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A Survey On Integrating Blended Mode Of Teaching And Learning At Undergraduate Level

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Abstract

With the universal hurt of COVID-19, the year 2020 has been reframing for all the Healthcare, Manufacturing, Education, Information Technology, and other commercial working sectors. The education sector has also been stirred in terms of teaching-learning practices, assessment, and evaluation aspects. Many traditional pedagogies have been altered. Teaching-learning processes have been made malleable keeping in mind the students' convenience. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or pace. While students still attend "brick-and-mortar schools with a teacher present, face-to-face classroom practices are combined with computer-mediated activities regarding content and delivery. Blended learning has been found an effective approach to delivering the best teaching practices and utilizing the maximum potential of students. It is an innovative approach that embraces the advantages of both traditional classroom teaching and ICT-supported learning including online and offline learning.

This paper aims to explore the possibilities of effective implementation of blended learning in college education. This paper focuses on a survey conducted among 54 teachers of English teaching at college level in Gujarat. The survey was conducted to construct a data-based scenario on English teachers attitudes, observations, experiments, and experiences regarding the blended mode of teaching and learning approach. Later, the data was analyzed and interpreted to develop better insights, which ultimately helped in making appropriate generalizations. At last, the paper enlists major findings and recommendations for improvement of the current scenario.

Key terms: Covid-19, Blended Learning, Face-to-face Learning, Online Learning.

Introduction

“Blended classrooms include face-to-face instruction techniques... while also using technology to provide in-class online learning that students can do at home....”

-Alfonso Gonzalez

The unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak three years ago presented a massive challenge to the education sector. To uphold social distancing, face-to-face teaching has been suspended for an extended period in universities worldwide, and replaced by online learning. However, with surging vaccination rates, more universities have restored face-to-face teaching.

Compared to online teaching, face-to-face teaching can undeniably facilitate greater interactions among students and teachers. A multitude of online tools, like Zoom, Google Meet, WebEx, etc. can certainly sustain interaction among them without time and space constraints. But there is a human touch, intimacy, and rapport that can hardly be provided in online settings. Such traits also make the learning experience more lively and engaging. For instance, teachers can support students more directly by judging their facial expressions and body language. Online tools, then, present a virtual barrier that hinders students from expressing themselves fully.

But even with the return of face-to-face teaching-learning many teachers and students have expressed their nervousness regarding returning to classroom settings. Many of them have now gotten used to the online environment, becoming comfortable with typing in chat boxes or leaving short comments instead of expressing themselves more directly. Students now tend to shy away from crowds and work in a solo manner most of the time, hindering their capabilities to interact with one another. As such, a lingering problem has arisen as to their overall well-being, engagement, and feelings of belonging.

As many teachers and students realize the potential of online tools in terms of enriching the learning process and their outcomes during the pandemic, these tools should certainly be maintained and even deepened when teaching returns to face-to-face format. This has led to the discussion of blended learning, which intentionally utilizes strategies, technologies, and pedagogical activities that incorporate both face-to-face and online elements.

After all, the university sector has been undergoing another new stage of educational development this year. There should be far more professional discussions on how to capitalize on existing opportunities to further consolidate and strengthen learning and teaching, which allows students to grow further. However, we must also bear in mind that everything comes with a cost and limitations. Even though blended learning is effective and innovative, this requires that we carefully consider and thoroughly judge them before applying them in real-life contexts that will affect students' interests.

Key Terms: Blended Learning, Face-to-Face learning, Online learning.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To know the view of the English professors regarding the use of blended learning.
- 2) To find out the opportunities and challenges of introducing blended learning in a state like Gujarat.
- 3) To propose the measures to be undertaken for introducing quality blended learning models in the new normal era. So that an appropriate pedagogy can be adopted in Gujarat.

1.2 Research Methodology

It was survey research conducted to collect information/data about a population of interest.

a) Primary Data: Primary data was collected through a questionnaire designed for teachers teaching in various colleges of Gujarat.

b) Secondary Data: Secondary data was collected through books, articles, and literature reviews available from web information sources.

1.3 Research Tool

Research tools are developed for the collection of qualitative and quantitative data. 54 teachers of English working in various colleges of Gujarat were given a questionnaire to be filled up. There were 19 questions covering Yes-No questions an Agree-Disagree scale/Likert scale, and Multiple Choice Questions.

The questionnaire was designed to know English teachers' attitudes and their reactions to the blended mode of teaching and learning. The following were the major components of the questionnaire.

- Familiarity with the blended mode of teaching.
- Previously taught a course using the blended mode of teaching.
- Regarding easiness to handle it.
- It has a positive effect on the student's performance.
- Regarding students' time management.
- Regarding motivation to develop students' independent learning skills.
- Blended mode affects students' initiative and enthusiasm positively.
- Comparing blended mode and face-to-face interaction concerning more information in the area of their study.
- Regarding the effectiveness of blended mode for enhancing language skills (LSRW) in English.
- Regarding their views, if the blended mode of teaching and learning is introduced in ELT.
- Views regarding Blended learning to be enforced at universities.

1.4 Sampling Method

The sampling method used for this survey was Random Sampling. The total sample size was 54. This consists of 54 teachers of English from various colleges of Gujarat chosen at random to collect the primary data through a questionnaire.

Demographic Information	Categories	Freq.
Name of City	Ahmedabad	9
	Rajkot	31
	Surat	1
	Vallabh Vidhyanagar	1
	Mehsana	1
	Dumiyani	1
	Jamnagar	9
	Dahod	1
Work Experience	0 – 5 Years	20
	6 – 10 Years	14
	11 – 15 Years	08
	Above 15 years	12

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

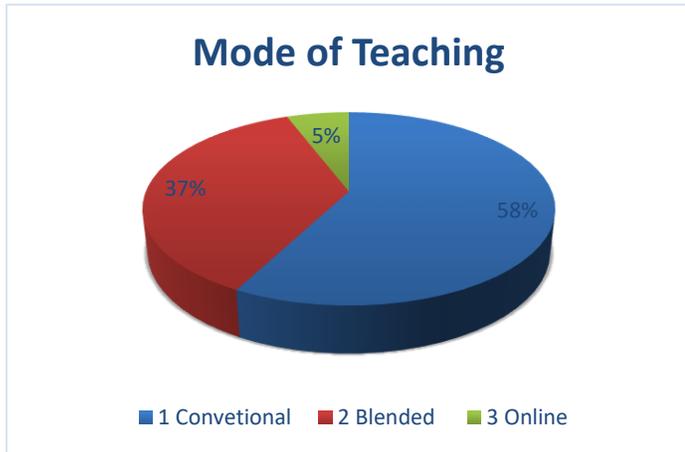
- This study was limited to teachers of English working in various colleges of Gujarat State.
- This study was limited to studying the current scenario of the Blended Teaching Mode of Learning in Gujarat.

1.6 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected through a questionnaire was compiled, codified, and analyzed with the help of MS Excel software. The appropriate graphs are used to analyze the data and prepare the survey report. Based on the analyzed data the interpretations were made.

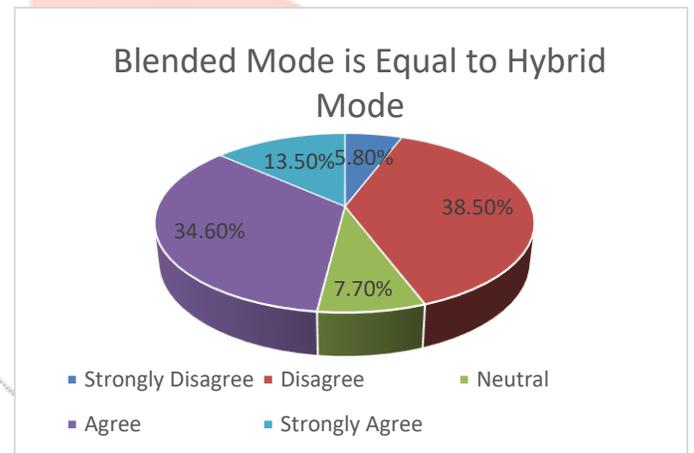
1.6.1 Quantitative Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher has presented analysis and interpretation of checklist (yes-no) type, Likert Scale type, and multiple choice type test items separately used in the tool with a graphical presentation in the form of a pie chart.

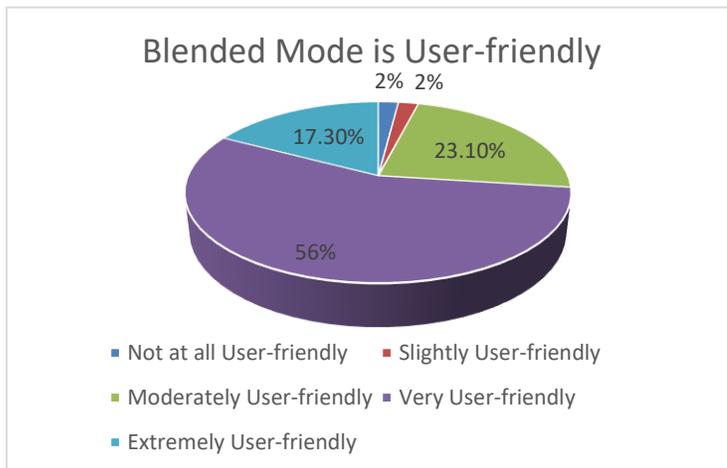


- 58% of respondents follow the conventional mode of teaching.
- 37% of respondents follow a blended mode of teaching.
- 5% of respondents follow online teaching mode.

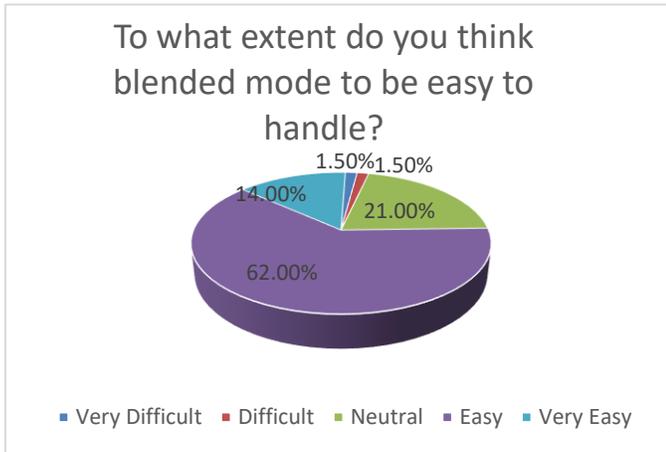
- 35% of respondents agree with the view.
- 38% of respondents disagree.
- 6% of respondents strongly agree with the view.
- 8% of respondents are neutral.
- 13% of respondents strongly disagree with the view.



- 17.30% of respondents believe that Blended Mode is extremely user-friendly in terms of its technology and instructional design concerning teaching English.
- 56% of respondents believe that it is very user-friendly,
- 23% of respondents believe that it is moderately user-friendly.
- 2% of respondents believe that it is slightly user-friendly.
- 2% of respondents believe that it is not at all user-friendly.s

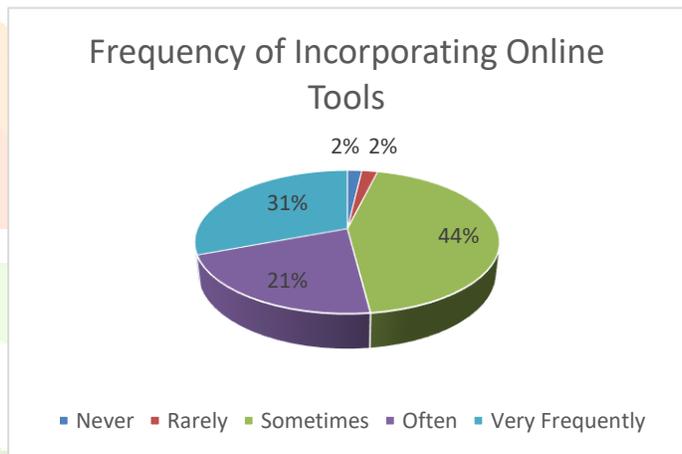


- 73% of the respondents have previously Taught a course using a blended mode of teaching.
- 27% of respondents have not taught any course using a blended mode of teaching.

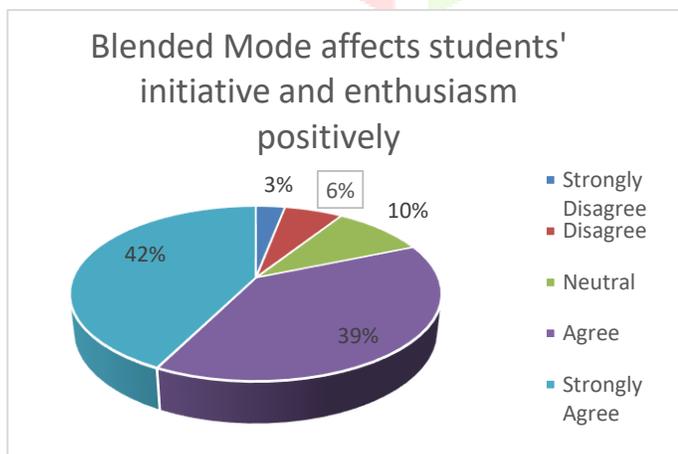


- 62% of respondents think that blended mode is easy to handle.
- 14% of respondents think that it is very easy to handle.
- 21% of respondents are neutral.
- 1.5% of the respondents think that it is difficult to handle.
- 1.5% of respondents think that it is very difficult to handle.

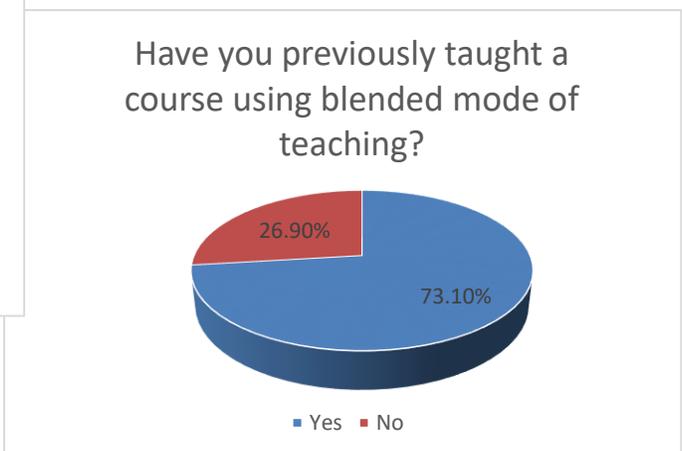
- 31% of respondents very frequently incorporate online communication tools (discussion forms, chat rooms, video conferencing, etc.)
- 21% of respondents often use these online tools.
- 44% of respondents sometimes incorporate online communication tools.
- 2% of respondents rarely use these tools.
- 2% of respondents never use online tools.



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42% of respondents strongly agree with the statement that blended mode affects students' initiative and enthusiasm positively.



- 39% of respondents agree with the statement.

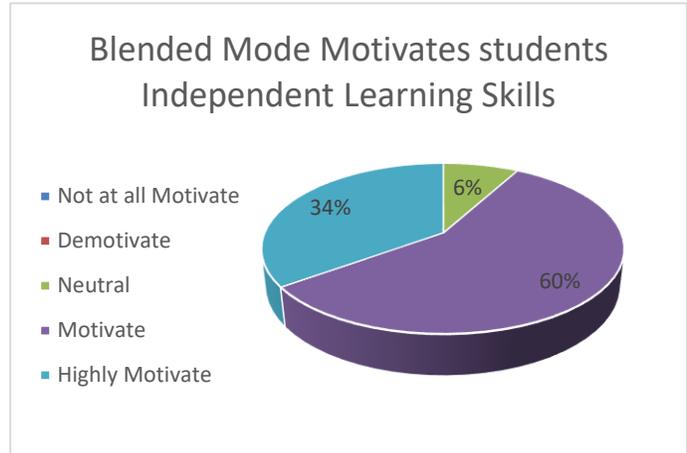
- 10% of respondents are neutral.
- 6% of respondents disagree with the statement.
- 3% of respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

60% of respondents think that blended mode motivates students' independent learning skills.

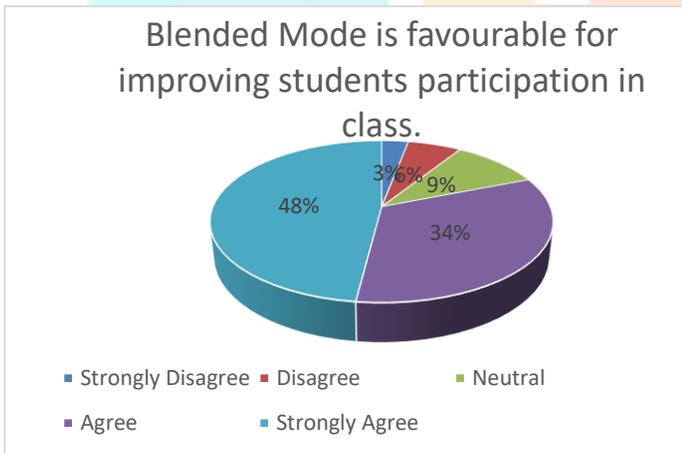
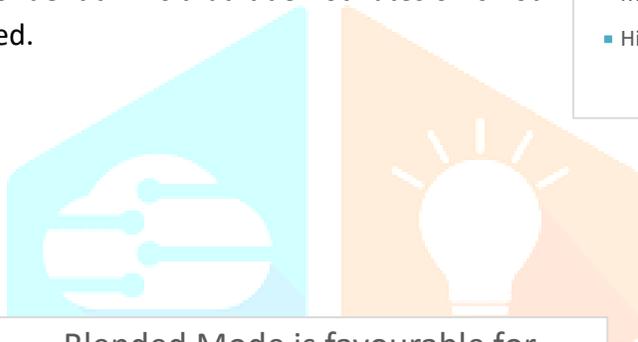
34% of respondents think that blended mode highly motivates students' independent learning

6% of respondents are neutral.

No respondent thinks that it demotivates or is not motivated.

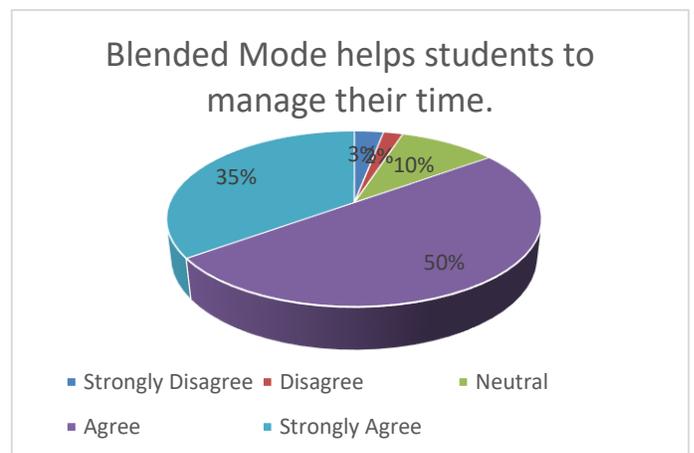


skills.
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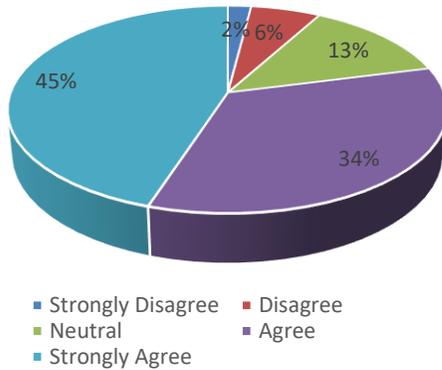


- 48% of respondents agree with the statement that blended mode is favourable for improving students' participation in class.
- 34% of respondents strongly agree with the statement.
- 9% of respondents are neutral.
- 6% of respondents disagree with.
- 3% of respondents strongly disagree with the statement.

- 50% of respondents agree with the statement that blended mode helps students to manage their time.
- 35% of respondents strongly agree with the statement.
- 10% of respondents are neutral.
- 3% of respondents strongly disagree with the statement.
- 2% of respondents disagree with the statement.



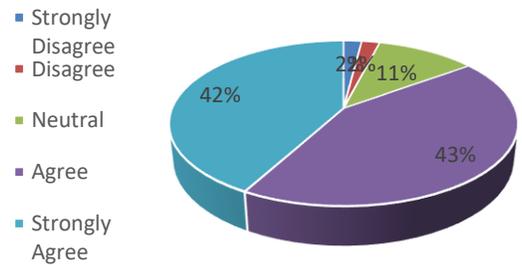
Students can get more information in the area of their study



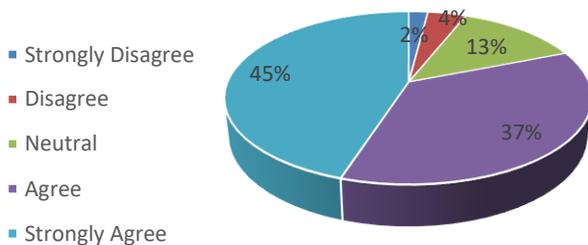
- 34% of respondents think that students can get more information in the area of their study through Blended Mode than through Face-to-Face interaction.
- 45% of respondents think that students can get more information in the area of their study through Blended Mode than through Face-to-Face interaction.
- 13% of respondents are neutral in this matter.
- 7% of respondents disagree with this matter.
- 1% of the respondents strongly disagree with this matter.

- 42% of respondents strongly agree that blended mode provides effective and frequent feedback.
- 43% of respondents agree with the view.
- 11% of respondents are neutral.
- 2% of respondents strongly disagree with the view.
- 2% of respondents disagree with the view.

Blended Mode provides effective and frequent feedback

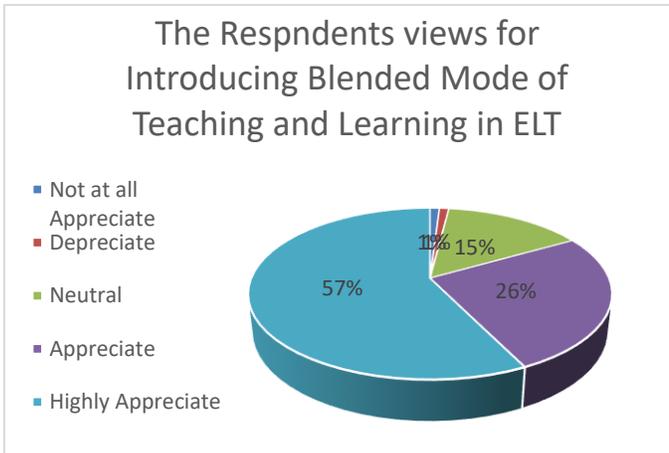
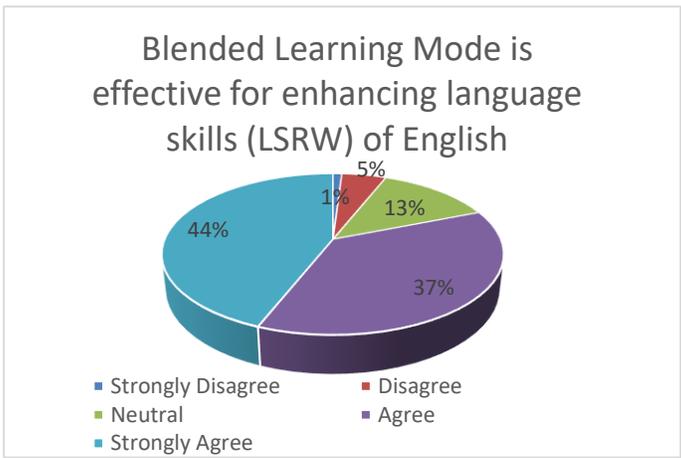


Blended Mode has a positive impact on students' performance



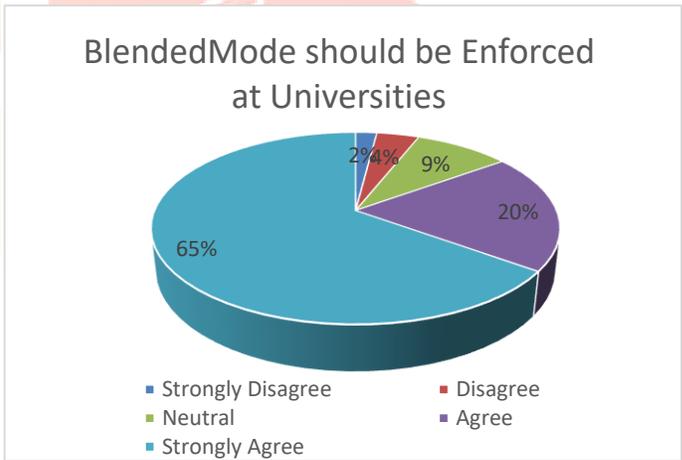
- 45% of respondents agree with the statement that blended mode has a positive impact on students' performance.
- 37% of respondents strongly agree with the statement.
- 13% of respondents are neutral.
- 4% of respondents strongly disagree with the statement.
- 1% of the respondents disagree with the statement.

- 44% of respondents strongly agree that the blended learning mode is effective for enhancing language skills (LSRW) in English.
- 37% of respondents agree with the same.
- 13% of respondents are neutral.
- 5% of respondents disagree.
- 1% of respondents strongly disagree



- 57% of respondents highly appreciate if a blended mode of teaching and learning is introduced in ELT.
- 26% of respondents appreciate if a blended mode of teaching and learning is introduced in ELT.
- 15% of respondents are neutral.
- 1% of respondents depreciate this view.
- 1% of respondents do not appreciate this view.

- 65% of respondents strongly agree with the statement that blended mode should be enforced at universities.
- 20% of respondents agree with the statement.
- 9% of respondents are neutral.
- 4% of respondents disagree with the view.
- 2% of respondents strongly disagree with the view.



5. Recommendations:

The following are areas in which the higher educational institutions in Gujarat can take leadership in transforming the educational scenario of Gujarat based on the survey.

5.1. Reconsideration of teaching-learning pedagogies

There is a need to reconsider the idea of pedagogy as a technique, an approach, a process, and a method that would help to make teaching-learning effective in the real sense.

A thoughtfully formulated techno-pedagogy at this critical stage could guide in using the appropriate teaching tools and techniques to fulfill the mission and objectives of education. The convergence approach between conventional and online institutions should be promoted for a better collaborative experience so that the learners from both modes can reap the benefits of learning at their place and pace.

5.2. Capacity building of the educators regarding the use of blended learning for content delivery

There is an urgent need to organize a series of training activities for the teachers/educators/counselors of conventional institutions by tying up with national agencies. In such programs, the teachers can also be provided with need-based training on creating audio-visual content in locally relevant areas.

5.3. Creating an open educational coffers depository

Developing a platform for storing and sharing educational materials freely in the new normal era, the use of open educational resources (OERs) in online and blended learning has greatly changed the methods of teaching and learning interactions. As a result, a fresh form of social constructivism has merged, enabling learners to engage directly with community members, exchange ideas with peers, and collaboratively undertake innovative research endeavors that have the potential to truly revolutionize society. This type of constructivism could potentially be highly beneficial.

5.4. Relinquishment of the learning management system (LMS)

Through the use of LMS, conventional institutions can partake in their educational content among their learners. This can be a major change that might transfigure the field of education of the whole state and give cooperative literacy openings to the intended learners in the real sense. Thus, it is the right time to formulate a policy to introduce an LMS-grounded literacy in higher education.

5.5. Blended learning models as the volition of a conventional model

From the study, it has been set up that the majority of the replies preferred the blended form of learning as the most suitable for learning in the coming days. It has also been found that due to the low position of internet connectivity for educational purposes, it is not possible to pierce completely online or coetaneous tutoring learning facilities by all in an equitable way. Thus, the asynchronous ways in education can give the optimum learning opportunity to all in a more flexible and accessible way. So, the blended learning form of learning, which is generally learner-centric and cost-effective, is going to influence the entire educational script.

6. Conclusion

In a state like Gujarat, with specific challenges to meet, the 'one-size-fits-all' conception may not work. So, before putting certain blended activities into practice, one must take into consideration numerous variables, including target learners, their social, artistic, and profitable backgrounds, s (Baytiyesh, 2018), their access to technological structure, technology readiness in the educational institutions, and so on. Thus, this study was undertaken to know the view of the learners on blended learning so that a suitable roadmap could be developed to help both the preceptors and learners happily manage at present as well as in the future.

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