



PERCEIVED PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES NEEDED FOR STUDENTS' ADAPTABILITY BY BUSINESS EDUCATORS IN A NEW NORMAL

¹ENENDU, CHIMAOBIM IJEOMA

javenendu@gmail.com

²NWOSU-CHUKWUDI EUNICE CHIOMA

Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract

The study investigated the perceived pedagogical approaches needed by business educators for the adaptability of their students' to a new normal. The study was necessitated by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were posed to guide the study and one hypothesis was raised and tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consist of 60 business education lecturers from the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. A purposive sample design was adopted for the study. The instrument for data collection was a researcher's structured questionnaire titled: Perceived Business Educators Pedagogical Approaches Needed for Students' Adaptability Questionnaire (PBEPANSAQ). The instrument was validated by two experts in business education from Rivers State University (RSU). The instrument was subjected to test-retest and the result yielded 82% coefficient index, which revealed that the instrument was reliable. Findings revealed that the emerging 'new normal' should not compromise the quality assurance mechanisms developed over time as Lecturers should be equipped with the necessary skills to aid in quality instruction using modern strategies that aid students' adaptability.

Keywords: Business Educators; Pedagogy; Approaches; Adaptability; New normal

Introduction

Change is one element that pervades all aspects of human endeavour and education as a medium of exchange of knowledge, skills and attitudes is not left out in that chain. Wagbara and Ulisan (2021) observed that at the present universities and other institutions of teaching and learning all over the globe are faced with the problem of sharing resources due to pandemic and such situations requires a pragmatic shift from the traditional approach to a newer updated system of instructions. The position of Wagbara and Ulisan (2021), as observed seems not abated, even with the new Delta variant otherwise known as the third wave of the coronavirus which is very dreadful and the human race is concerned about its contagiousness. This has continued to put humankind in fear and has stiffened academic exercise at one time or the other. The ugly situation has necessitated academia opting for possible opportunities (new normal) to explore and turn around pedagogical approaches in a bit to keep steering the wheel of education



in the right direction. Suffice it to say that the carriage of these approaches is in a new normal with reference to the Covid-19 pandemic; Habibi (2020) defined new normal as a new way of life or a new way of living life activities. New normal could be said to be a current situation, social custom, etc., that is different from what has been experienced or done before but is expected to become usual or typical. Buheji (2020) stated that during the new normal many types of challenges are expected in every sector. This should raise the prospect of inspiration that come as a result of opportunities that come with the challenges, and resilience, as it is a needed spirit for survival during times of change.

Choosing the right teaching method in a Covid-19 pandemic will definitely affect the changes that are expected to occur not only in the students but in the entire process after learning is complete, conversely, the mistakes in choosing and applying appropriate teaching methods will have a negative impact on student achievements (Wagbara, 2019). The effectiveness of learning is very dependent on the learning method or approach used by educators. In achieving good learning outcomes, a teacher needs to know, learn several teaching methods, and practice them when teaching, (Nasution, 2017).

Researchers have proven that educators sometimes are not right in choosing the method for handling students in a learning situation which is one of the determinants of success in teaching and learning (Dolong, 2016). This implies that Business Educators need to consider carefully the selection of teaching methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of students more in particular in this pandemic era. Rogers and Sabarwal (2020) stated that the emergency shift to remote learning requires teachers to learn and possess digital skills to operate technologies and to adapt the teaching-learning materials into a synchronous or asynchronous mode.

Therefore, learning requires the ability of teachers to apply learning methods that are appropriate to the characteristics of their students (Nasution, 2017). It is a fact that the outbreak of Covid-19 calls for a paradigm shift from the traditional methods of teaching and learning to a more digitalized system such that learning can be made easy for both the learner and the teacher without any fear of being infected by the deadly virus, so business educators need to be more proactive in adjusting accordingly to the requirements of the time which is online learning.

Online classes and interaction have been there, although many public institutions haven't fully adapted to its usage due to some inadequacies in their system which do not support online environment opportunities for more engaging practice. For example, a more problem-based curriculum, with students being involved in 'real-life', mentored projects. This develops student creativity, adaptability and very importantly, resilience. Assessment formats and protocols also required creative re-thinking. Teaching business education through digital means during this COVID-19 pandemic had many scholars teaching in unfamiliar situations.

Perhaps a silver lining has been the widespread practice of synchronous instruction, a potential remedy for the connection students and faculty often miss in traditional online classes. The exponential growth of synchronous sessions will likely shape a "new normal" for online learning, long after the pandemic has passed. Education pathways that help students explore interests and careers in the process of progressing through school. Academic subject matter taught with relevance to the real world (contextual learning) Employability skills, from job-related skills to workplace ethics.

The ability to adapt is central to coping and problem-solving with adaptability being related to but distinguishable from resilience. Favale, Soro, Trevisan, Drag and Mellia (2020) observed that one of the most significant changes imposed on students is the focus of this article. Specifically, many students who typically engage in face-to-face learning formats have now had to make a sudden transition to online learning. Active learning involves anything that students do in a classroom other than merely passively listening to an instructor's lecture.



Research shows that active learning improves students' understanding and retention of information and can be very effective in developing higher-order cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking. Collaborative/cooperative learning is an instructional approach in which students work together in small groups to accomplish a common learning goal. They need to be carefully planned and executed, but they do not require permanently formed groups. Critical thinking, is a collection of mental activities that include the ability to perceive, clarify, reflect, connect, infer, and judge. It brings these activities together and enables the student to question what knowledge exists. Currently, instruction cannot be isolated from technological enhancement whether both online and offline and so it is important that ICT infusion is the core of teaching and learning in the new normal.

Statement of the Problem

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has placed the entire globe into a near confused state such that the modes of operations of many business concerns have drastically changed. Given the abruptness of the situation, many schools and colleges were forced to close down temporarily as teachers and administrations were unprepared. Due to the fact that it was uncertain to return to the classroom soon and the fear of losing the education industry, there was an immediate need for emergency remote learning systems. This fear called for a digital approach to teaching and learning; what has been experienced or done before but is expected to become usual (New Normal).

It is apparent that online teaching and learning is no longer an option but a necessity. Consequent to the above obvious fact, it becomes expedient for faculty members to adopt this all-important means of teaching and learning as an escape route in a pandemic era. In support of this, Divya and Prakasam (2015) observed that the main goal of e-learning is to meet the needs of the students such as clarifying the doubts about trained teachers' competence in accessing materials required for their academic purpose. Also, Pedro (2009) maintained that extensive improvements have been made in the area of online collaborative learning, constraining teachers to reevaluate how they approach learning, directions, and the conditions made to cultivate these. In the same vein, Selwyn (2010) expressed that sensational advances in instructive innovation have roused incredible new ways for students to learn with a wide range of improvised instructional media and exercises to promote self-study. The juxtaposition of these situations made an exceptionally intriguing test and prospect a command to rethink and re-imagine learning methodologies ready to get ready and exceed the expectations of every person (learners) for long-life learning in particular in this era of social distancing.

Suffice it to say that the business teacher quality is hinged on the content knowledge, the pedagogical knowledge and the pedagogical/content knowledge (Okebukola, 2008). The onus now in this pandemic era lies in the deliverables of the lectures and this put to test the capability of the Business education teachers programme to provide high-quality and relevant training. Furthermore, some scholars have spoken aloud on the unsatisfactory quality of business education and their lecture delivery. Hence this study seeks to establish the perceived business educators' pedagogical approaches needed for students' adaptability to a new normal via the use of the Zoom App and WhatsApp platform.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and guided the study

1. To what extent does the use of the Zoom App instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?
2. To what extent does the use of the WhatsApp platform instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?



Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses formulated were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived effectiveness of the zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability in Rivers State-Owned Universities.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived effectiveness of the WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability in Rivers State-owned universities.

Method

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design as it involved eliciting a response from the respondents. The population of the study comprised 30 business education lecturers in Rivers State-owned tertiary institutions that offer business education, namely Rivers University Port Harcourt and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt. Nigeria. The entire population of 30 business education lecturers was studied. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed by the researchers. The instrument is the Perceived Business Educators Pedagogical Approaches Needed for Students' Adaptability Questionnaire (PBEPANSAQ)."

Copies of the instrument were given to one expert in Computer Science, one in business education and one in science education for face and content validity. The instrument was divided into two parts part "A" focused on the participant's personal data, while part "B" contained 20 items covering the research questions. Part B was designed on a 4-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE – 4 Points), High Extent (HE – 3 Points), Moderate Extent (ME – 2 Points) and Low Extent (LE – 1 Point) respectively. The administration recorded a 100% response rate as all respondents responded accordingly. The data collected to answer the research questions were analyzed using mean rating and standard deviation. A mean rating of 2.50 was used for the decision regarding the research question. This was calculated based on the 4point rating interval used in the study. Items with mean values of 2.50 and above were considered a high extent, while items with mean values below 2.50 were considered a low extent. The hypotheses were tested using t-test inferential statistics at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does the use of the Zoom App instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?

S/No	Zoom Instructional Approach	x	SD	Decision
1.	Students had no problem switching to zoom classes	1.73	0.91	Low extent
2.	Zoom application media is popular with my students	3.07	0.94	High Extent
3.	Zoom classes aid collaboration among my students	2.03	1.07	Low Extent
4.	My students feel classes are planned better on zoom than other teaching tools/ applications	1.23	0.57	Low Extent
5.	Lecture sessions seemed fluid due to ease of operation on both audio and video meetings	1.93	0.74	Low Extent
6.	Zoom serves as the easiest and fastest medium to cater information in this time of a pandemic	2.73	0.74	High Extent



- | S/No | WhatsApp Instructional Approach | x | SD |
|------|--|------|------|
| 7. | Students can freely use the zoom apps and learn how to solve at the same. | 3.07 | 1.17 |
| 8. | My students had to undergo zoom training on areas that are relevant to business education to be able to attend classes | 1.90 | 1.55 |
| 9. | Zoom aids the incorporating of both Synchronous and Asynchronous learning method | 1.47 | 0.73 |

Following the results in the table above, it shows that the various items responses were more to a low extent and showed inconsistency in the results received. The mean scores varied from below 2.5 and above 2.5 which represents an outcome of low to a high extent. The standard deviation also varied highly as seen in the table above (between 0.5 and 1.5). This, therefore, shows that most business educators perceive that the zoom instructional approach affects students' adaptability to the new normal to a low extent.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the use of the WhatsApp platform instructional approach affect students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities?

S/No	WhatsApp Instructional Approach	x	SD
11.	Students can easily refer to past lecture notes on Whatsapp better than other applications	2.73	1.08
12.	delivery mode via WhatsApp seems a lot easier for my students to deal with	3.37	0.89
13.	Using the WhatsApp lecture medium shows that my students are well equipped for the 21st century pedagogy	3.50	0.73
14.	Students were conversant with the WhatsApp lectures	2.67	1.09
15.	WhatsApp enabled students to connect with any device from anywhere via audio/video	3.80	0.48
16.	WhatsApp is the most accessible way of delivering lessons to learners	3.53	0.78
18.	Ease of access made WhatsApp a better option for lectures for my students	3.50	0.90
19.	WhatsApp aids Team building and idea sharing in business education classrooms	3.03	1.16
20.	I find it easier to share messages and cite case studies via WhatsApp in an interesting way.	3.23	1.19
21.	Attendance on WhatsApp classes is more impressive than other apps	3.40	0.67

Following the result in the table above, it is revealed that the respondent's responses are undivided as they all agree to a high and very high extent. This is seen in the mean scores which are all above 2.50. This was also indicated in the results of the standard deviation which ranged from 0.7 to 1.19. This, therefore, suggests that the business educators perceive that WhatsApp instructional approach affects students' adaptability to the new normal to a very high extent.



Hypotheses One: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the zoom instructional approach in the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities.

Table 3: T-test Analysis of the business educators on their perceived influence of zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities.

Institution	N	Mean	S.D	Difference	df	t-value	p-value
IAUE	10	20.70	2.45	0.75	28	-0.64	0.53
RSU	20	21.45	3.27				

As presented in Table 3 above, a t-test analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the Zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-owned universities. The result of the table was $df (28) = -0.64, p > 0.05$. This result is not significant as the p-value of 0.53 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that the respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived influence of the zoom instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers state-owned universities.

Hypotheses Two: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the WhatsApp instructional approach in the new normal in Rivers State-owned universities.

Table 4.0: T-test Analysis of the business educators on their perceived influence of WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-Owned Universities

Institution	N	Mean	S.D	Difference	df	t-value	p-value
IAUE	10	32.10	4.25	1.00	28	-0.87	0.39
RSU	20	33.10	2.10				

As presented in Table 4 above, a t-test analysis was carried out to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators on their perceived influence of the WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers State-owned universities. The result of the table was $df (28) = -0.87, p > 0.05$. This result is not significant as the p-value of 0.39 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This suggests that the respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the perceived influence of the WhatsApp instructional approach on students' adaptability to the new normal in Rivers state-owned universities.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question one revealed that the zoom application serves as the easiest and fastest medium to cater for information in this pandemic era and also allowed students to learn and solve at the same time. The results also showed that the zoom application is popular with the students. This finding aligns with the results in Ogwunte (2020) which revealed that zoom cloud technology has positively influenced instructional delivery in business education programs in Universities in Rivers State. Also, the results revealed that the zoom application does not affect students' adaptability to the new normal. This is in support of Wang



and Hall (2018) who indicated that students liked the flexibility and convenience of attending lessons via Zoom at remote sites.

The result of research question two revealed that the WhatsApp application affected students' adaptability to a high extent. The findings of this study corroborate with the results of Ogwunte (2020) that cloud technology have positively influenced instructional delivery in business education program in Universities in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is therefore concluded that both the zoom and WhatsApp instructional approaches affect students' adaptability to the new normal and therefore impact the business education classroom in a pandemic era to a high and fairly high extent in Rivers State-owned Universities. The findings of this study also indicated that students were not fully satisfied to some extent with the use of the zoom application learning approach as they were with the WhatsApp approach during this transition period as perceived by the instructors.

Recommendations

Since the online pedagogical teaching approaches have been found to aid students' adaptability to the new normal, it is therefore recommended that

1. Higher Education administrators should adopt and regularly organize computer literacy programs to allow for improved technological involvement of lecturers and students in order to be abreast with the different learning ICT platforms.
2. Business educators should constantly find innovative ways through the electronic platform to engage students in assignments, projects and discussions that could enhance learning in this pandemic era and not only rely on the traditional mode of teaching.

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