

Assessment of Knowledge Acquisition through Blended Learning among Pre-service Social Studies Teachers

¹Dr. Adedayo Oyewole Sofadekan, ²Dr. Zabur Olayiwola Soluade & ³Oladimeji Samuel Fatoki

^{1,2,3}Department of Sociological Studies, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun, Ogun State

Corresponding Author's email: fatoki_dimeji@yahoo.com Phone: +2348052404111

<https://doi.org/10.57233/gijmss.v8i1.16>

Abstract

The new normal has increased the call for innovative pedagogies to drive learning outcomes. A structured questionnaire ($\alpha = .731$) was administered to 339 Social Studies students in Nigeria, four questions were answered using descriptive statistics and findings emphasised the use of digital learning resources, teamwork and flexible study in blended learning. The study revealed that student empowerment on the use of digital learning resources such as Zoom, Google Drive and Meet increase learning habits and promote a proactive engagement. It is however recommended that quantitative studies should be conducted to leverage emerging technologies in cross border interactions amongst Social Studies professionals in pursuing 21st century skills, future studies should include skill assessment.

Keywords: Social Studies, new normal, blended learning, innovative pedagogies, learning outcomes

1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental right of all citizens, which society must sustain and made available. The new focus of Social Studies Education is fast adopting the use of blended learning to achieve 21st century student outcomes. In this study, pre-service teachers are students in tertiary institutions who are undergoing training in Social Studies instruction and improving pedagogy in pursuing excellence, mastery and competence in classroom management, methodology, and assessment.

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and its massive effect on education has widened the gap of educational inequity. Billions of students were shut out of learning and statistics have it that the period schools were closed down had amounted to years of learning loss that may or not be recovered throughout one's life span. Unfortunately, the closure of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic

have resulted in learning losses (World Bank, 2021). For students to have a true meaning of education, students should be guided to advance knowledge in meeting the demands of society. As it is generally agreed that learning is from cradle to death; however, amidst the stress and not shying away from the socio-economic disparities, students should be encouraged and be willing to put more effort to advance meaningful learning.

The educational response to the COVID-19 pandemic have showed the ability of scholars in mobilizing their professional knowledge and digital technology in enhancing the educational attainment of the students (UNESCO, 2020). Hence, informed blended learning. Blended learning is a pedagogical approach that strategically integrates traditional face-to-face learning with digital technology and online learning components. This method leverages the unique advantages of both in-person interaction such as Zoom, Google Meet, and flexible online resources to create a more comprehensive and engaging learning experience. Blended learning is recognized as an effective and adaptable teaching methodology, that enhances accessibility and caters to diverse learning needs. Moreover, blended learning enhances students' academic achievement and motivation (Mohammad, 2023; Muxtorjonovna, 2020; Sheu & Eleanya, 2020). Through blended learning, the 21st century student outcomes would be met. 21st century skills help students to achieve knowledge, expertise and skills which will help the students to succeed in the work of life. Through blended learning students will acquire skills of problem solving, critical thinking, innovation, curiosity and so on. These skills, knowledge and expertise are part of what Social Studies aims to achieve in learning by developing socio-civic and personal behaviours to become responsible citizens.

The foregoing are major thoughts, concerns and challenges of a passionate teacher, however, a great demand on the teacher-leader. Most academic institutions are now adopting the blended approach to learning for their students to enhance teaching and learning process. As a result, instruction for Social Studies has changed due to emerging rise of technology and e-learning which encourages learning through digital platform. The pandemic is in no doubt a call to realigning Social Studies scholars, students, experts and other professionals in pursuing the primary goal of Social Studies which is the development of responsible and active citizens. When pre-service teachers continue to explore and gather hands-on experience to reality-based learning, only then would they be able to challenge their abilities (innates and external) and mobilise human and

non-human resources in rising to meet the needs of the society both at the local, national and global levels. Accordingly, Social Studies helps the learners in gaining full awareness and understanding of the human environment in its totality. It is in the direction that the breadth of Social Studies instruction should make provision for a variety of experiences so that the learning of pre-service teachers will be well-rounded and well-balanced.

In the report of UNESCO (2020) laid emphasis on collaboration, teacher engagement with stakeholders as well as adoption of technology in the classroom. Technology has come to stay with us and in Education. Social Studies teachers should adopt and adapt to the rising demand for technology in delivering Social Studies instruction, however not to completely push back physical interaction for online learning but both should complement another.

Blended learning promote flexibility of learning by enhancing the student to choose the topics they want to study, when and where they want the learning to take place. Blended learning is a student centre approach (Jdaitawi, 2020). Indeed, Social Studies emphasises relationships and cordial interactions with fellow humans as no one can live in isolation; technology here does not mean the extinction of human touch. Blended learning support cultural exchange, knowledge transmission, interactions on causes, effects and solutions to social problems across borders, issues that are not limited to classroom teaching, gender issues, conflict and peace, voter education, youth engagement, election and crisis, amongst others that are in the purview of Social Studies. Hence, the separation of experts from non-experts (a tick line is drawn) of Social Studies. The delineation in terms of passing information and issues in and around Social Studies across local, national and international borders based on the acceptable standard would make many half-baked experts hide from these knowledge transmissions. Hence, the need to empower pre-service Social Studies teachers with all arsenal that are accessible to learning online and offline to appreciate our past, preserve the present and save the future where humanity becomes a watchword for all.

Blended learning makes use of face-to-face and online digital technology which helps the student to interact and acquire knowledge and skills using both online and offline medium (Omeodu & Ekineh, 2023; Zhang, et al., 2020). Based on the foregoing, as much as virtual learning was embraced, it has not been easy with many teachers unable to access the internet and basic infrastructure such as electricity. In this regard, much attention had been given to the primary and secondary learners with no attention for higher education.

The general aim of the study is to appraise blended approach to learning among preservice Social Studies teachers, while the specific objectives are to investigate the extent to which pre-service Social Studies teachers learn with digital resources; examine the level of flexible study with learning on demands; investigate the influence of the students' learning styles on learning modalities and to examine the coping styles of the students for blended learning.

Based on that the following research questions were raise

- i. To what extent do pre-service Social Studies teachers learn with digital resources?
- ii. How flexible is the study with learning on demands (just-in-time learning)?
- iii. How does the learning styles of the students influence learning modalities?
- iv. What are the students' coping styles for blended learning?

The study is organized as follows; introduction, methodology, result and discussion and finally conclusion and recommendations

2. Methodology

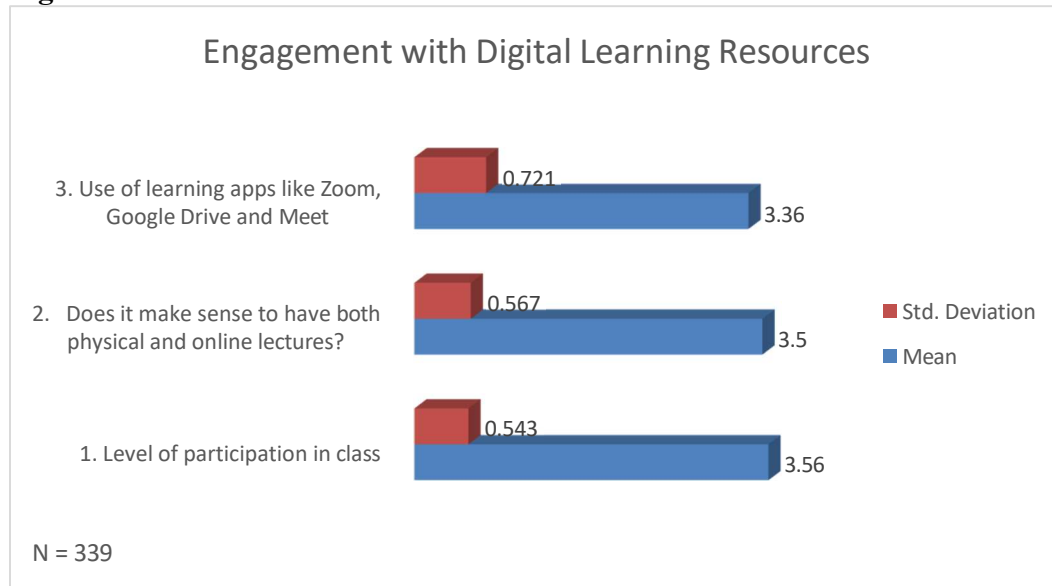
The study adopted a quantitative research design and a simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 339 pre-service Social Studies teachers from Nigeria. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire tagged "Pre-service Social Studies Teachers and Blended Approach (PSSTBA) with a = .731. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents through Google form and responses were gathered spontaneously. The collected copies of the distributed questionnaires were coded, collated and analysed using SPSS. The stated research questions were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

3. Results and Discussions

Analyses of Research Questions

Research question 1: To what extent do pre-service Social Studies teachers learn with digital resources?

Fig.1

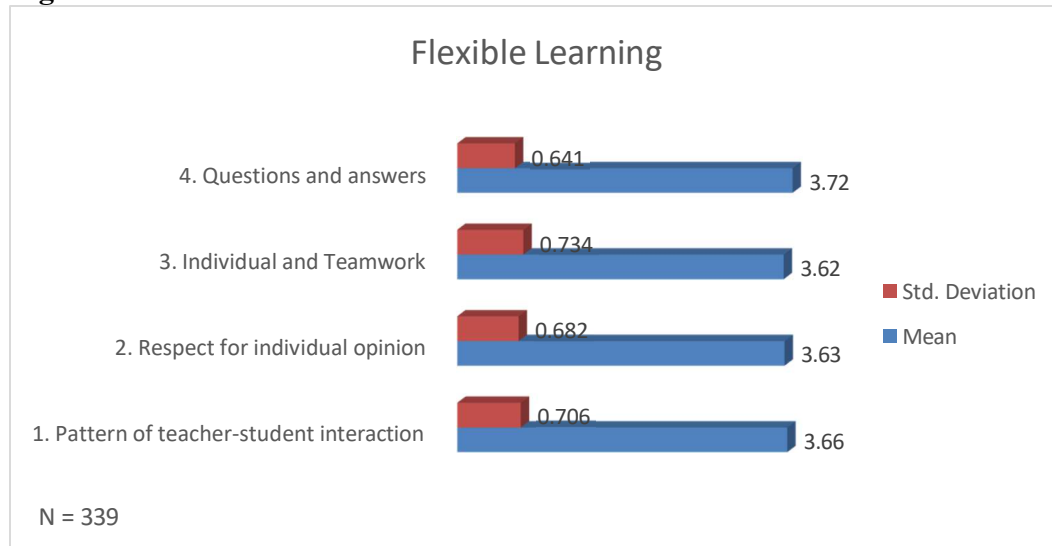


Field survey, 2022

Fig.1 above indicated the descriptive statistics of the extent to which pre-service Social Studies teachers learn with digital learning resources with an overall mean score of 3.472 (SD= 0.4136) and showed an inclination towards positive engagement because the scale ranges from very good to very poor. The overall mean score was slightly near to 5 which means the pre-service Social Studies teachers utilize digital learning resources slightly above the average. However, Item 1 had the highest mean value, indicating a good level of participation in class, followed by Item 2 which applauded the blended approach. Scores were less spread out in Item 1 (SD= 0.543) compared with Item 3 (SD= 0.721) specifying that Item 1 has more consistent scores and in Item 3 data were more spread out from the mean.

Research question 2: How flexible is the study with learning on demands (just-in-time learning)?

Fig. 2

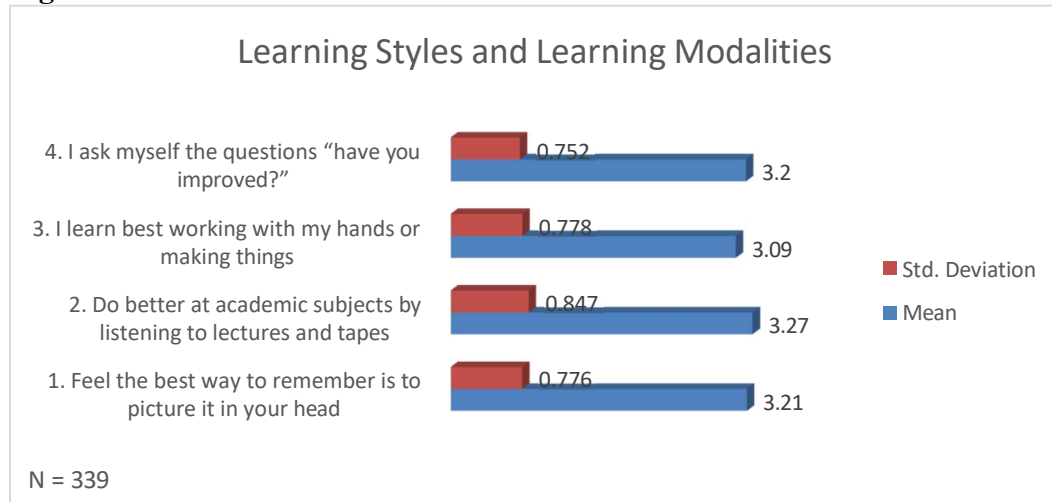


Field survey, 2022

Fig.2 descriptive statistics for flexible learning had an overall mean score of 3.655 (SD= 0.4718). This showed a positive perception of flexible learning among the students because the scale ranges from favourable to very unfavourable. The overall mean score was pretty near 4 which means that blended learning based on demand is favourable to pre-service Social Studies teachers. Item 4 had the highest mean value, indicating that students showed responsibility towards questions and answers. Also, the standard deviation scores for all the items are fairly close.

Research question 3: How does the learning styles of the students influence learning modalities?

Fig. 3

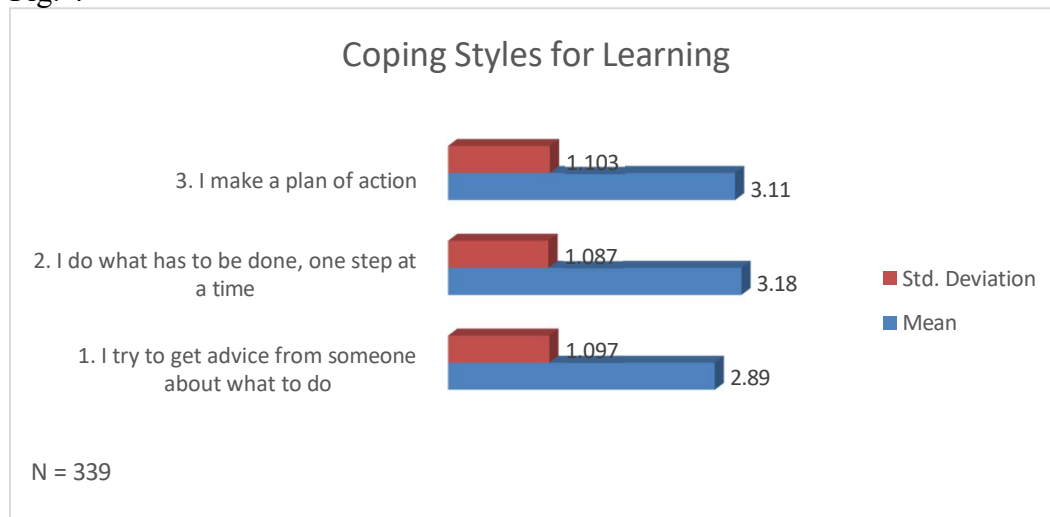


Field survey, 2022

Fig. 3 descriptive statistics for learning styles and learning modalities had an overall mean score of 3.187 (SD= 0.528) and showed a positive perception of students on their learning styles and learning modalities because the scale ranges from sometimes to often. The overall mean score is close to 4 which means that the students showed responsibility for learning. Item 2 had the highest mean score of 3.27 (SD=0.847) which showed that the majority of the respondents are auditory learners. However, scores are less spread out from the mean in Item 4 compared to other items in the table.

Research question 4: What are your coping styles for blended learning?

Fig. 4



Field survey, 2022

Fig. 4 descriptive statistics for coping styles for learning had an overall mean score of 3.059 (SD= 0.856) showed positive coping styles for the students because the scale ranges from “I usually do not do this at all” to “I usually do this a lot.” The overall mean score is slightly close to 4 which means the pre-service Social Studies teachers exhibit various coping styles for the blended approach. Item 3 had the highest mean score of 3.18 (SD= 1.087), Item 1 had the lowest mean score of 2.89 (SD= 1.097) and the standard deviation of all the items revealed that students had many different reactions which are more spread out from the mean.

Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

The results of the current study indicate that students consider the level of participation in class more positively since they perceive it to be very important to help the blended learning process in learning Social Studies instructions. It can be argued that student empowerment on the use of digital learning resources such as Zoom, Google Drive and Meet would increase learning habits and promote a proactive engagement. These findings corroborate a recent study from Zhao (2022) who confirmed that perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, a learning atmosphere are important factors affecting learners' acceptance of blended

learning. In relation to flexible study with learning on demands, students show a poor perception of individual and teamwork. These results were in accordance with the study conducted by Lim, Ab, Habibah, Aini and Saad (2020), who found empirical evidence on the role of peer learning in the development of self-regulated learning. Hence, individual and team work should be more emphasised while pursuing students' outcomes. Concerning, learning styles and learning modalities, students learn best at their pace and with different learning styles, the auditory learners show higher reactions. However, blended learning should take account of all categories of learners for inclusive learning. The results support the study of Kennedy (2021) who reported that as an increasing number of teacher educators shift to online and blended learning formats, it is essential that careful consideration is given to the meaningful integration of the online and onsite elements of the learning process. For coping styles for learning, the findings of the current study show a positive reaction to students making a plan of action than trying to get advice from someone about what to do. The results were in support of a previous study from Brysch (2020) who reported that blended learning offers teachers much more flexibility than face-to-face classes since barriers to attendance arising from time or location constraints are either removed or reduced.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Evident from the results of this study, pre-service Social Studies need to be empowered through blended learning. Educators, trainers and teachers need to put more effort into promoting the use of digital learning resources and help students appreciate them for sustained learning. Blended learning is capable of promoting innovative pedagogies from instructors, students and school leadership. In this light, a wide array of Social Studies concepts would be covered and equipping the pre-service teachers to inculcate the necessary knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens, developing skills of social inquiry and approach, developing skills of teamwork, participation and responsible action and exhibit attributes such as identity, ownership of rights and obligations, respect for human dignity, involvement in public matters and acceptance of social values. Accordingly, further quantitative studies are needed to leverage emerging technologies in cross border interactions amongst Social Studies professionals in pursuing 21st century skills, future studies should include skill assessment.

References

- Brysch, C. P. (2020). Teacher attitudes toward alternative professional development in Geography. *Journal of Geography*, 119(2), 55–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221341.2019.1706621>
- Daitawi, M. (2020). Does flipped learning promote positive emotions in science education? A comparison between traditional and flipped classroom approaches. *Electronic Journal of e-learning*, 18(6), 516-524.
- Kennedy, E. (2021). *Blended learning in teacher education & training: Findings from Research & Practice, Brussels, Belgium* [E-book]. European Schoolnet (EUN Partnership AIBSL).
- Lim, C., Ab, J., Habibah, J., Aini, M., & Saad, W. (2020). Peer learning, self-regulated learning and academic achievement in blended learning courses: A structural equation modeling approach. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 15(03), 110–125. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i03.12031>.
- Muhammad, S. A.(2023).A blended learning approach to improve student's performance in higher education. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 7(4),261-273.
- Muxtorjonovna, A. M. (2020). Significance of blended learning in education system. *The American Journal of Social Science and Education Innovations*, 2(8), 507–511. <http://doi.org/10.3574/tajssei/>.
- Omeodu, M. D. & Ekinah, D. R. (2023). Blended learning in teaching science in secondary schools in Abua/Odual local government area, *Rivers State. Rivers State University Journal of Science and Mathematics Education (RSUJOSME)*, 1(1), 106-114.
- Sheu, A.L., & Eleanya, F.I. (2020). Effect of Blended Teaching Method on Students' Academic Achievement in Civic Education in Senior Secondary Schools in Imo State. *Kano Journal of Educational Psychology (KaJEP)*, 2(2), 276- 286.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. (2020). *Education in a post COVID world: Nine ideas for public action*. International Commission on the Futures of Education.
- World Bank. (2021). *The impact of Covid-19 on education – recommendations and opportunities for Ukraine*. The World Bank. Retrieved December 9, 2021, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2021/04/02/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-educationrecommendations-and-opportunities-for-Ukraine>.

- Zhang, Y., Rebrina, F., Sabirova, F., & Afanaseva, J. (2020). Blended Learning Environments in Inclusive Education at the University. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)*, 15(21), 145-161.
- Zhao, W. (2022). *An empirical study on blended learning in higher education in "internet +" era*. ResearchGate. Retrieved March 14, 2022, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/359194993_An_empirical_study_on_blended_learning_in_higher_education_in_internet_era.