HYBRID/BLENDED APPROACH AS AN EVOLVING PARADIGM FOR THE DEMOGRAPHICALLY ISOLATED TERTIARY STUDENTS

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Abstract

Evolving technological advancement and emerging digital environments have permeated and swiftly changed the learning landscape globally. One such advancement that incorporates face-to- face learning with technological tools is the blended or hybrid mode of learning and teaching. Blended or hybrid learning is a seamless combination of online and face-to-face activities for classroom instruction for all and basically the demographically displaced. This research delves into a profound study of the perception of students and staff involved in a postgraduate educational leadership program offered in a blended mode. An interpretive paradigm using mixed methods approach adopting a survey consisting of Likert scale items and interviews were successfully implemented. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS while thematic approach using emerging themes were used for interpreting the interviews. Findings testify that blended approach has been liked and very well accepted by the students as it enables them to complete their qualifications and progress academically and professionally in their lives. This study sets a solid platform for further research as certain scholars and administrators are still sceptical and hesitant in fully implementing blended mode of learning and teaching. The study concludes by stating certain implications that subsequently can make blended mode more chronic and applicable to the needs of scholars, teachers and students especially in archipelagos like Fiji and beyond.

Keywords: Leadership, Blended Learning, Expanding globally, Faculty development, Student learners, Constructivist pedagogy, Distance learning