

Comparative Effects of Distance Learning Education Programme and Classroom Based Instruction on the Learning Behaviour of Students in Nigeria

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Abstract. The study investigated (two instructional strategies) the comparative effectiveness of distance learning educational experiences and the classroom-based instruction on the learning behaviour of matured students in the distance learning programme in Ado Ekiti study center of Ekiti State University Nigeria. A pre test post test experimental research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised of about 1000 student in the study center of Ado-Ekiti distance learning center. The subjects were 40 undergraduates. A 2 x 2 factorial design was used for the study. 20 students were randomly selected and assigned to each of the two groups. The data was collected using the learner observation sheets, a validated and reliable research instrument. Treatment consists of the exposure to the counseling and independent content (CIC) of a training package using the traditional classroom based instruction and the distance education learning approach. Two research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested using (ANOVA). The study revealed that student learning behaviour became relatively effective as a result of distance learning education. The

study demonstrated that distance learning consistently develops a positive effect on students learning behaviour, improve their study skills and learning strategies. Appropriate recommendations were made.

1. Introduction

Most of the time when people talk about education, we often think about school in a traditional, formal sense. Most people believe that true learning can only take place in a formal classroom setting. Others feel education occurs in many different forms and environment. The traditional classroom involves a fact-to face contact which emphasizes the delivery of instruction in only the classroom setting. It involves the teacher, verbal, social facial expression. The distance learning is a hybrid of classroom and online learning that includes some online courses without the complete loss of face to face contact.

According to Barr and Taggi (1995) Universities are moving away from faculty centered and lecture-based paradigm to a model where learners are the focus, where faculty members become learning designers,

and where, students are taught critical thinking skill. Thus the role of teachers in the new school house is to serve their student by ensuring that student learning is of paramount importance

Teachers support their students by attending to their intellectual growth and self-autonomy, and by instilling in them an awareness of important social issues, thus supporting their ability to become more productive member of the society of life-long learners, working toward the common good.

Distance education is a shift providing exclusively traditional classroom instruction to reaching out to students by delivering courses at a distance using technology invention Distance education is already a pervasive element of higher education and techniques to rapidly expand, education, Research however suggestion that online courses are not suitable for all types of students and faculty. Gallons (1999) noted that students and teachers react to new educational technologies with varied emotions, ranging from enthusiasm to fear. Abrahamson (1998) reports that distance learning require students who are self-regulated and independent. Marine (2000) also discovered that some student, experienced difficulty adjusting to the structure of online course, managing their time in such environments, and maintaining self-motivation.

From the courses design perspective, a distance course can be anywhere between the continuums anchored at opposite ends by fully face-to-face and fully online environment. The face-to-face component can either be on the main university campus or the professor can travel to a remote site in order to meet with student. Martyn (2003) described a successful Distance learning

mode as consist of an initial face-to-face meeting weekly online assessment, synchronous chat, asynchronous discussion, email, text message and a final face-to-face meeting with a final examination. Dziuban and Moska (2001) reported that distance courses at the university when compared to the traditional course, had equivalent or superior student success rates.

Voos (2002) suggested that it is unlikely that the distances makes the difference in such course, but rather the fundamental reconsideration of the course design of new instructional the media choices and the learning strengths and limitation of each.

2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to compare the two instructional strategies (distance learning education and the classroom based instruction) in teaching and learning. The study is also to find out which of the two strategies or techniques will be more effective at improving study skill, providing knowledge, improving learning and developing an instructional process which incorporates good study habit, independent learning and other effective learning strategies.

3. Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were that:

- There would not be a significant difference in the knowledge of those exposed to distance learning education and the classroom based instructional strategies,
- There would not be a significant difference in development of independent learning of those exposed to distance learning education and the classroom based instruction strategies

4. Methodology

A pretest posttest experimental research design was adopted for the study the population of the study consist of 1000 students in the distance learning study center of Ado-Ekiti, study center of Ekiti State University.

The study participants consisted of 40 undergraduate students in the two graduate level courses during the same semester. All participants were employed as full time teachers seeking 1st degree in Education. The overall volunteer rate was 80% by course. The volunteer rate is as follows traditional course 25 enrolled 20 volunteered, 20 students were randomly selected and assigned to each of the two groups

4.1 Settings

The two courses were presented by an accredited university located in an urban area in Ado-Ekiti towns in Ekiti State.

The courses were selected for inclusion in this study because they were taught by full time professor of education who has a reputation for being superb teachers universally, and were well regarded by their student who valued their interaction and collaborative group work. The professor were also noted for possessing such qualities as to enhance study skills, knowledge and student independence in learning.

The traditional course presented instructions on course in educational and met on Wednesday evenings throughout the semester in a classroom, on the main campus. Student resided in the same geographical area. Each class meeting lasted approximately three hours for total face-to-face time of approximately 48 houses. Online technologies were used in this

course. The professor employed a mixture of text book study assignment tasks requiring a single project assigned by the instructors were also said.

The distance course covered the same courses content and used the ethnical aspect and legal aspect with teaching distance learners. The distance consists of both the face to face and the online components like the traditional courses, student reside in the same geological area. Assignment emphasized practical application authentic task, collaborative action research and group projects, all complimented with textbook readings. The course started with an initial face to face session followed by two Friday evening and Saturday session, spread evenly throughout the 16 weeks semester, for a total approximately 14 face to face hours. These sessions were conducted on the main campus chosen based on their accessibility to students and included activities such as guest speaker's group stimulations, interactive video and discussion. The online component was delivered using the e-learning system in the provision of assignment which was done and submitted online by students.

Treatment consists of the exposure the counseling and independent context of the training package using the distance learning approach and the traditional classroom based instruction.

4.2 Instrumentation

The data was collected using the leaner observation sheet, a validated and reliable research instruments. The instrument was used to measure the variable which is related to independent learning. The instrument consist of 20 self-report items, such as feelings of dependence, feeling of self-astronomy, feeling of self-regulatory, feel self-motivating, feeling of independence as a

result of the experience in the school. Each item was a five point scale of potential response, strongly agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The participants were to check the place on the scale that best reflect their feelings about the items.

Scores are computed by adding points assigned to each of the 20 five point items with 10 items allocated to each subscale. There items are reverses – scored where appropriate to ensure the least favourable choice is always assigned a value of 10 and the most favourable choice is assigned a value of 4. The independent scale represented the feeling of student regarding their devotement of self-regulatory, self-intimating skill. The other subscale represented the feeling of participant regarding the degree to which they share educational goals and experienced educational befits by their experience in the course. Scores on the subscale courage for 0 to 0.4 with higher scores reflecting a stronger sense of out regulating or independent skills.

End of course student evaluation were also used to obtain anecdotal data regarding

student perception of their respective course. Instructor received written copies of this comment after the grades were submitted to the university.

4.3 Procedure

The observation sheet was completed during the face to face meeting by professors during the traditional and distance courses meeting. This was done by completing the pretest during the second week of the semester and the posttest during the first two weeks of the semester. Participant were aware of the final course grade when the learner observation sheets were been completed.

4.4 Data Analysis

The hypothesis were tested using (ANCOVVA)

The pretest was used to establish the base line of the student to be used while the pretest was used to measure the difference in the knowledge’s skill acquisition and the development of independent learning in the two groups (distance learning and the traditional classroom based institution)

5. Result

What is the means and standard deviation of the two methods (distance learning and tradition classroom instruction)

Variable	Method	Protest Mean	S D	Protest mean	S D
Skill Development	Distance learning	20.46	2.19	29.47	1.94
		20.37	0.43	21.04	2.47
Instruction	Traditional classroom	10.42	1.86	22.19	0.14
		10.39	2.47	11.27	1.66

Table: indirect the mean score and standard deviation of undergraduate independence skill development learning.

The post mean of knowledge and independence learning skill development are 29.47, 22.19 while that of control is 21.04 and 11.27 respectively. It implies that distance learning and traditional class- based instruction could generate knowledge and independent learning.

Hypothesis 1: There would be a significant difference in the knowledge of those exposed to distance learning education and the classroom based instruction.

In testing this hypothesis the mean score of student in the distance learning was compared with those in the traditional classroom instruction using analysis of variance.

The table below shows the result of the analysis.

Source	SS	DF	MS	Fcal	F table	P
Coverage	46.393	1	46.83	10.2355	4.19	0.80
Group	11.986	1	11.988	26.434	4.17	0.00
Error	16.765	37	0.453			
Correct	62.37	393				
Total	2859.00					

-p<0.05

Hypothesis 2: There is significant difference in the development of independence learning of those exposed to distance learning and the classroom based instructional strategies.

This means that the level independent learning in student varies according to the method of instruction (distance and classroom based) A post HOC Analysis using Turkey was carried out to locate the source of variability among the two method (Distance learning and classroom based) Result of the analysis is presented below.

Table 3: post HOC Analysis showing the direction of difference in the independence learning between the two methods of instructions.

Variable	N	In adjusted	T a	Unadjusted for interpreted	Beta
	20	-.87		6.89	.45
	20	.77	.346	6.31	

Multiple R square

Table 3: shows Analysis showing the direction between groups revealed that distance learning contributed to the difference then classroom based instruction

6. Discussion

The present study compared the two instructional strategies (distance learning educational strategy and the traditional classroom) the study demonstrated that distance learning consistently develops a positive effect on the learning behaviour of student by improving their study and help student to plan their study more than the classroom based instruction

The findings of the study shows there was a significant difference in the development of independent learning skill of those exposed to distance learning more than the traditional classroom based instructions. This finding is supported by Dziuban and Moslcal (2001) who reported that distance of the traditional course had or reduced student withdrawal rate. Superior student often cited characteristics of successful distance learning critical thinking, family support, positive and timely feedback acceptance of responsibility to include interest in the material taught, self-vision, independence and self-directed learning critical thinking, family support, positive and timely feedback, acceptance of responsibility for own learning, organized and practical

knowledge in the use of computers (Irizary 2002). Student deficiency in any of these factors could possibly result in a weak development of independent learning ability. The reason why the distance learning is more efficient may be because Distance learning is a more robust educational experience than the traditional classroom based instruction. Distance learning is an important building block of the new school house that offers students both flexibility and convenience, important characteristics for working adults who decide to pursue postsecondary degrees. According to Colis and Moonen (2001),

Distance learning is hybrid of traditional face to face online learning so that instruction occur both in the classroom and online and where the online components becomes a natural extension of traditional classroom of learning Distance learning is thus a flexible approach to course design that supports the blending of different times and place for learning.

7. Conclusion

The distance learning concept of learning is highly consistent with the areas of identified changes. These changes include de-emphasis on thinking about delivery instruction; emphasis placed on producing learning to using technology to expand distance education, and the importance of developing the ability of independent skill in learning.

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