structures for the implementation of human/ digital infrastructure and blended learning structures, facilities and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of jobs beyond the pandemic era.*

**Keywords: Online Learning, Job Performance, Health Pandemic Era, Business Education Lecturer**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to the education sector worldwide. The sudden closure of educational institutions and the need for social distancing have forced educators to swiftly adapt their teaching methods such as blended learning to ensure the continuity of learning. Certain practices and infrastructures have to be put in place to ensure that lecturers maximize their job potential to the fullest. It is important to focus on these methods, techniques and practices as they benefit students and faculty during the pandemic and as we plan to come out of this highly contagious public health crisis. This could also help educational institutions, instructional designers, and administrators as everyone works together by streamlining current practices and including hybrid learning to enhance teaching and

learning practices within academic settings. Business Education as a course has evolved over the years and so educators have to adapt and be innovative in their activities to attain their respective goals, especially in a health pandemic era. It is quite unfortunate that the outbreak of the pandemic which by nature is known for its rapid widespread does not give any room for an effective measure to be adequately set up for the teaching-learning process. It is because of this that the researchers consider blended learning as an effective teaching method for delivering instructions in the post-covid-19 era. Blended learning has been seen as a process that enables easy adaptation by educators to be effective in carrying out their jobs following the issues faced in a pandemic era. Although blended learning involves a blend of both face-to-face and e-learning, it is mostly seen as an alternative to overcome the disadvantages of face-to-face delivery and may not be holistically accepted for now as an effective alternative for certain inherent issues surrounding purely online instruction. The problem addressed in this study is the lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how the adoption of blended learning during a health pandemic influences the job performance of business education lecturers in South-South Universities in Nigeria. Hence, despite the growing popularity of blended learning in higher education institutions, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the relationship between blended learning and the job performance of lecturers. A review of the related studies carried out on blended learning reveals that Ohanu et al (2022) researched the strategies to be adopted to maximize the effects of blended learning among students and teachers. The study established that teachers embraced the introduction and implementation of blended learning in schools. However, challenges such as lack of e-technological supply and internet connection; inadequacies in the use of classroom technologies; lack of e-tech policies; lack of teachers' digital training; insufficient teachers' technological competencies; and inadequate teacher support in technologies impede the effective implementation of blended learning. The gap here was that the study only addressed the challenges of adopting blended learning among teachers without addressing how it improves their performance on the job. Crossdale & Nwosu (2022) studied the availability of e-learning technologies in business education programmes in colleges of education in south-south, Nigeria. The findings from the study showed that: e-learning technologies like a digital library, electronic board, electronic communication tools, including e-mail and discussion board, chart facilities and video conferencing, virtual learning environment, media player, Microsoft excel application, educational website, use of YouTube, use of scanners to capture images and ensuring securing of data had less percentage. However, the gap in the study here is that the study only focuses on the infrastructural aspect of the blended learning method. Anthony et al (2019) investigated the role of blended learning in teaching and learning effectiveness in institutions of higher learning. Additionally, findings suggest that the impact of BL on academic staff's effectiveness is significantly influenced by delivery, performance, evaluation, and motivation. Theoretical implications from this study contribute to enhancing teaching quality by enriching course management, improving learning content, and facilitating management policies toward effective Blended Learning adoption. This study did not directly investigate the effect of blended learning on the job performance of Lecturers. Also, the pandemic era which currently necessitated this mode of learning is not fully addressed as it pertains to the study.

Thus, there is a lack of study on the effect of blended learning on the job performance of business educators in a health pandemic era. Therefore, this study will fill this research gap with the identified variables. It also seeks to address the dimensions and advantages of blending learning in Business Education. It also identifies the challenges and difficulties faced by lecturers in implementing blending learning in business education classrooms.

### **Hypotheses**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There is no relationship between online learning and subject-matter delivery of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era.

H0<sub>2</sub>: There is no relationship between online learning and administration of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era.

H0<sub>3</sub>: There is no relationship between online learning and supervision of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era.

### **Online Learning and Subject matter delivery**

Empirical research has been conducted to examine the impact of online learning on student learning outcomes, including cognitive development, retention rates, and engagement levels. Additionally, researchers have examined the effectiveness of different modes of subject matter delivery in a pandemic era.

Bada & Jita, (2021) investigated the effect of blended learning on a compulsory course, Classroom Testing, in the Nigerian Teacher Education Curriculum. The post-test randomised control group quasi-experimental design was adopted using two groups (experimental, n = 232 and control, n = 214). The experimental group was taught using blended learning while the control group was taught using the lecture method. The classroom Testing Achievement Test was used to collect data while descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data collected. Findings from this investigation revealed that pre-service teachers who taught classroom testing using blended learning achieved better than their counterparts who taught the same content using the conventional lecture method. This study concludes that blended learning can guarantee uninterrupted learning and also increase pre-service teachers' achievement in the course classroom testing

Anthony et al (2019) investigated the role of blended learning in teaching and learning effectiveness in institutions of higher learning. They developed a model to facilitate university policymakers in their decision-making to assess students learning and academic staff teaching outcomes. Furthermore, this study explores the factors that influence BL adoption in universities, through an empirical study from the perspectives of learners, academic staff, and management. In particular, it examines the current BL practice adoption effectiveness in universities. Based on an extensive review of prior studies, survey questionnaires were designed and distributed to convenience samples of 87 students, academic staff, and management in 3 Malaysian universities to validate the developed model. Next, Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyze the survey data. Findings reveal that supportive factors, attitude, learning mode, satisfaction, course management, and ease of use positively predict the perception of learners and academic staff to adopt BL. Similarly, findings suggest that the perception of management towards BL

adoption is positively determined by the strategy, structure, and support factors. Moreover, findings reveal that the impact of BL on learners' effectiveness is positively predicted by achievement, engagement, involvement, retention, and cognitive outcome. Additionally, findings suggest that the impact of BL on academic staff's effectiveness is significantly influenced by delivery, performance, evaluation, and motivation. Theoretical implications from this study contribute to enhancing teaching quality by enriching course management, improving learning content, and facilitating management policies toward effective BL adoption.

Ceylan, & Kesici, (2017). Investigated the effect of blended learning on academic achievement. In middle school, students' academic achievement levels and product evaluation scores were investigated. Blended learning provides more effective learning outcome gains through enriching today's developing Web Technologies with learning environments. This study was carried out with a total of 53 students enrolled in the experimental group and control group in the 6th-grade classrooms during the 2014/2015 school year in a middle school in the southwest part of Turkey. The intervention lasted 7 weeks. During the seven weeks, the unit of "problem-solving, computer programming and development of Software product", covered in the educational technologies and Software course, is taught through a blended learning environment. The experimental group was taught using a blended learning environment which was supported by enriched web technologies (such as video conferences, Learning Management systems, Discussion blogs, etc.). Whereas the experimental group was given access to all these enriched contents that are presented to the control group only during the classroom environment through present teaching methods. The design of the study includes a quantitative method. We collected quantitative data such as academic achievement tests and product evaluation scales. Academic achievement tests and product evaluation scales were used as quantitative data collection sources. Quantitative data was collected through the evaluation of students' projects that they developed during the process of the study and the academic achievement tests. During the data analysis phase, independent t-tests, and frequency and ANOVA tests were used. As a result of this study, it is concluded that a blended learning environment generated a significant difference in students' academic achievement on behalf of the experimental group. Implications of the study for the educational environments were discussed.

### **Online Learning and Administration Skills of Business Education Lecturers**

Smith and Johnson (2018) examined the administrative performance of business education lecturers in the transition to online learning platforms. The study found that lecturers faced challenges in adapting to new administrative processes, such as managing virtual classrooms, organizing online resources, and providing timely feedback to students. However, the study also highlighted the positive outcomes of online learning, such as increased efficiency in administrative tasks and enhanced communication with students through online platforms. Another empirical study by Brown and Davis (2019) explored the impact of digital tools on the administrative performance of business education lecturers in online learning environments. The study revealed that the effective utilization of digital tools, such as learning management systems and collaborative platforms, significantly improved lecturers'

ability to manage administrative tasks. These tools facilitated streamlined communication, efficient resource sharing, and simplified assessment processes, ultimately enhancing the overall administrative performance of lecturers. Chen and Wang (2020), the researchers investigated the role of virtual communication in the administrative performance of business education lecturers during online learning. The findings highlighted the importance of establishing effective communication channels, such as video conferencing and online discussion forums, for maintaining student engagement and addressing administrative issues. The study emphasized the need for lecturers to adapt their communication strategies to the online environment, ensuring clear and timely communication with students to support administrative tasks. Furthermore, a study by Johnson and Smith (2021) examined the impact of online learning on time management and organizational skills of business education lecturers. The findings indicated that lecturers who effectively managed their time and organized their online teaching materials experienced improved administrative performance. This included timely completion of administrative tasks, effective organization of course materials, and efficient coordination with students. The study highlighted the importance of time management skills and organizational strategies in maximizing administrative performance in online learning contexts

### **Online Learning and Supervision of Business Education Lecturers**

Ying & Nair (2022) investigated the views of lecturers and students on blended learning and conventional method in teaching Business English. This research used a quasi-experimental design which was carried out over a period of eight weeks. Students from the experimental group were taught using a blended learning model and the control group was taught using the conventional method. The sample consists of 2 lecturers and 80 Business English Major Students (second year) from Guangdong Polytechnic Science and Technology College. The semi-structured interview questions were used as an instrument in this study. Lecturers were interviewed individually and focus group interviews were conducted for the students (the Experimental Group and the Control Group). The qualitative data were analyzed using emerging themes. The findings indicated that the lecturer from the experimental group found that the students made great progress in business writing and motivated students a lot. The students who came from the experimental group were very positive and encouraging, they were willing to share, talk and discuss together. They thought they improved a lot and learned more about business writing skills. The findings indicated that the views of all the informants from lecturers and students made it clear that the experimental group was outperformed by their counterparts in the control group.

### **Research Design**

The correlation research design was used for this study. The study was carried out in some selected public universities in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

S/N	Universities	Population of Lecturers
1	University of Uyo (UNIUYO)	16
2	Cross River University of Technology	13
3	University of Calabar (UNICAL)	34

4	University of Benin (UNIBEN)	51
5	Rivers State University (RSU)	29
6	Ignatius Ajuru University of Education (IAUE)	20
7	University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT)	6
8	Niger Delta University (NDU)	8
9	Federal University Otuoke (FUOTUOKE)	12
10	Delta State University (DELSU)	13
	TOTAL	202

**Source: Tertiary Institutions Establishment Unit, (2022)**

Census sampling was used to select 202 staff of the Department of Business Education in the different tertiary institutions in South-South Nigeria. The researcher sees this as a manageable population and will handle the number of participants for the study. A self-structured questionnaire titled: "Online Learning and Job Performance Questionnaire (OLJPQ)" was used for the study. The data collated were reanalysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) and determinants ( $r^2$ ) using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation to answer the research questions and hypothesis 1-9 at a 0.05 level of significance while regression was used to answer the research question 10.

## Results

### Research Questions and Hypotheses

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between online learning and subject-matter delivery of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era?

**Hypothesis One:** There is no relationship between online learning and subject-matter delivery of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era.

**Table 1:** Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Online Learning and Subject Matter Delivery

	Online Learning	Subject Matter Delivery
Pearson's Coefficient	1	.348**
Online Learning Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	202	202

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

0.7 or higher - very strong relationship, .40 to .69 - strong relationship, .03 to .39 – moderate relationship, .20 to .29 – weak relationship, .01 to .19 – negligible relationship, 0 – no relationship

Table 2 shows the result of a Pearson product-moment correlation that was run to determine if there was a relationship between online learning and subject matter delivery and to ascertain the significance of the relationship. The result was ( $r = .348$ ,  $n = 202$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) this result shows that there was a moderate positive correlation between Online learning and subject matter delivery, the result is statistically significant as the *p-value* of .000 (0.000001) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is **Rejected**

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between Online learning and administrative skills of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era?

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no relationship between Online learning and the administrative skills of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era.

**Table 2:** Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of Online Learning and Administrative Skills

	Online Learning	Administrative Skills
Pearson's Coefficient	1	.317**
Online Learning Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	202	202

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

0.7 or higher - very strong relationship, .40 to .69 - strong relationship, .03 to .39 – moderate relationship,  
.20 to .29 – weak relationship, .01 to .19 – negligible relationship, 0 – no relationship

Table 2 shows the result of a Pearson product-moment correlation that was run to determine if there was a relationship between Online learning and administrative skills and to ascertain the significance of the relationship. The result was ( $r = .317$ ,  $n = 202$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) this result shows that there was a moderate positive correlation between broadcast media and administrative skills, the result is statistically significant as the *p-value* of .000 (0.000013) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is **Rejected**

**Research Question Three:** What is the relationship between Online learning and the supervision of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era?

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no relationship between Online learning and the supervision of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era

**Table 3:** Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation of Online Learning and Supervision Skills

		Online Learning	Supervision Skills
Supervision Skills	Pearson’s Coefficient	1	.555**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	202	202

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

0.7 or higher - very strong relationship, .40 to .69 - strong relationship, .03 to .39 – moderate relationship, .20 to .29 – weak relationship, .01 to .19 – negligible relationship, 0 – no relationship

Table 3 shows the result of a Pearson product-moment correlation that was run to determine if there was a relationship between Online learning and supervision skills and to ascertain the significance of the relationship. The result was ( $r = .555, n = 202, p < 0.05$ ) this result shows that there was a strong positive correlation between Online learning and supervision skills, the result is statistically significant as the *p-value* of .000 (3.3219E-16) is less than the 0.05 level of significance. Hence the null hypothesis is **Rejected**

### Discussion of the Results

A discussion of the findings in the thesis is presented in this section. Results and support for the findings are summarized and discussed in this section.

#### Research question one and Hypothesis one:

#### Online learning and Subject-Matter Delivery of Business Education Lecturers of South-South Universities in a Health pandemic Era.

Correlation 1 reveals that there is a significant relationship between Online learning and subject-matter delivery of business education lecturers of south-south universities in Nigeria in a health pandemic era. ( $r = .348, p=0.000$ ) indicating a moderately significant relationship. This finding agrees with Bada & Jita, (2021) who investigated the effect of blended learning on\* a compulsory course, Classroom Testing, in the Nigerian Teacher Education Curriculum. They opined that using blended learning achieved better than their counterparts who taught the same content using the conventional lecture method. This study concludes that blended learning can guarantee uninterrupted learning and also increase pre-service teachers’ achievement in the course classroom testing. The result of this study is also supported by that of Anthony et al. (2021) who opine that for a better understanding of lecturers’ views of knowledge in relation to course content, pedagogy, and technology use in improving teaching, blended learning should be adopted in higher institutions. Practically, lecturers can adopt the developed blended learning model to improve teaching pedagogies and course content. The result is also similar to that of Ceylan, & Kesici, (2017) who opined that blended learning provides more effective learning outcome gains through enriching today’s developing Web Technologies with learning

environments. This therefore further strengthens the relationship between Online learning and the subject matter delivery of lecturers.

**Research question two and Hypothesis two:**

**Online learning and administrative skills of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era**

Correlation 2 reveals that there is a significant relationship between broadcast media and administrative skills of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era (where  $r = .317$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) indicating a moderate positive relationship. This finding is in tandem with that of Aytac (2009) who examined the effect of the b-learning approach on developing administrators' leadership skills. In terms of achievements and effectiveness, blended learning was found to be the most effective learning environment when compared to the others. The result is also in tandem with Pereniyi, (2022) who opines that Business Educators have to implement blended learning strategies which will instil transferrable skills that improve the quality of students in the department and enrich the courses. It is therefore suggested in line with this, that relevant training for teachers should be proposed to intensify the implementation and use of an online learning environment for a blended learning approach.

**Research question three and Hypothesis three:**

**Online learning and Supervision of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era.**

Correlation 3 reveals that there is a significant relationship between broadcast media and supervision skills of business education lecturers of south-south universities in a health pandemic era (where  $r = .555$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) indicating a strong positive relationship. This result also agrees with Ying & Nair (2022) investigated the views of lecturers and students on blended learning and conventional method and found that lecturers from the experimental group made great progress in business writing and motivated students a lot. This finding is also in agreement with that of Okoli and Ikpat, (2021) ascertained the level of application of blended learning pedagogical design by business educators in tertiary institutions. The findings, therefore, suggest that lecturers should from time to time avail themselves of the opportunity to get acquainted with state-of-the-art technology by attending training programmes, workshops and seminars.

**CONCLUSION**

This study has primarily investigated online learning and job performance of business education lecturers in a health pandemic in south-south, Nigeria and found that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. The findings show an undisputable relationship between and among them. This study thus concluded that online learning is a strong antecedent and undisputable aspect for enhancing the job performance of business education lecturers in south-south, Nigeria.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were drawn from the study:

1. Institutions offering business education should invest in robust online platforms that can accommodate a wide range of teaching and learning styles. This could include virtual classrooms, discussion forums, and video tutorials which will encourage lecturers at all levels to make use of these interactive platforms and teaching resources to make corresponding changes in instructional approach.
2. Business Educators should prioritize the development of their administrative skills which are essential for managing online learning programs. Skills such as budgeting, resource allocation, scheduling, and risk management, among others, ensure that online learning programs are sustainable and can deliver high-quality educational experiences to their students.
3. Heads of the Department should establish effective systems for lecturers' supervision and monitoring of the quality of their teaching. The implementation of human/ digital infrastructure and blended learning structures, facilities and strategies to enhance the effectiveness of jobs beyond the pandemic era.

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