E-LEARNING: AN EVALUATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA'S GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS BLENDED PROGRAMME AND CHALLENGES FACED BY THE STUDENTS/ADMINISTRATION

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Operations, Projects and Supply Chain Management in the Graduate School of Business

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my children(Niza, Zangi and Sipho) and my Mum

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ABSTRACT

The University of Zambia introduced blended learning in various programmes under the Graduate School of Business in 2015. These programmes were scheduled to run for 18 months with students choosing to be either on Blended Learning or 100% Online Learning. The programme has however had challenges from inception which has seen the first four intakes going beyond the advertised 18 months. The main objective of the study was to identify challenges faced by the Graduate School of Business in administering (implementing) the e-learning blended program at the University of Zambia and come up with a suggested model solution. Additionally,the specific objectives were to identify the challenges experienced by students and the Graduate School of Business in the e-learning blended program as well as propose a model that would help mitigate these challenges.

The study adopted an exploratory inductive research design. Simple random sampling was used to come up with the 100 students from both the May 2016 and November 2016 intakes while purposive sampling was used to pick the 7 GSB support staff as well as the 15 Lecturers bringing the total sample to 122. For data collection, questionnaires containing open ended and closed ended questions were used. Data was then analysed using frequency table percentages and pie charts while content/thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. The study came up with the solution of having a consistent block release model together with the hexagonal model to efficiently deliver the programmes.

Results indicated that UNZA GSB has a proper functional e-learning platform powered by Astria Learning and over 90% of the respondents had a fair understanding on how to use it. In addition to the above, it was discovered that challenges were only being encountered when loading content by students within the same time. The main impediment however, is that 80% of the lecturers are not directly employed under GSB. The school also lacks dedicated customer service personnel hence the absence of a documented service level agreement in complaint and query resolution.

There is need for regular review meetings and continuous refresher training on Astria Learning and this should be conducted by the Graduate School of Business. The School should also ensure yearly customer service workshops for all members of staff with a consistent block release model together with the hexagonal model running side by side.

Keywords: E-learning blended program, Astria Learning, Service Level Agreement, University of Zambia's Graduate School of Business.

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DEFINITION OF KEYWORDS

E-Learning: Training conducted through electronic media.

Blended Program: An approach that combines traditional class based interactions with e-learning.

Online Learning: Can be used interchangeably with e-learning.

Astria Learning: A plaform used for online learning

Customer Service: Provison of service that ensures customer satisfaction before, during and after selling a product.

Service Level Agreement: A commitment between the service provider and its customers stipulating all the necessary steps to be taken at any given time.

University of Zambia: The highest instution of Learning in Zambia

Graduate School of Business: A recently introduced (2015) school situated at the University of Zambia conducting business course to both graduate and undergraduate students.

LIST OF APPENDICES

ACRONYMS

GSB	Graduate School of Business
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNZA	University of Zambia
SLA	Service Level Agreement
LMS	Learning Management System
UTAMU	Ugandan Technology and Management University
CA	Continuous Assessment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
IOTM	Input Output Transformation Model

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the research. Blended learning and online learning will be defined. The chapter also describes the research problem, aim, objectives and research questions which leads to the establishment of challenges faced by students on the Blended Online Learning Program at the University of Zambia's Graduate School of Business. The chapter concludes with the structure of the thesis on section 1.11.

1.2 Background

The University of Zambia which is the first and oldest public institution of higher learning, established in 1966, is today a leading institution, endeavoring to be among the world-class higher institutions of learning committed to, and true to its motto of 'Service and Excellence'. The academic and administrative strengths of the University are reflected in its existence of its Schools, institutes and Directorates each one performing its own functions in its areas of specialization. Additionally, it's country-wide presence through distance learning and extension studies (which was introduced in 1970 and has since grown in popularity with a population of about 10,000) cuts across the country, region, gender and differently-abled (University of Zambia-Strategic Plan, 2013-2017: Xi).

Upgrading of qualifications can give one an advantage in career advancement. It can be arguably stated that employment is not easy to come by hence in trying to keep up with its reputation, the University of Zambia saw a gap and introduced the Graduate School of Business to cutter to the business community/professionals. This was to be done through the use of a blended online program that would see students advance their careers without any disruptions to their daily working lives. Online learning for the purpose of this study is defined as learning which takes place via a Web browser on the internet, intranet and extranet (Yee, 2011). Online learning environments allow students to learn through Web based interface where the course materials are available online and students interact with their peers and instructors through online communication tools (Yee, 2011). There is generally a synergy between the learner, instructor and environment.

Therefore, the number of students opting for the blended e-learning program has been on the increase and this is expected to continue in the years to come. Tang and Chaw (2016) referred to blended learning as a learning delivery approach which blends face-to-face classroom learning and online learning. A pre-liminary interview with UNZA GSB shows that the

program started with 114 enrolments and has since grown to over 800 registered students. As with many online programs, students usually interact with course materials, the lecturer and their peers through a learning management system.

Factors such as the lack of communication, failure of online students to interact with their peers and busy individual schedules continue to impede the students' ability to perform effectively in online learning environments (Yee, 2011). It is for this reason that most researchers have emphasized on blended learning in recent findings. The use of online technologies as a blended strategy in higher education programs offers challenges and opportunities for all students who happen to come from different backgrounds.

1.3 Significance of the study

The principle behind the research was as a result of the various queries and complaints raised by students that were going unanswered. This was bordering on customer service which is an integral part of any business and should be at the helm of an institution's priority. Therefore, the various challenges expressed by the students showed lack of customer satisfaction which could potentially have a negative effect on future enrolments at UNZA's GSB.

A lesson transcript by Paul McKinney on the study.com website states customer service as being an act of taking care of the customer's needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during, and after the customer's requirements are met while customer satisfaction entails whether those needs have been met which in turn leads to customer loyalty.

The grounded theory model based on consistency will ensure uniform customer service and a solid structure in place to deal with the challenges faced by the students. In addition to the above, an SLA which should be visible to all will further ensure a proper complaint handling process with timelines attached hence promoting efficiency on the part of the school and satisfaction on the part of the students.

Furthermore, the above will be important because it is hoped that the findings will provide administrators of the program with probable solutions to mitigate the challenges experienced which will be of benefit for future intakes as well as the school as a whole. Eventually, this will result in the smooth running of the blended e-learning program.

1.4 Scope

The scope of this research is suggesting a theory/model as a solution to curtail the many challenges faced by students on the Blended Program at UNZA's GSB. It is also aimed at

investigating challenges experienced by the GSB in administering the program. This research will focus on two intakes only (November 2016 and May 2016 cohorts).

1.5 Statement of the Problem

E-learning is a rapidly emerging concept facilitating learners in education. Continuous advancements in information technologies are enhancing the possibilities of its growth (Bell, 2007). Therefore, understanding factors in successful online course experiences can provide suggestions for instructors and students to promote improved learning experiences (Rodriguez et al, 2008 NB). This has however come with its own challenges during implementation and delivery in tertiary education.

In 2015, the University of Zambia introduced the blended online learning programme in the graduate school of business which would carter for the informal and formal sectors at both graduate and post graduate levels. This was necessitated to meet the growing demands of a business school that would yield very good results and command respect in the corporate world. The above was in consideration of the fact that the only other public university offering business courses was in the copperbelt region, it was imperative that the same be introduced at the highest institution of learning to increase opportunities for those opting to advance their careers in business. The general overview by most employers places very high importance on qualifications obtained from the University of Zambia. Therefore, the introduction received overwhelming response from the public as a result of the confidence and importance placed on the institution.

The administration of the programs would either be 100% online or through a blended system which would be 75% online and 25% of face-to-face lectures. This was seen to be very ideal by the students as they would have a chance to choose what best suits their schedules without any disruptions. Moreover, classes were set to be after working hours, a clear indication of who the target market was.

However, the program has seen a lot of challenges since its inception. The fact that Distance learning is not new to UNZA as it has a fully-fledged and functioning Institute of Distance learning, one would expect this to be easy for the GSB administration. This has however not been so as evidenced by the various inconsistencies and challenges experienced by the students registered in the various programs.

The program scheduled to run for 18 months has exceeded it’s timeline and scheduled block releases have been constantly changing which has proved to be of great concern to students in various programs. This goes against the 2013-2017 University of Zambia strategic plan

vision which is to be a provider of world class services in higher education and knowledge generation.

1.6 Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to highlight the challenges experienced by the students and identify challenges faced by the Graduate School of Business in administering (implementing) the e-learning blended program at the University of Zambia and come up with a suggested model solution.

Therefore, the following objectives and questions were outlined in an attempt to come up with solutions for the research problem.

1.7 Research Objectives

i. To identify the challenges experienced by students and the Graduate School of Business in the e-learning blended program.

ii. To propose a model that would help mitigate the challenges experienced in (i).

1.8 Research Questions

i. What are the challenges being faced in the blended e-learning program by both the students and the Graduate School of Business?

ii. How can we address the challenges in (i) using a suitable model similar to that used in public universities in developing countries with similar challenges to UNZA?

1.9 Research Contributions

In this study, the major contribution was from the baseline line study that showed the challenges experienced by students and GSB administration while the other was the model suggested to curtail or best handle the challenges established.

1.10 Organisation of the Dissertation

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the research with a brief background of Blended Online Learning. The motivation and aims of the research are provided with the statement of the problem clearly outlined. The chapter concludes by giving the outline of the thesis. Chapter 2 is the review of the literature where a comprehensive review and background of e-learning, blended learning and similar research works are given.
The methodology for developing a model to deal with the challenges is clearly given in chapter 3 and Chapter 4 shows the results for the baseline study and model implementation. The thesis concludes with chapter 5 which is an in-depth discussion of the results of the research in comparison to the current situation at UNZA's GSB.

1.11 Summary

This chapter provided the basic introduction of the work in this dissertation which is E-learning and Blended online learning which were adequately defined. The motivation, significance and scope of the work in this study are also outlined. The statement of the problem which necessitated the study was then given with the aims and the research contributions outlined. The chapter closed with a brief outline of the dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights E-learning, 100% online learning, face-to face learning and blended learning environments and further discusses student and lecturer characteristics. It also looks at the different types of Learning Management Systems in relation to Blended learning and also points out the importance of e-learning in general. Further, a review of related works on the implementation of newly introduced programs in other universities that are similar to the University of Zambia in blended learning is given.

2.2 Review of Literature

2.2.1 E-Learning Environments

Over the past decade, there has been substantial Information and Communications Technology(ICT) development aimed at providing learning and teaching to a wider group of learners around the world (Kisanga and Ireson, 2015).The information and communication technology revolution is transforming the way the 21st century education is being delivered. This transformation is facilitated by the emergence and convergence of modern digital technologies (Olelewe, 2014). The quality of learning is dependent on how a learner interacts with their learning environment. Institutions have increasingly diversified and the modes of delivery have also expanded (OECD, 2012). Therefore, since the traditional mode of delivery is not well suited for those in employment; universities are developing more flexible ways of reaching more learners. It is for this purpose that because of the growing focus on global education, the University of Zambia introduced its first online learning in different programs comprising of 100% e-learning and a blended online learning to graduate and post graduate clients. The number of student enrolment for the online study has more than tripled since its inception in 2015.

There is widespread recognition that skills and human capital have become the backbone of economic prosperity and social well-being in the 21st century (OECD, 2012). E-Learning is outlined as playing a key role in the drive towards increasing skills levels. Students' demands are also changing hence several researchers have made the assertion that online learning is a tool that can improve teaching and learning skills but its effectiveness depends on how the tool is used. Current trends in e-learning is all about knowing the requirements of the learners and being able to provide for them (Naidoo, 2014). Internet based online instructional delivery is now the fastest growing type or sector of higher education in many countries

(Allen and Seaman, 2011). Moreover, Basheka, Lubega and Baguma (2016) authoritatively outlined that Online learning is compelling educators to confront existing assumptions of teaching and learning in higher education. The technologically sophisticated student community and the benefits provided by the use of computers make it imperative for leaders of higher education to be challenged on how to position their institutions to meet the connectivity demands of prospective students.

E-Learning is not a new concept; it traces its origin back to the provision of distance education by a small group of educators aimed at the underserved population. However, with the introduction of the internet the practice of undertaking e-learning got into the mainstream of higher education (Basheka et al, 2005). According to Bell (2007), in 2003 the UK government launched an e-learning strategy in which it recognized its many benefits. It is an effective way of providing an individualized learning experience, while also offering opportunity for collaborative learning. Online course experience eases computer anxiety and improves computer proficiency. Dadzie (2009) in his thesis submission confirmed that research carried out by Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006) revealed that online instructions are welcomed by students because it provides learners with convenience and autonomy. Chew (2007) in her final PhD thesis submission also alluded to the fact that a number of researchers have indicated that online learning enables institutions and instructors to reach new learners at a distance, increases convenience and expands educational opportunities.

E-Learning offers a unique flexibility and control over the learning experience. The learners can decide when and where to study, which modules they feel like doing at any particular time and they can also set the pace of their learning, something that is very ideal for busy professionals and those looking to advance their careers. Flexibility refers to the classical mantra of e-learning being learning for anyone, anytime and anywhere. The factor concerns many issues such as whether students should be allowed to learn at self-pace and take the examinations when they want and if they should be allowed to choose the medium of content delivery. Above all, flexibility in assignment pace and course delivery has proven to lead to good results (Mashra and Mohammed, 2012). A good example is the Herriot-Watt University that offers online courses to postgraduate students who study at their own pace, anywhere in the world and write examinations when ready. This has proven to be a very successful and highly sought after program by so many busy professionals.

Moreover, e-learning also provides relatively anonymous learning environment so there's less pressure to perform well in front of colleagues as might be the case in a classroom style

training. This safe environment allows individuals to tackle very personal issues. “Further research by Shapira and Youlino (2001) and Dixon, Pelliccione and Dixon (2005) also maintained that students were highly motivated to participate in an online electronic learning environment” (Dadzie, 2009).In addition to the above, the advantages of online learning have been highlighted in a number of studies. “For instance, Bourne, Harris and Mayadas(2005) believed that the sloan consortium’s quality scale and breadth of online learning relied on approaches that gave students flexibility to learn anywhere, anytime. The Sloan Consortium is a USA based organization that provides online, institutional and professional leadership in higher education” (Yee, 2011). Papp (2000) also concluded that students enjoyed online learning as it enabled them to learn anytime and anywhere. Online learning has increased flexibility in meeting the needs of the students for learning, independent of time, place or circumstances, and has turned out to be a solution for the increasing demand for lifelong learning.

Ozkan and Koseler (2009) in their presentation on Multi-Dimensional Evaluation of E-Learning Systems in the higher education context suggested a systematic and comprehensive model comprising both social and technical issues of e-learning in the name of HELAM(Hexagonal E-Learning Assessment Model). It proposes a multi-dimensional approach for the evaluation of a Learning Management System using six dimensions. The proposed dimensions included; service quality, system quality, content quality, learner perspective, instructor attitude and supportive issues. Aguti et al(2013) simplified it as a focus on measurements of students’ perceived satisfaction with the learning management system in higher education context. They further summed up the study as having concluded that there was a close relationship between students’ perceived satisfaction and each of the six dimensions of the Hexagonal model. However, universities remain reluctant to implement the technology. The most common reasons being a sometimes impersonal delivery method or overly automated assessment processes and concerns about possible isolation of learners. Despite these reservations, online education has grown rapidly in recent years, fueled by a greater demand for personal development and learning (Bell, 2007).

2.2.2 100% Online Learning Environment

Gilbert (2015) in her thesis submission categorized online learning into three central groups namely; fully web based, blended or hybrid format, and traditional courses using web based supplements. Fully web based courses are conducted entirely on the Internet with no face to face interaction, all aspects of the course being conducted in an online learning environment.

She further went on to state that Online course construction is as diverse as traditional classroom settings hence developing and teaching an online course that benefits students and yields positive learning outcomes is a complex undertaking which involves communication between the learner, the content and the lecturer as one of the most crucial elements to an effective online course.

Online instructors can orchestrate the class environment to increase the interaction between the learner and the instructor and the learner and other learners through both synchronous and asynchronous interactions (Gilbert, 2015). Epignosis LLC **(**2014**)** alludes Synchronous learning as any learning tool that is in real-time, such as instant messaging that allows students and teachers to ask and answer questions immediately and depicts the main benefit as enabling students to communicate with others throughout the learning process. However, the disadvantage to this is that it happens at a particular time hence students need to attend in real time using the web. The other type alluded to by the same author is asynchronous learning which can be carried out when both learner and lecturer are offline via the web, email, messages or any community forums. This can create a feeling of total isolation for the learner hence for any effective online learning; both synchronous and asynchronous learning should apply.

Although online learning is flexible and has no boundary in terms of location for the learner, the University of Washington (2013) further highlighted the disadvantages as follows:

Some students may struggle. Online courses may be more effective for self-directed learners. They appear to work best for students who are mature, well organized, and have good time-management skills.

Community. Online courses may not be able to replicate the vibrant intellectual and social community fostered by in-person education. In particular, online students may miss out on the many networking and mentoring opportunities available to on-campus students. However, in well-designed online classes, the opposite can be true—students who rarely speak up in face-to-face classes are drawn into conversations through mandatory online discussion board posts and peer-responses.

Instructor workload. Faculty members often need training to use technology tools such as lecture-capture systems and learning management systems (LMSs), representing an additional time investment on their part. In online courses, instructors often seek to compensate for the lack of in-person interaction by maintaining a high degree of communication with students, which can be very time-consuming.

Student support. Some students, including those with disabilities, may struggle to use online tools and will likely need technological support.

Technical problems. It is inevitable for technology problems to arise. Servers can crash and cut students off from a class, individual personal computers can malfunction, and problems may arise with the site or LMS used to host the class. This presents a challenge not only for the instructor and their students, but also the department or university responsible for providing administrative support and sufficient IT staff.

Access. Some potential students have limited or no access to computers, the Internet, and/or assistive technology.

Higher education providers have become increasingly aware of the diversity of their current and potential learners and are moving to provide a range of options for their engagement. The increasingly flexible delivery modes available for university students provide multiple pathways and opportunities for those seeking further education (Gillet-swan, 2017).

2.2.3 Face-to-Face Learning Environment

Face-to Face learning is basically a live interaction between a student and an educator which requires physical presence of both. This has been the mode of delivery in most institutions before the shift to online learning came into play. It has proved to have its own merits and demerits. The University of Washington (2013) summarized both as follows:

The Merits

Gauging learning. Ideally, due to the synchronous format, faculty members can gauge their students' level of engagement, attentiveness, and comprehension. Student questions provide the instructor immediate feedback and can shape how that class session's material is presented.

Collaborative environment. Traditional classrooms often create a collaborative environment where discussion and dialogue can thrive. Synchronous peer-to-peer and student-faculty conversations allow students to receive immediate individual feedback and mentorship, to hone their speaking and argumentation skills, and to form lasting interpersonal relationships.

Student motivation. Some students find face-to-face classes particularly engaging because they can talk to their professors in person and get immediate responses to their questions or concerns. Face-to-face classes also provide a structure for students, in which class time becomes a routine part of their schedule.

Student access and support. Both students and campus services are most familiar with this format.

Faculty experience. Most faculty members are very familiar and comfortable with this format.

The Demerits

The pace. In many face-to-face classes, faculty members cannot provide individualized or customized learning experiences. Students who need extra time to understand certain concepts may be left behind.

Impediments to engagement. Students may be embarrassed about or intimidated by asking clarification questions in person during class. Additionally, the face-to-face setting can encourage an overreliance on lectures, limiting opportunities for active learning and often hampering student engagement.

Scheduling. Students must arrange their schedules so they can be there in person, which may limit access to classes for those working at part-time or full-time jobs.

Large-class challenges. In large face-to-face classes with over 100 students, classroom management issues can be especially difficult and distractive through continuous movements and discussions of other students.

Technical problems. When problems using technology in classrooms and labs arise as most of these use projectors especially for large classes, immediate technical support is often not available to the instructor.

2.2.4 Blended Learning Environments

A number of institutions around the world have introduced online learning systems as a platform for the implementation of e-learning that encourages independent learning and forms the basis for blended learning. Olelewe (2014) describes Blended learning as that which encompasses various event based activities such as self-pace learning, live e-learning and face-to-face classroom learning. He further went on to state that the value of self-pace learning and live e-learning is that it can teach the learner appropriately, providing the right skills at the right time as well as enable learners to collaborate with one another, share ideas and ask questions in real time. The recent literature review as highlited by Atef and Medhat (2015) exhibits two trends in blended learning definitions and research: (1) educational-focus and (2) technological-focus which is seen as a way of preparing students for the 21st century workplace, that is increasingly based on information and services. Rajkoomar (2015) in her final P hd submission quoted Beyers (2009) as having alluded to the fact that modern ICT intensive organizations expect their employers to have digital skills hence graduates tend to be underprepared for the demand of the current workplace that demands competencies such

as creative thinking, group problem solving and decision making. Blended Learning has therefore filled in the gap and equipped students accordingly.

Majority of researchers and trainers have suggested blended learning as a more effective teaching and learning approach (Klein et al, 2006). Collins and Moonen (2001) asserted that because of the combination in blended learning, it can lead to teaching and learning transpiring both in the classroom and in an online learning environment; thus within blended environments the online element becomes an excellent supplement to traditional classroom teachings. Mutula et al (2006) presented findings of the design and implementation of an online information literacy module for first year students at the University of Botswana. Findings generally revealed that impartation of information literacy through the online mode could improve students' competencies, perhaps more than the face to face instruction approach. Furthermore, respondents preferred a blended instruction approach to a single learning mode. Finally, they concluded that online instructions do not necessarily reduce the workload for staff and students, and pointed out that more time will be needed to assign and administer the course. Their findings as sighted by the above mentioned author corroborate similar findings by Tallent Runnels et al (2006) and conceicao (2006).

Other researchers, such as Kyei-Blankson and Ntuli (2008), provided further evidence on blended learning when they studied the perceptions of 650 students enrolled in a blended course in an arts college in the United States of America. The researchers concluded that "synchronous online discussions may enhance interaction, elaboration, active learning as well as equal learning opportunities". These findings highlight the value that online learning could add to a blended learning environment. Basheka, Lubega and Baguma (2016) further quoted Oliver and Trigwell (2005) as having asserted that Literature has shown a variety of ways of undertaking blended-learning and several frameworks have been developed to enable this to happen. It should be noted that blended-learning varies from place to place, from institution to institution, technology to technology, and also the existing infrastructure and resources. Hence institutions cannot simply pick and use the existing blended-learning models without taking into consideration their environments and the perspective for use.

Although e-learning has become a household word amongst many academics in universities both in the developed and developing countries, there is still inadequate research focusing on the development of a comprehensive model to define, assess and measure the effectiveness of blended e-learning (Aguti, et al. 2013). Therefore, to gain the real advantages of blended learning, it is essential to have a proper structure of the course and clearly defined face-to-

face contact time and online learning time (Hapuarachchi, 2016).Vaughn et al(2017) quotes KTH Royal Institute of Technology as having emphasizes on blended learning being a strategic initiative aligned with the mission and vision of the institution. Existing literature shows blended learning as having different definitions as well as descriptions. However, many studies seem to agree that blended learning combines the strength of face-to-face and e-learning to create the most efficient learning environment (Mthebe and Raphael, 2013).

2.2.5 Lecturer and Student Characteristics

Online learning may involve activities such as investigations, critical reading debates (peer reviews) and responses to lecturers. Therefore, the lecturer is responsible for ensuring active participation from students in the e-learning environment.

Dadzie (2009) in his submission quoted Goodyear et al (2001) as having argued that engaging in online learning and teaching poses a significant challenge for academics and universities. They suggest that being a competent online teacher requires a new and different role for academics and mentions some competencies such as IT expertise, information handling expertise, teaching and learning skills, time management and team building skills as necessary pre-requisites. The challenge is thus for faculty members to gain the skills necessary to become effective online instructors.

Designing an online course requires more time from the instructor because it involves organizing context, presenting information that addressed different learning styles and providing lecturer notes in advance. Neo (2004) summed up the role of an effective online lecturer as follows: 1) provide instructions and pre-requisite knowledge to students, 2) prescribe the group project and content, 3) take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating task and process outcomes of students, 4) act as external consultant to the groups , 5) use web technology to modify curriculum and update materials as well as keep in touch with students , 6) verify web links of the students in research papers and 7) assess students formatively. The lecturer plays a very important role for students to cope in an online learning environment.

An important stakeholder in online teaching and learning is the student. Students' needs and demands should be taken into consideration when designing and implementing e-learning. This is because they largely determine its direction by virtue of their participation. Neo (2004) further described the actions of a student group in an online learning environment as being able to: 1) be autonomous and solely responsible for learning outcomes and internal group tasks, 2) conduct and acquire research information using internet and 3) solve and

manage group dynamics and conflicts and work cooperatively with team members and group leaders. The brightest and most motivated students may prefer to learn in an individual competitive environment rather than sharing their knowledge with less motivated, less bright students. Harrison (2004) argues that age and prior computer experience are factors that influence how students cope with an online environment.

Therefore, behaviors such as planning, monitoring and reflections need to be nurtured. Learning motivation among students and lecturers to change their attitude towards online learning activities must be extensively trained and enforced through a series of trainings, workshops, seminars and others.

2.2.6 Learning Management System

Learning Management Systems are increasingly being utilized to facilitate online learning in many universities around the globe. How well an LMS is utilized can impact on the student's learning. Therefore, training is crucial for students on how to use the system.

The main purpose of a Learning Management System is among others to facilitate, content development and delivery, class and user management, assessments delivery and tests, communication, electronic assignment management, submission, tracking, grading and feedback (Yee, 2011).There are different types of LMS and among the notable ones include Moodle, Tuubi and Astria Learning.

Moodle is a learning platform originally designed by Martin Dougiamas in 2002 and is a robust open-source e-learning platform which was later used and developed in the next years by global collaborative effort of international community. It is designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalized learning environments (Benta et al., 2014). Moodle stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment and is available in various languages as well as very popular globally (Guragain, 2016).

The preceding author further highlighted another platform called **Tuubi** which is a portal in Metropolia dedicated to connect students with the administration and teachers. It is a multifunctional platform which allows students to get information about what is going on at the university while managing their courses. While multi-functionality is an asset of Tuubi, it makes its user interface complicated and students will need some time to get used to using it.

Astria Learning which is the one currently being used by the University of Zambia is according to its website and as sighted on the best of Zambia website, a cloud based Learning

Management System that is designed to help manage all learning activities systematically and develop the learning of students and the faculty. It allows one to automate the administrative tasks of tracking courses in a catalog, recording and tracking student data, charting a student's progress and delivering e-learning to students. The system is built with considerable emphasis on security and has many enterprise security features in place to protect clients. This LMS has a digital library of over 170,000 of content material and partners with institutions around the world to meet the needs of students, faculty and administrators.

2.2.7 E-Learning Infrastructure

E-learning relies on technology: It requires hardware, software, and network infrastructure. Most e-learning environments today are Web-based, i.e., they are accessed via Web browsers (using HTTP) over a TCP/IP network such as the Internet or an intranet (Piotrowski, 2010**).** The author goes on to state that the functionality of e-learning platforms typically includes access to learning content and tests, communication and collaboration tools for students, and course management and assessment facilities for instructors. E-learning platforms may also include administrative functionality or interfaces to administrative systems for managing student admissions and enrollment for resource planning, accounting, etc.

2.2.8 Importance of e-learning

A large number of students who graduate from senior secondary schools cannot go to reputable universities creating a gap between the high demand for better education and limited resources available. E-learning is believed to be a promising approach since it offers students ways to interact with experienced teachers and professors. This helps to broaden the scale of higher education.

The level of e-learning adoption in developing countries cannot be matched to that of developed countries because of the lack of facilities such as infrastructure technology, low connectivity and low levels of training. Nonetheless, developing countries need to bridge this digital divide by pursuing vigorously any home grown solutions which maximize the use of infrastructure and technology (Dadzie, 2009) and enhance the quality of online learning offered to all.

Benchmarking as a method for quality enhancement has until now not been very commonly used in higher education (Ossiannilsson, 2012) and especially not with regard to e-learning. Quality assurance, quality indicators, benchmarks and critical success factors for e-learning have not been taken seriously into account in regular quality assurance within higher education, though few methods have so far focused on parameters to quality assurance

governing e-learning. One of the sides of Quality Management points to the effectiveness of change management, higher academic standards, increased number of staff and student satisfaction (Pavla, 2014). Nevertheless, criteria based on ease, new forms of interaction, flexibility, accessibility and personalization and other pedagogical aspects relevant for e-learning are missing. Additionally, there is a lack of experiences and theoretical framework about the value and impact of benchmarking e-learning in higher education (Ossiannilsson, 2010a, 2011).

Tarus et al (2015) in their journal entitled challenges of implementing e-learning in kenya summarised the importance/benefits of e-learning as follows:

- Ease of access to information,
- The potential for interactivity amongst and between learners and teachers,
- Enables conduct of lessons from a remote location and extends geographical access to education,
- Content is more timely, consistent and dependable with potential for re-use,
- Combination of both synchronous and asynchronous learning,
- Supports student centered e-learning paradigm and students can learn at their own pace,
- Increases access to learning and training opportunity,
- E-learning lowers costs and improves cost-effectiveness of educational resources,
- Offers the combination of education with work and family life,
- Scalability: e-learning solutions are highly scalable,
- Facilitates the management of student records and tracking students' progress.

2.3 Related Works

A study by Basheka, Lubega and Baguma (2016) entitled Blended-learning approaches and the teaching of monitoring and evaluation programmes in African universities: Unmasking the UTAMU approach showed the implementation of the M&E program at the Ugandan Technology and Management University by conceptualizing blended learning and providing a discussion for e-learning trends. It further went on to explain the UTAMU and model to teach the course by use of a block release model. It also explains why this model could be used in African universities. The critical success factors are highlighted in form of policy, scheduling, planning and resources. Despite the challenges on infrastructure inadequacy having being highlighted, the research did not look at the consistency of the implementation and how it is perceived by the receiving end who is the student which is the gap that this

research intends to fill up. For example, the research did not give enough literature on the amount of time given to students for the first and second block releases and whether these timelines were practical for them.

Another study by Abrahams and Witbool (2016) entiltled; A Realist Assessment of the Implementation of Blended Learning in a South African Higher Education Context used a realist evaluation approach and focused on the implementation of strategies aimed at showing how lifelong learning opportunities, conceptualized and provided in flexible ways, could support innovation in learning and teaching in order to enhance access and success to learning by working people. The study highlighted the overall nature of the intervention, the experiences of student and staff regarding access to the LMS. However, the study fell short in its literature concerning the overall experience and how the mode of delivery was as its concentration was on the infrastructural challenges of the students when accessing the learning portal. Therefore, there was no way of knowing whether the needs of the intended target were being met or not. This is the gap this research endeavoring to highlight.

Vaughan et al (2017) conducted a study titled Blended Learning from Design to Evaluation in order to compare and contrast four international faculty development programmes for blended learning so as to understand the benefits, challenges, lessons learnt and recommendations from such initiatives. The literature gathered highlighted the biggest challenge to be a lack of common institutional definition and understanding of blended learning as well as lack of time and resources to support faculty in the design of their course. The benefit of the faculty development programme was that faculty members who participated were more reflective of their teaching practice and began to make adjustments from a content provider to a designer and facilitator of learning to the students. The key recommendation from the study was that a faculty development program for blended learning needs to be clearly aligned with the institution's vision and mission. Although the study was very significant in bringing out the challenges and benefits concerning its delivery and resources availability for the four universities under study, the literature provided was very inadequate regarding the perception of the students on how the blended courses were delivered with the concerns highlighted focusing more on the faculty's end. The study focused more on educational policies on blended learning at macro (national) level hence this research will fill gap at the micro (institution) level and highlight whether the students' needs are being met.

A study titled Implementing Blended Learning at a Developing University: Obstacles in the way by Tshabalala, Ndeya-Ndereya and Merwe (2014) was necessitated to investigate the perceptions academic staff have about blended learning and to identify challenges that they are facing that have affected the adoption of blended learning in the faculty of education at a developing university in South Africa. The study offered several advantages to the academic staff such as accessibility of information, universal connectivity enabling the formation of communities of inquiry and innovative teaching strategies. However, the limitations of the research related to attitudes towards innovation and change, time required for implementation, workload, level of institutional support, available technology infrastructure, instructional delivery methods and quality assurance. The literature collected managed to bring to the fore most of the challenges encountered by the faculty staff. It also highlighted the infrastructural limitations that students were encountering in the blended learning program. The study however, did not give a comprehensive perception on the challenges that students on the program were facing hence this research intends to fill that gap.

Oghenevwede (2015) conducted a study on the Adoption of Blended Learning into the Nigerian Education System which highlighted the benefits of blended learning and how some of its advantages could be used to reduce the many challenges facing the Nigerian educational system. The literature highlighted some of the challenges as being poor power supply, inadequate skilled manpower and poor internet connectivity as some of the many limitations while identified prospects included reduced cost on expansion and maintenance of the infrastructure, improved safety of lives and properties in school as well as a reduction in national illiteracy levels. The researcher endeavored to give an elaborate perspective of the meaning of blended learning and its many benefits. He further gave a number of recommendations in the implementation and adoption of the aforementioned into the whole education system. The literature fell short in sampling individual universities but looked at it on national level. Therefore, this research will fill in the gap and highlight in detail challenges faced by the actual staff and students that are part of blended learning program.

The above studies were all of great significance to this research as they outlined the importance of blended e-learning and how it works best for those undertaking various programs. They also looked at the characteristics that both the students and the Lecturers should possess to effectively adapt as well as the various advantages associated with e-learning. However, all the above studies fell short as no focus was given on the challenges or the root cause that various students may face both in the formal and informal sectors while

undertaking the programs delivered via blended e-learning. The preceding Table 1 summarises all related works refered to above.

Table 1: Related Works

Title	Year	Authors	Findings	Gaps
Blended-learning approaches and the teaching of monitoring and evaluation programmes in African universities: **Unmasking the UTAMU Approach**	2016	Basheka, B., Lubega, J.T. and Baguma, R	Suggested use of block release model with success factors on why African universities should adopt it.	the research did not give enough literature on whether the model was being used within stipulated time and how it was perceived by the students
A Realist Assessment of the Implementation of Blended Learning in a South African Higher Education Context	2016	Abrahams, M.A. and Witbooi, S.	Concentration was on the infrastructural challenges of the students when accessing the learning portal.	the study fell short in its literature concerning the overall experience and what the mode of delivery was
Blended Learning from Design to Evaluation	2017	Vaughan, N., Reali, A., Stenbom, S., Van Vuuren, M.J. & MacDonald, D.	Key recommendation from the study was that a faculty development program for blended learning needs to be clearly aligned with the institution's	Focused on educational policies on blended learning at macro level and not micro level

			vision and mission.	
Implementing Blended Learning at a Developing University: Obstacles in the way	2014	Tshabalala, M., Ndeya-Ndereya, C. and Merwe, T.	offered several advantages to the academic staff	did not give a comprehensive perception on the challenges that students on the program were facing
Adoption of Blended Learning into the Nigerian Education System: Prospects and Challenges	2015	Oghenevwede,R.I.	Gave an elaborate perspective of the meaning of blended learning and its many benefits and recommended its adoption in the Nigerian Education System.	The literature took a national level and fell short in sampling individual universities and their perception of blended learning.

2.4 Summary

The chapter gave a comprehensive overview of e-learning environments, blended learning and some of the models that have been used in other universities in other developing countries. A futher look at the Face-to-Face learning environment in comparison to 100% learning was also highlighted as well as a slight insight on the insfrastructure used in the delivery of E-learning. The chapter further discussed the pros and cons of all the forms of learning environments mentioned above and concluded with a number of related works sighted highlighting the knowledge gap which this research is endeavoring to fill in.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter defines the research methodology with details of the research setting, design, population and sampling clearly given. The procedure of designing the data collection instrument is outlined as well as the technique used in analyzing the data.

As there has been no documented evidence of any previous external research into UNZA's Graduate School of Business implementation and challenges of its e-learning blended program, an exploratory inductive approach using a grounded theory was adopted for this approach. Grounded theory is a well-established inductive process for developing theoretical models with a high level of rigor (Bell, 2006). This is important in order to gain understanding of all the concerns that all stakeholders involved in its design; development and delivery of the e-learning blended program have had overtime since its inception. In addition, it was imperative to gain an insight on the students' perception regarding the delivery and administration of the blended e-learning program.

The intention of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the UNZA GSB blended programme and identify challenges experienced by both the administration and students on the blended learning program so as to suggest a model that would help avert the challenges.

3.2 Research Setting

The research was based at a Zambian University (UNZA) that has a diverse population of over 20,000 students, including over 1,000 from the graduate school of business. In this study, the sample was drawn from the GSB students, Lecturers teaching courses at GSB and its administration only.

3.3 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research design to collect data from participants. This approach produces a detailed description of participants' feelings, opinions, experiences and interprets

the meanings of their actions.Therefore, it is not statistical and it incorporates multiple realities (Rahman, 2016). In addition to the above, qualitative research is good at simplifying and managing data without destroying complexity and context allowing for discovery and gives deeper insight to people's perceptions and the complexity of their interpretations (Atieno, 2009). The aforementioned was adequate for the study in question as it was highlighting general perceptions on the challenges and implementation of the Blended Learning Program. Table 2 below shows the research design matrix that was used.

3.4 Research Design Matrix

Table 2: Research Design Matrix

Research Questions	**Objectives**	**Sampling and Data collection**	**Data collection Tools and Analysis**
What are the challenges being faced by both students and the school in the administration of the program?	To determine challenges faced by the students and administration in the blended e-learning program.	Simple random sampling with use of survey questionnaires that will have both open ended and closed questions for the students. Purposive sampling with use of survey questionnaires for the GSB administration.	Content analysis Content analysis and Thematic analysis by coding using themes
How can we address the challenges in (i) using a suitable model similar to that used in public universities in developing countries with similar challenges to UNZA?	To suggest a model working in other developing countries to deliver the program to its students.	Simple random sampling with use of survey questionnaires.	Content analysis.

3.4.1 Ethical Issues Consideration

The researcher adhered to the five basic principles of research ethics by obtaining informed consent from respondents who were assured of total confidentiality and anonymity. Further the researcher ensured that the risk of harm was minimised by avoiding deceptive practices when designing the research and providing participants with the right to withdraw from the

research at any time. Data collection for this study involved students, lecturers and GSB administration completing questionnaires. In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality no names where collected. Questionnaires collected were kept secure by the researcher.

3.4.2 Population and Sampling

The methods and techniques selected for the study was based on both probability and non-probability sampling. Under probability sampling, the study employed simple random sampling while under non-probability; purposive sampling was used to select respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 100 students while purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 22 respondents comprising of 7 members of staff (full time) from GSB and 15 lecturers that currently teach a course at GSB. These were purposively selected as they are involved in the day to day running and administration of the blended program. Table 3 below summarises the above mentioned criteria used.

Table 3: Population and Sampling

Population Sampled	Questionnaires Distributed	Sampling Technique
Students	100	Simple Random
Teaching Staff (Lectures)	15	Purposive
Support Staff (Administration)	7	Purposive
Total	122	

3.4.3 Data Collection Methods and Process of Collecting Data

Data for this study was collected from 01st April, 2018 to 13th July, 2018. Data was collected using both primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire containing both open ended and closed ended questions was used to gather relevant primary data from students and the GSB administration/Lecturers. The inclusion of open ended questions was meant to elicit detailed responses from the selected respondents. The above data collection methods were used to collect primary data. Secondary data was collected through desk research from various sources such as the internet and other relevant publications.These included published and unpublished literature on the topic as well as from journals, newspapers, books, websites, magazines case studies or any relevant sources. Primary data was collected from the selected respondents at the University of Zambia's Graduate School of Business.

3.4.4 Data Analysis

The study categorized qualitative data thematically and analyzed it using Microsoft excel.This is widely used for content analysis which is generally a way of interpretating and coding of textual material.

3.4.5 Implementation

A continued consistent approach to the block release model combined with the hexagonal e-learning assessment model was adopted based on the literature review in chapter two and the findings of the study covered under objective one. The combination of the two takes into consideration a consistent approach to the service delivery while continuously getting students' perceptions on the blended program. Figure 1 below is an illustration in form of an IOTM.

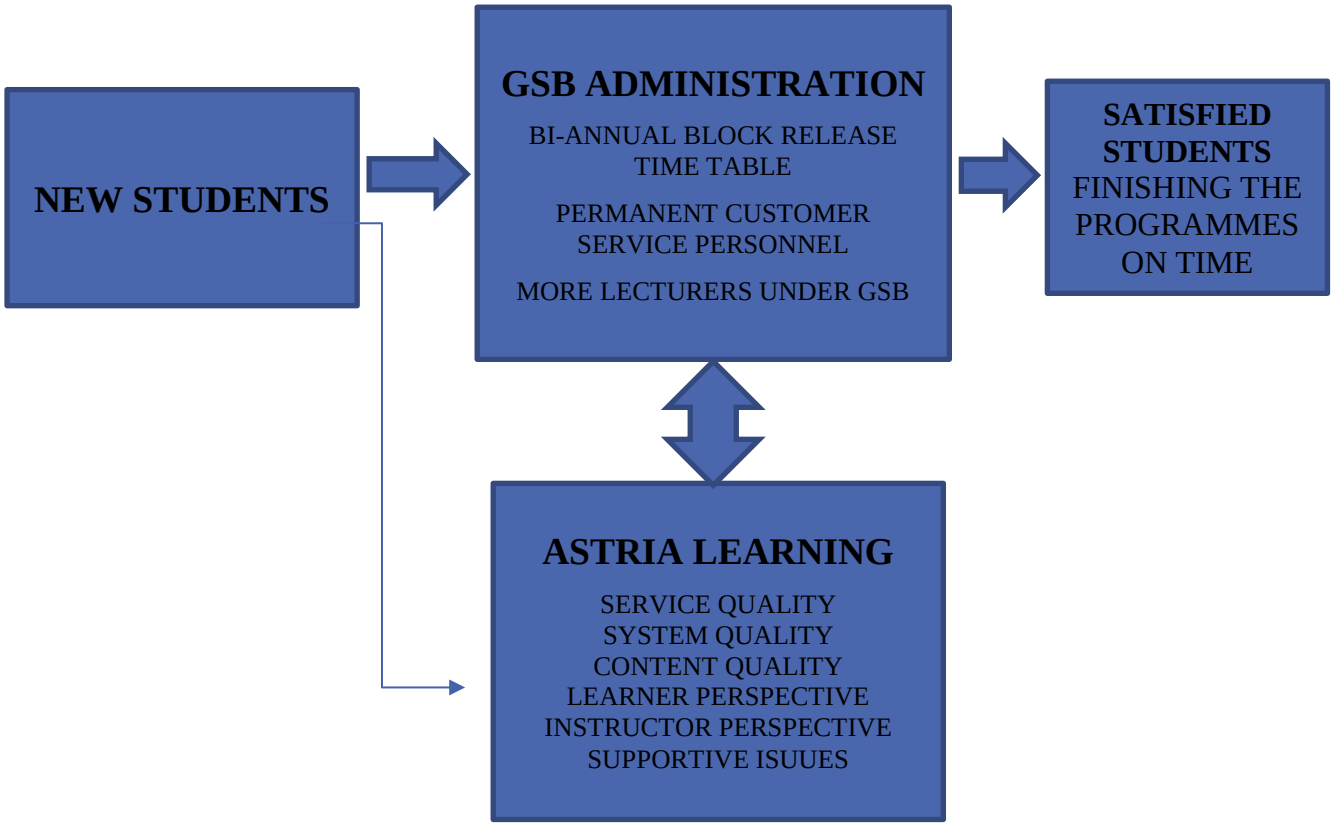

Figure 1: Input Output Transformation Model

3.5.7 Current Administration of the blended e-learning program

UNZA like UTAMU has adopted the block release model which schedules face to face first block release, self-pace learning, face to face second block release, self-pace learning and Examination. The Schedules are supposed to be prepared way in advance to allow students to get permission and attend various classes as well as write any tests that are administered. In addition, the continuous assessments are supposed to be ready before students seat for any

exams as the criteria is to get 50% and above of the CA failure to which one repeats the course. However, students rarely write their exams with full knowledge of their CA, the schedules of the block release are not consistent hence others fail to make it for classes at short notice and some exam results are released way beyond the stated service level agreement of one month with others having made available after various students' follow ups.

3.6 Limitations encountered

Collection of data from students was extremely slow as some of them are based outside Lusaka and the respondents picked were generally busy professionals. On the part of GSB, it was equally difficult to get timely responses as these are involved in the day to day running of the school hence finding time to accommodate the researcher was very limited. Therefore, several follow ups had to be done to get responses. Financial constraints may also have delayed the research process considering that the researcher is a self-sponsored student.

3.7 Summary

The chapter provided the definition of the methodology with details of the research setting, sample size, procedure of data collection and designing of the instrument outlined. In addition, a diagrammatic illustration of the research design matrix was given.

Furthermore, details of the models adopted and purpose of their adoption were highlighted with a summary in form of an IOTM shown.The chapter concluded with the current administration of the blended e-learning program as well as limitations that were encountered during the research.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by discussing the area of study, the response rate and then presents the research findings as outlined by the three categories of respondents starting with the students, lecturers then support staff.

4.2 Study Area

The research was carried out in Lusaka at The University of Zambia Great East Road Campus in the Graduate School of Business which was officially launched in August, 2015. The school is manned by 8 employees (The Director, Acting Assistant Registrar, the Secretary, Registry Personnel, Accounts Clerk, GSB Coordinator, 2 Full time Lecturers). This is the first full time business School at the highest institution of learning.

It offers various programs to those wanting to advance their careers in the area of business to both the undergraduate as well as post graduate students.

4.2.1 Response Rate

The response rate indicates the questionnaires issued and the ones that were returned to the researcher for analysis. Table 4 indicates the response rate of the study.

Table 4 : Response rate

Questionnaires	**Frequency**	**Percent (100%)**
Distributed	122	100
Returned Students (64) Lectures (10) Support Staff (5)	79	64.8
Response Rate	79/122	64.8

Table 4 above shows that 122 questionnaires were distributed and out of these, 79 were returned. These represent 64.8% of the distributed questionnaires. This implies that the response rate was adequate. According to Kothari (2004) a sample size of 30 is adequate for a study. Therefore, the 64.8% (79) was adequate for this study.

4.2.2 Bio Data for Students

The researcher wanted to find out the age of respondents, their sex, intake, employment status and the results were as shown in table 5 below:

Table 5: Bio data for students

Characteristics	n (%)
Gender	
Male	39 (61)
Female	25 (39)
Age group	
26-35	22 (34.4)
36-45	33 (51.5)
46-55	9 (14.1)
Education level	
Bachelor's Degree	30 (46.9)
Master's Degree	17 (26.6)
Professional qualification	
ZICA	8 (12.5)
CIM	9 (14.1)
Employment status	
Self-employed	5 (7.8)
Employed	59 (92.2)
Organization	
Private	26 (44.1)
Public	19 (32.2)
Parastatal	14 (23.7)
Current Position Held	
Inspector	15 (23.4)
Programs Officer	11 (17.2)
Administrative Assistant	7 (10.9)
Share transfer consultant	9 (14.12)
Information Security Specialist	10 (15.6)
Principal Electronic Government Procurement	5 (7.8)
General Manager	2 (10.9)
Intake	
May 2016	33 (51.6)
November 2016	31 (48.4)

Out of 100 respondents drawn from students, 39(61%) males and 25(39%) females' responses were received. Amongst these 22(34.4%) were between the age of 26 and 35, 33(51.5%) were between 36 and 45 years old while 9(14.1%) were between 46 and 55 years old.

The results above indicated that most of the respondents were between 36 and 45 years with the total number of males being more than that of females. It is worth noting that the majority of those enrolled are also between the ages of 36 and 45. As shown above, 59(92.2%) respondents were in formal employment while 5(7.8%) were self-employed. Amongst those employed 26(44.1%) were from the private sector, 19(32.2%) from the public sector and

14(23.7%) from the parastatal. The May 2016 cohorts had 33(51.6%) responses while the November 2016 cohorts had 31(48.4%) responses as shown above.

4.2.2.1 Learning Experience

The purpose of this section was to identify the actual learning experience from the students as this would give an insight on some of the challenges that they were experiencing, the actual time spent on GSB work as well as the program enrolled for.

Table 6: Learning experience

Variable	n (%)
Working hours per week	
11-20 hours	5 (6.25)
31-40 hours	38 (59.4)
40+ hours	21 (32.8)
Hours spent on GSB per week	
0-10 hours	41 (64.1)
11 to 20 hours	11 (17.2)
21-30 hours	12 (18.7)
Program enrolled for	
MBA Strategic Management	15 (23.4)
MSc Operations, Projects & Supply Chain Management	23 (35.9)
MBA Finance	11 (17.2)
MBA General	3 (4.7)
MSc Human Resource Management	12 (18.8)
Courses taken so far	
9-12	55 (85.9)
13-16	9 (14.1)
Students effectively taught in blended format	
5-25	6 (9.4)
26-50	20 (31.3)
51-75	10 (15.6)
76-100	9 (14.1)
Above 100	19 (29.7)
Challenges loading content on platform	
Yes	46 (71.9)
No	18 (28.1)
How often are challenges encountered when loading content on portal	
Very often	5 (7.8)
Often	24 (37.5)
Less often	28 (43.8)
Never	7 (10.9)
Formal training using portal	
Yes	45 (70.3)
No	19 (29.7)

Interaction by students on the platform	
Very bad	19 (29.7)
Bad	10 (15.6)
Medium	35 (54.7)
Submitting assignments on portal	
On the due date	35 (54.7)
Just before the due date	29 (45.3)

Table 6 above indicates that 5 respondents work for 11 to 20 hours per week while 38 work for 31 to 40 hours and 21 works for more than 40 hours weekly. In addition to this, 41 spent 0 to 10 hours on GSB work weekly while 11 spent 11 to 20 hours and 12 spent 21 to 30 hours. It can be noted from the findings that the majority spent 10 hours or less on GSB. Furthermore, the majority of the students had challenges loading content on the portal although it was mainly less often. 45(70.3%) admit that they had formal training on the use of the portal during induction while 19(29.7%) did not due to different circumstances. Most students however agree that interaction with fellow students neither good nor bad. As regards to submitting of assignments, 35(54.7%) did it on the due date while the remaining 29(45.3%) submitted a day or two before the due date.

The table below highlights the performance of the e-learning portal during submission of assignments and if the school had any dedicated customer service personnel. 35.9% felt the system was good during submission while 29.7% thought it was fair.14.1% found it to be very good while 12.5% and 7.8% found it bad and very bad respectively.

The students further acknowledged of there not being a dedicate personnel to carter to all queries and complaints raised. Therefore, resolution of complaints mostly took more than 72 hours for the majority as those responsible to handle them were vested with the responsibility of performing other roles. However, despite the fact that most students were dissatisfied with the online blended learning, 48.5% would still enroll in another blended program.

Table 7: Level of satisfaction

Variable	**n (%)**
System performance during submission of assignments on portal	
Very bad	5 (7.8)
Bad	8 (12.5)
Medium	19 (29.7)
Good	23 (35.9)
Very good	9 (14.1)
Dedicated personnel to carter for queries	
Yes	18 (28.1)

No	46 (71.9)
How long it takes for complaints to be resolved	
24 hrs	9 (14.1)
48 hrs	17 (26.6)
72 hrs	10 (15.6)
More than 72 hrs	28 (43.8)
How satisfied are you with blended online learning	
Very dissatisfied	7 (10.9)
Generally dissatisfied	15 (23.4)
Neither	22 (34.4)
Generally Satisfied	20 (31.3)
Would you enrol in another blended online course	
Definitely not	14 (21.9)
Undecided	19 (29.7)
Possibly	22 (34.4)
Definitely	9 (14.1)

The following figures 2 and 3 translates the level of satisfaction in complaint and query resolution for students from the table 7 above.

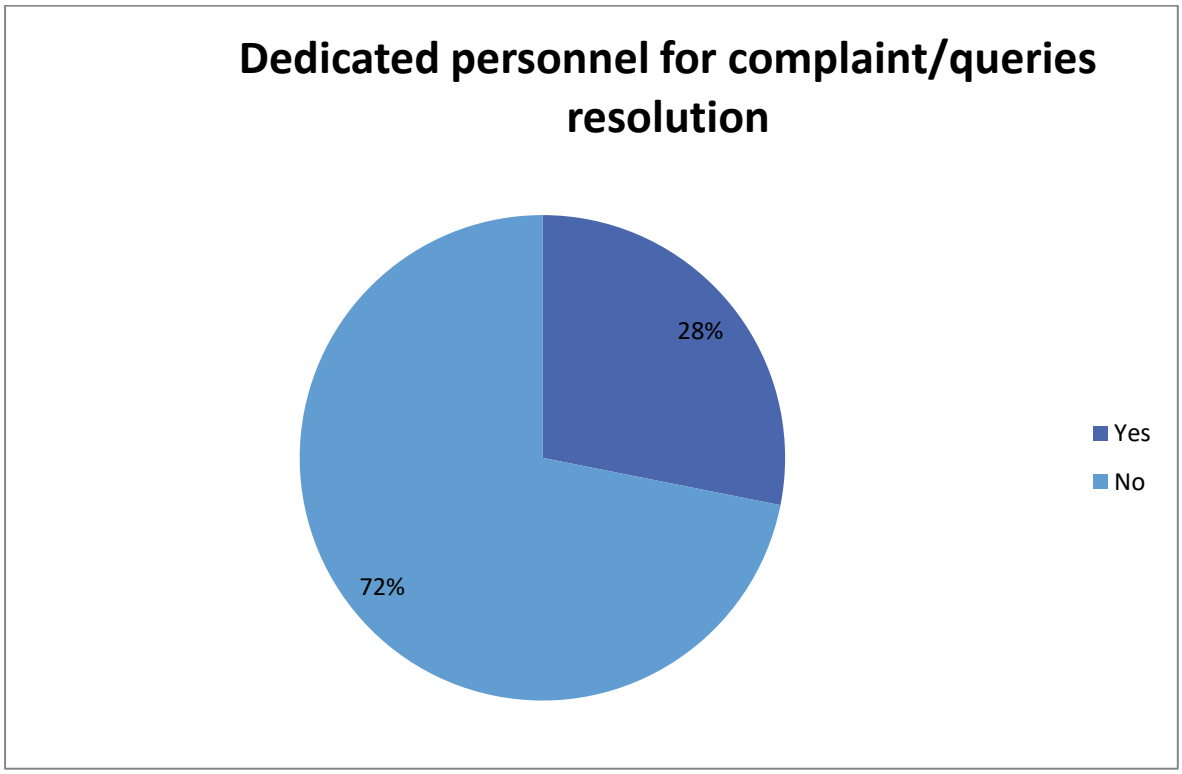

Figure 2: Dedicated personnel for complaint/query resolution

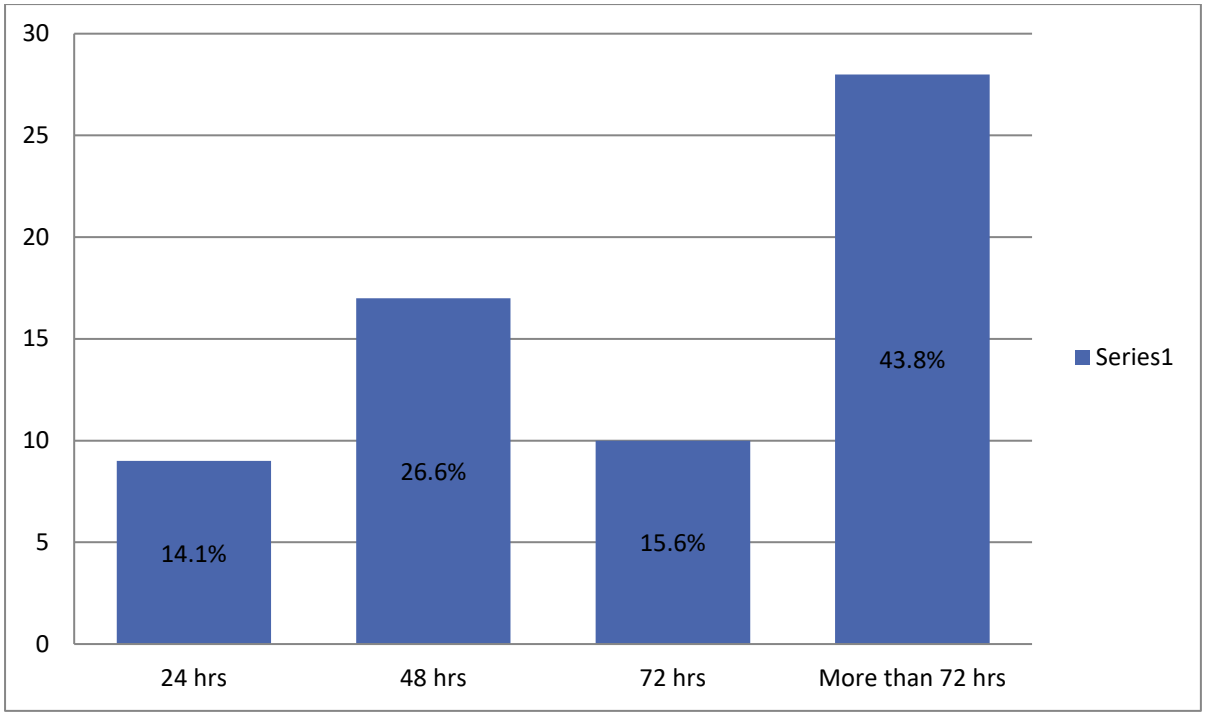

Figure 3: Time for complaint/query resolution

The preceding table 8 shows the level of interaction on the blended program amongst the students and how they perceived it.

Table 8: Level of interaction

	Much better n (%)	A little better n (%)	Medium n (%)	A little worse n (%)	Much worse n (%)
The amount of your interaction with other students	-	13 (20.3)	37 (57.8)	7 (10.9)	7 (10.9)
The quality of your interaction with other students	9 (14.1)	12 (18.8)	23 (35.9)	13 (20.3)	7 (10.9)
The amount of your interaction with the instructor	-	12 (18.8)	25 (39.1)	18 (28.1)	9 (14.1)
The quality of your interaction with the instructor	9 (14.1)	13 (20.3)	26 (40.6)	16 (25)	-

Table 8 above shows 57.8% of the students having a fair amount of interaction with other students. The quality of interation saw 35.9% perceiving it to be medium while 18.8% and 14.1% thought it was a little better and muc better respectively. The amount and quality of interaction with instructors is also clearly shown above. The following table shows blended

learning experience among students. The purpose of the table below was to show in depth the students' perception on the blended learning as well as their personal experience.

Table 9: Blended Learning Experience

	Strongly agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly disagree n (%)
I'm more likely to ask questions in my blended online courses	-	16 (25)	17 (26.6)	19 (29.7)	12 (18.8)
There are more opportunities to collaborate with others in blended online learning	14 (21.9)	9 (14.1)	18 (28.1)	13 (20.3)	10 (15.6)
My blended online learning experience has increased my opportunity to access and use information	-	8 (12.5)	27 (42.2)	18 (28.1)	11 (17.2)
I have more opportunities to reflect on what I've learned in blended courses	14 (21.9)	20 (31.3)	8 (12.5)	14 (21.9)	8 (12.5)
Blended learning helps me better understand course material	7 (10.9)	15 (23.4)	22 (34.4)	12 (18.8)	8 (12.5)
Generally, I understand course requirements better in a blended online environment	7 (10.9)	18 (28.1)	22 (34.4)	12 (18.8)	5 (7.8)
Because of the blended online learning, am more likely to get my master's degree	20 (31.3)	13 (20.3)	22 (34.4)	9 (14.1)	-
Generally, I am more engaged in my blended online learning	9 (14.1)	19 (29.7)	15 (23.4)	11 (17.2)	10 (15.6)
My personal devices help with my learning	22 (34.4)	42 (65.6)	-	-	-
I have strong time management skills	10 (15.6)	46 (71.9)	3 (4.7)	-	5 (7.8)
I am motivated to succeed	39 (60.9)	25 (39.1)	-	-	-
Unza provides the resources necessary for students to succeed in blended courses	-	14 (21.9)	21 (32.8)	15 (23.4)	14 (21.9)

From the table 9 above, all the students agree and strongly agree that the blended program is a motivation to succeed but 32.8% were indifferent on the aspect of UNZA providing the necessary resources for students to succeed in the blended program as compared to 21.9% who agree with 23.4% disagreeing and 21.9% strongly disagreeing.

The researcher further wanted to find out the preferred class modality of the students where 50% chose the extensive use of the web, with some face to face class time while 26.6% sought an equal mixture, 14.10% went for the minimal use of the web and 9.40% were entirely for online learning with no face to face time as shown by figure 4 below and the reason for choosing blended learning in the preceding figure 5.

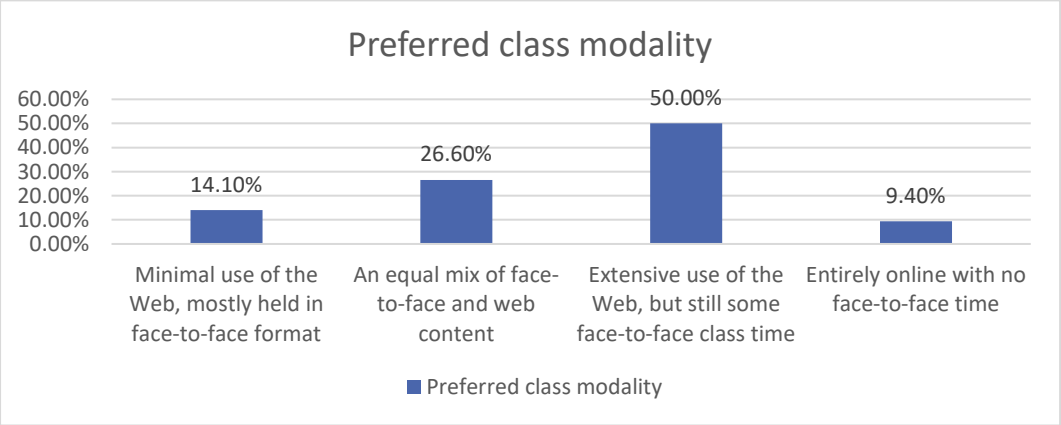

Figure 4: Preferred class modality
N= 9 (14.1%), 17 (26.6%), 32 (50%), 6 (9.4%)

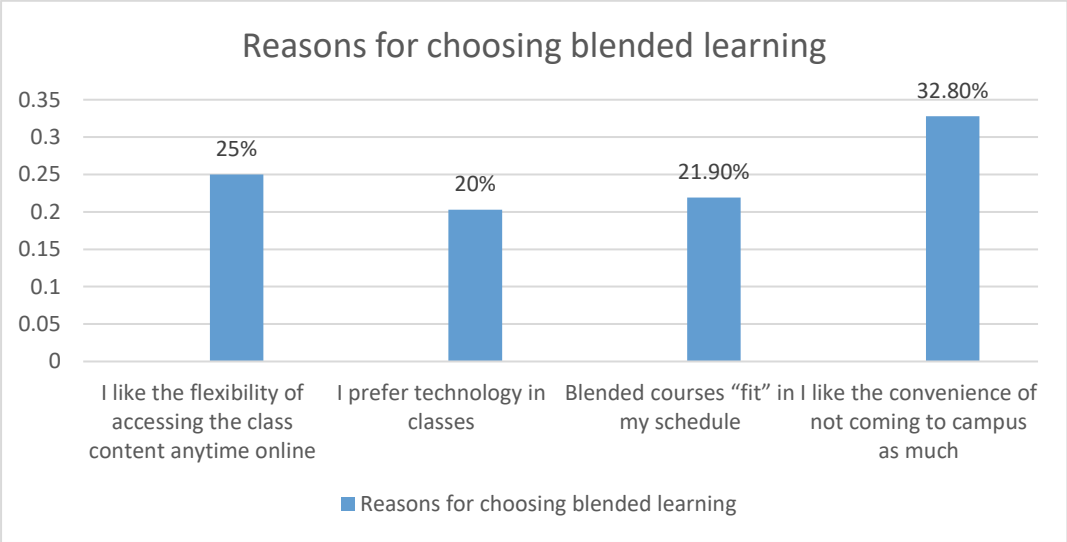

Figure 5: Reasons for choosing blended learning
N= 16 (25%), 13 (20.3%), 14 (21.9%), 21 (32.8%)

Figure 5 above showed flexibility and convenience as the most popular reasons for choosing blended learning which are also shown in figure 6 below as advantages.

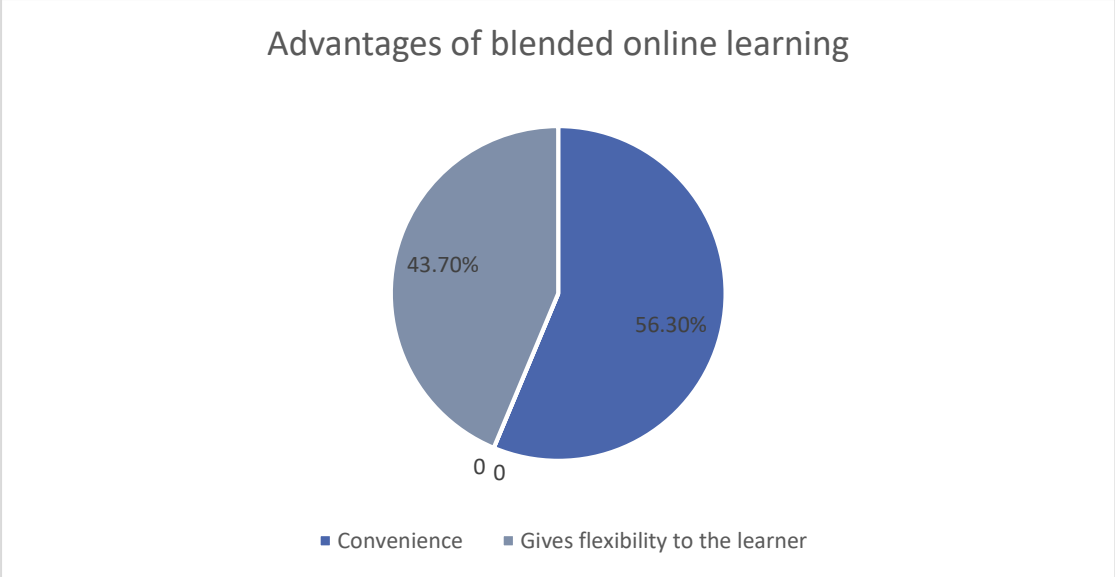

Figure 6: Advantages of Blended Learning
N= 36 (56.3%), 28 (43.7%)

Figure 6 above shows that 26(56.3%) chose blended learning because of its flexibility and 28(43.7%) went for the program because of convenience. The researcher also wanted to further find out if the students had any disadvantages as regards to blended learning. Below are the responses.

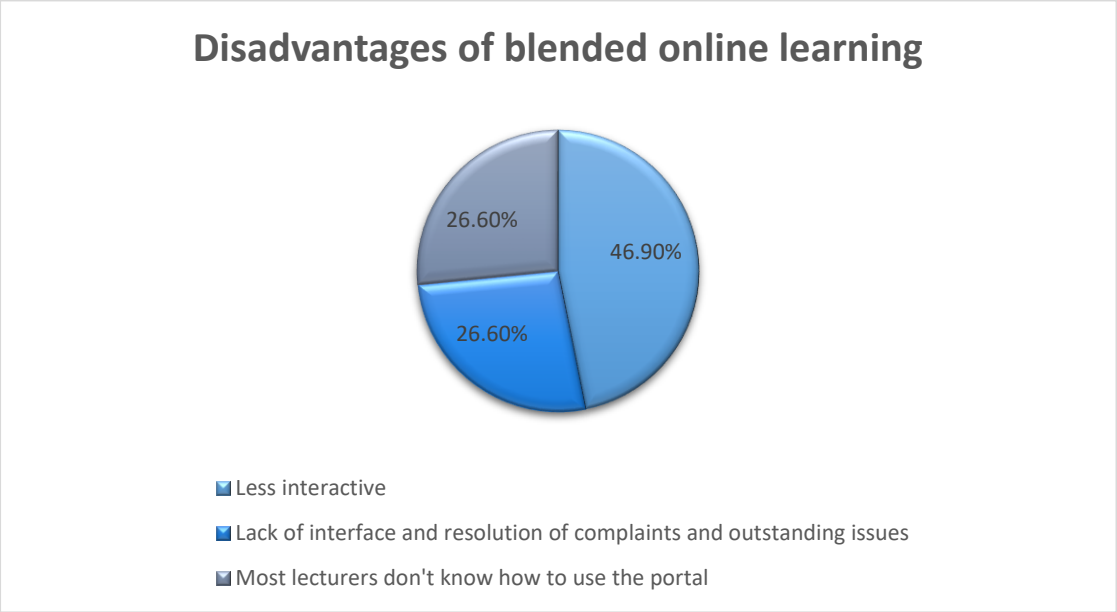

Figure 7: Response on disadvantages of Blended Learning
N= 30 (46.9%), 17 (26.6%), 17 (26.6%)

From figure 7 above, 30(46.9%) thought it was less interactive, 17(26.6%) found the lack of interface as the main reason for lack of timely resolution of complaints and outstanding issues

and 17(26.6%) thought most lecturers didn't know how to use the portal which is a reason subject for debate.

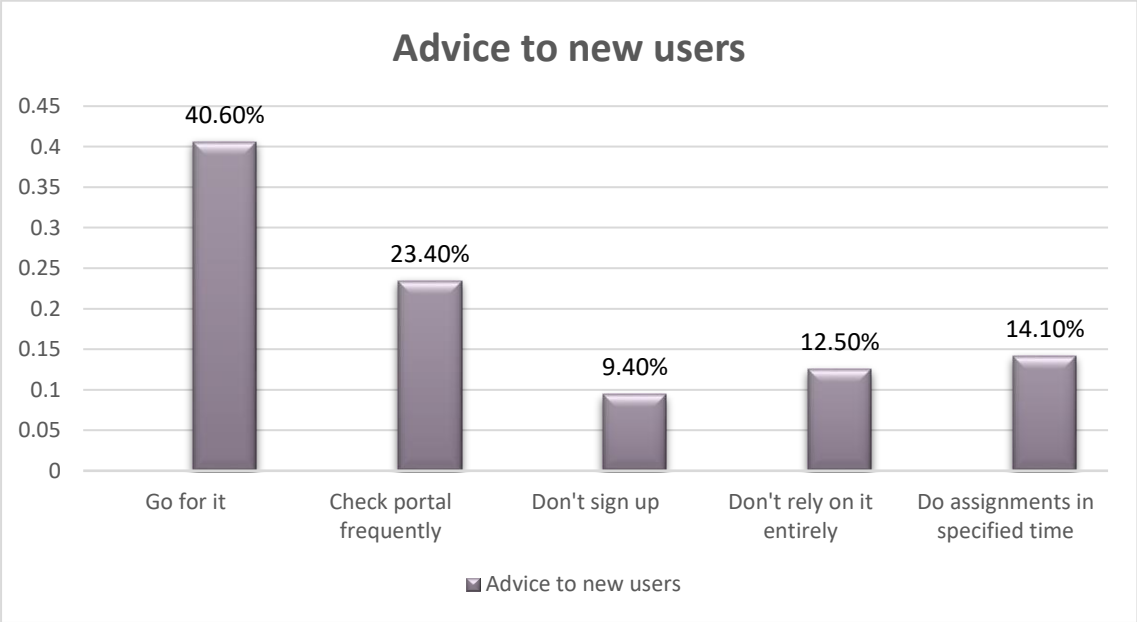

Figure 8: Response on advice to new users
N= 26 (40.6%), 15 (23.4%), 6 (9.4%), 8 (12.5%), 9 (14.1%)

Figure 8 above indicated that 40.6% of the students would advise new users to go for the e-learning, 23.40% would suggest frequent checking of the portal while on the program and 9.40% would advise new users not to sign up on the portal. From the indication above the majority of the students would actually play a positive role in suggesting e-learning to new users.

4.2.3 Bio Data for Lecturers

The purpose of this section was to identify the actual teaching experience from the lecturers as this would give an insight on some of the challenges that they also experience with regards to the online platform. This would help in the translation of the many challenges being faced by the students.

Table 10: Bio Data for Lecturers

Characteristics	n (%)
Gender	
Male	8(80)
Female	2 (20)
Age group	
36-45	4(40)
46-55	6(60)

Classification	
Lecturer 2	3(30)
Lecturer 3	7(70)
Education Level	
P.H.D.	6(60)
Masters Level	2(20)
Proffessional Qualification	
ZICA	1(10)
CIPS	1(10)
Position held	
Unza Support Staff- Part Time Lecturer	2(20)
Full Time Lecturer- Other Unza Department	6(60)
Fill Time Lecturer- GSB	2(20)

Table 10 shows that Out of 15 respondents drawn from the lecturers, 8(80%) males and 2(20%) females' responses were received. 30% of these were classified as Lecturer 2 while 70% belonged to the category of Lecturer 1. Furthermore, 6 (60%) are P.H.D holders, 2 (20%) hold Masters Degrees, while 2(20%) hold professional qualifications in accountancy and procurement respectively. These hold various positions in different schools and only 2 were fully working under the Graduate School of Business. Therefore, it is safe to state that 80% of the Lecturers have other primary responsibilities before attending to any assigned duties under GSB. This is illustrated in the following figure 9.

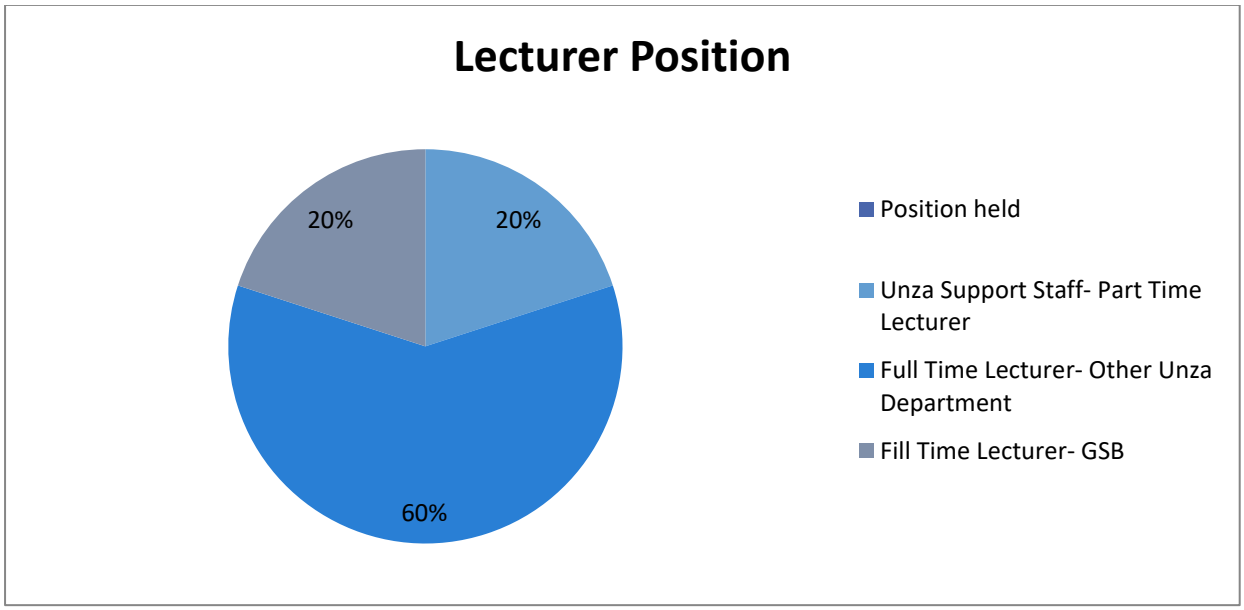

Figure 9: Position Held

4.2.3.1 Teaching Experience

Table 11: Teaching Experience

Variable	n (%)
Students effectively taught in blended format	
26-50	3 (30)
51-75	7 (70)
Times course appears on timetable	
Once	2 (20)
Twice	5 (50)
Three times	3 (30)
Challenges loading content on platform	
Yes	7 (70)
No	3 (30)
How often are challenges encountered when loading content on portal	
Less often	7 (70)
Never	3 (30)
Formal training using portal	
Yes	2 (20)
No	8 (80)
Interaction by students on the platform	
Medium	7 (70)
Good	3 (30)
Submitting assignments on portal	
On the due date	5 (50)
Just before the due date	2 (20)
After the due date	3 (30)
System performance during submission of assignments on portal	
Bad	3 (30)
Medium	2 (20)
Good	5 (50)

The table (11) above indicates that 70% of the lecturers feel 51-75 students can be effectively taught in the blended format while 30% feel only 26-50 can be taught. Of the total respondents; 70% stated they had challenges when loading content on the e-learning portal while 30% did not. In addition to the above, 80% attested to the fact that no formal training was given on the use of the online portal while 20% state that they had. Moreover, 70% found the interaction of students on the portal to be medium and 30% thought it was good.

Table 12: Instructional Technologies

Categories of Instructional Technologies	Currently use n (%)	Planning to use n (%)	Interested in using n (%)	Not planning to use n (%)
Content Management (Lecture Capture, Wikipedia, course wiki, blogs, RSS feeds, Podcasts)	-	6 (60)	4 (40)	-
Communication (chat, web/video conferencing)	-	-	7 (70)	3 (30)
Student Response Systems (iClicker, Turning Technology, eInstruction)	3 (30)	2 (20)	5 (50)	-
Plagiarism Detection Software (e.g. Turnitin.com, Web Assign)	-	6 (60)	4 (40)	-

The instructional technologies and how they are perceived are as indicated in Table 12 above. When respondents were further asked if any additional support was needed in order to ease the delivery of the program, the pie chart below represents the responses that were given.

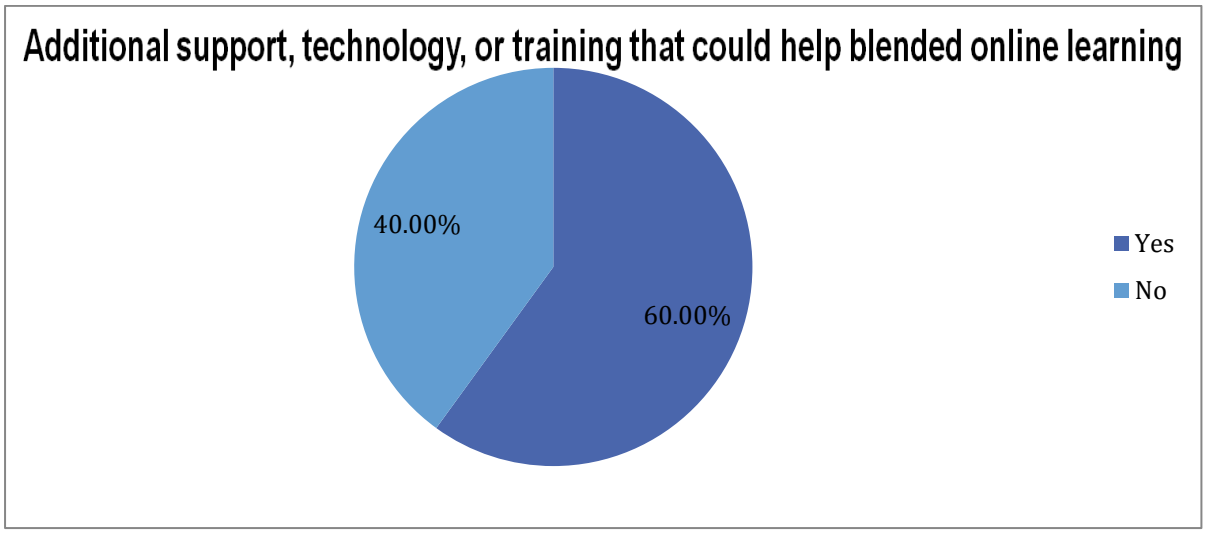

Figure 10: Response for additional support
N= 6 (60%), 4 (40%)

The above figure (10) clearly shows that more than half of the responses indicated that additional support, technology, or training that could help the blended program was needed with more reasons indicated in figure 11 below.

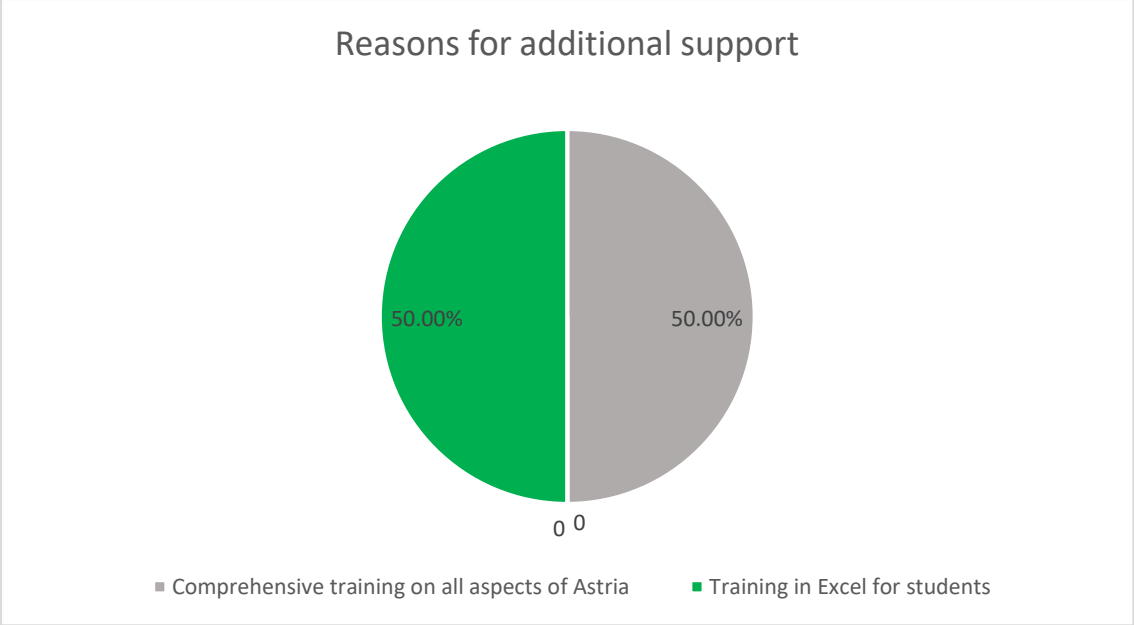

Figure 11: Reasons for additional support
N= 5 (50%), 5 (50%)

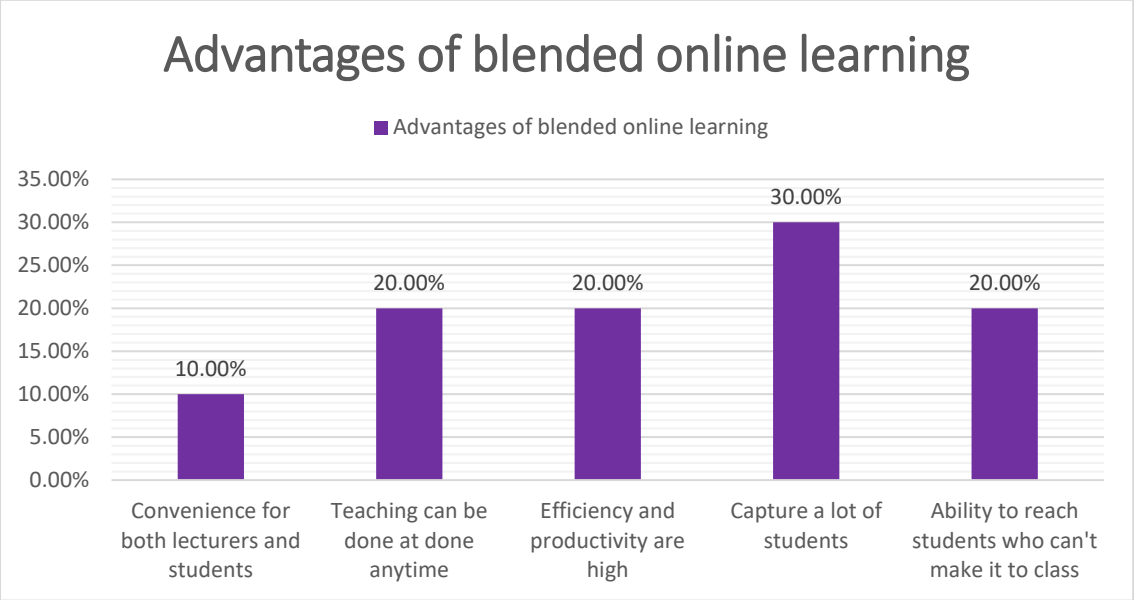

Figure 12: Response for advantages of blended learning
N= 1 (10%), 2 (20%), 2 (20%), 3 (30%), 2 (20%)

When asked on what was perceived as being advantages of blended online learning, 10% indicated convenience for both the Lecture and Students, 20% indicated the advantage teaching being done anytime while 20% thought efficiency and productivity are high in such an environment. 30% thought it captures a lot of students at the same time and the remaining 20% gave the indication that it had the ability to reach students who cannot physically make it to class. This is clearly shown in figure 12.

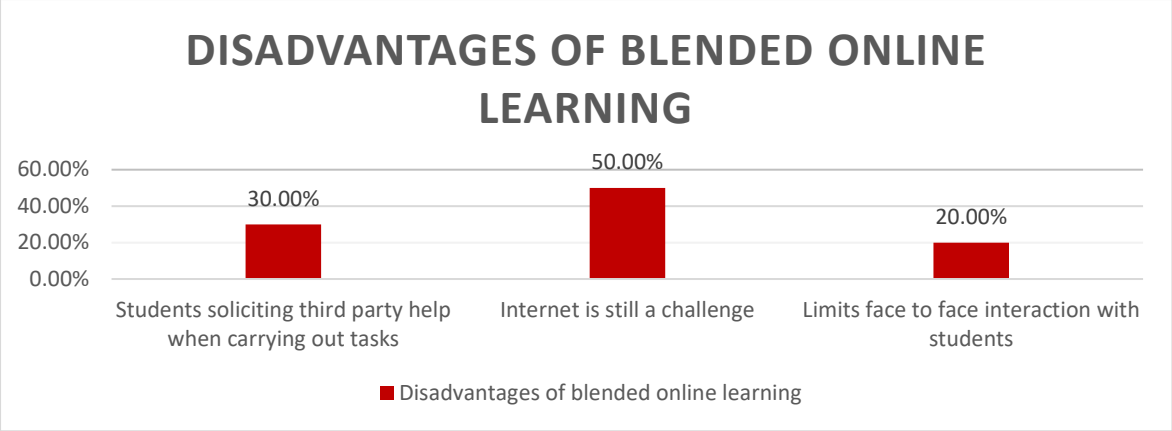

Figure 13: Response for disadvanges of blended learning

The figure (13) above shows the disadvantages as perceived by the Lecturers. 30% were of the view that students solicit for third party help when carrying out tasks online, 50% thought the internet was still a challenge and 20% thought it limits face to face interaction with the students.

4.2.4 Bio Data for Support Staff

To identify the successes and impediments that may arise in the process of running the school, more attention was focused on the support staff that is tasked with the day to day running of GSB.

Table 13: Bio data for support staff

Characteristics	n (%)
Gender	
Male	3 (60)
Female	2 (40)
Age group	
18-35	1 (20)
36-45	4 (80)
Education level	
Master's Degree	3 (60)
Professional qualification	
ZICA-2011	1 (20)
ZICA-2012	1 (20)
Directorate/school	
Graduate School of Business	5 (100)

The table(13) above shows 5 responses from an administration of approximately 7 full time employees as per information obtained from GSB. At least 100% of the staff are adequately qualified to run the affairs of the role they are employed for.

4.2.4.1 Administration Experience

Table 14: Administration experience

Variable	n (%)
Role in GSB	
Administrative work and academic support	3 (60)
Lecturing	2 (40)
How long have you been in the position	
2 years	2 (40)
3 years	3 (60)
Familiar with e-learning	
Very familiar	3 (60)
Quite familiar	1 (20)
Not familiar	1 (20)
Familiar with current e-learning platform used in GSB	
Very familiar	3 (60)
Not very familiar	2 (40)
Formal training using portal	
No	5 (100)
Challenges loading content on platform	
Yes	5 (100)
How often challenges encountered loading content on platform	
Often	1 (20)
Less often	3 (60)
Never	1 (20)
Interaction by students on the platform	
Bad	2 (40)
Good	3 (60)
System performance during submission of assignments on portal	
Medium	5 (100)
Dedicated personnel	
Yes	3 (60)
No	2 (40)
How many dedicated personnel	
2	3 (60)
4	2 (40)
Service level agreement for handling of complaints and queries	
Yes	3 (60)
No	2 (40)
Average turnaround time for resolution of queries	
48 hours	4 (80)
72 hours	1 (20)

Additional support, technology, or training that could help blended online learning	
Yes	5 (100)

The above table (14) indicates 60% of the employees having been worked for GSB for 3year meaning they started with the school. Moreover, 80% of them indicate that they are familiar with e-learning. Although no formal training was carried out as indicated above, 60% of the employees are familiar with the e-learning. However, all the respondents admitted to having challenges when loading content on the e-learning platform which was mostly less often. The system performance during the same was seen to be neither good nor bad.

In addition to the above, when asked whether there was a dedicated personnel to handle all complaints and queries, 60% said yes while 40% said no. The same was respectively the same response for the service level agreement being in place. 80% were of the view that complaintswere resolved within 48 hours while 20% stated that these were resolved within 72 hours. However, it was unanimously agreed that additional support that could help the blended online learning was needed which is needed in the figure 14.

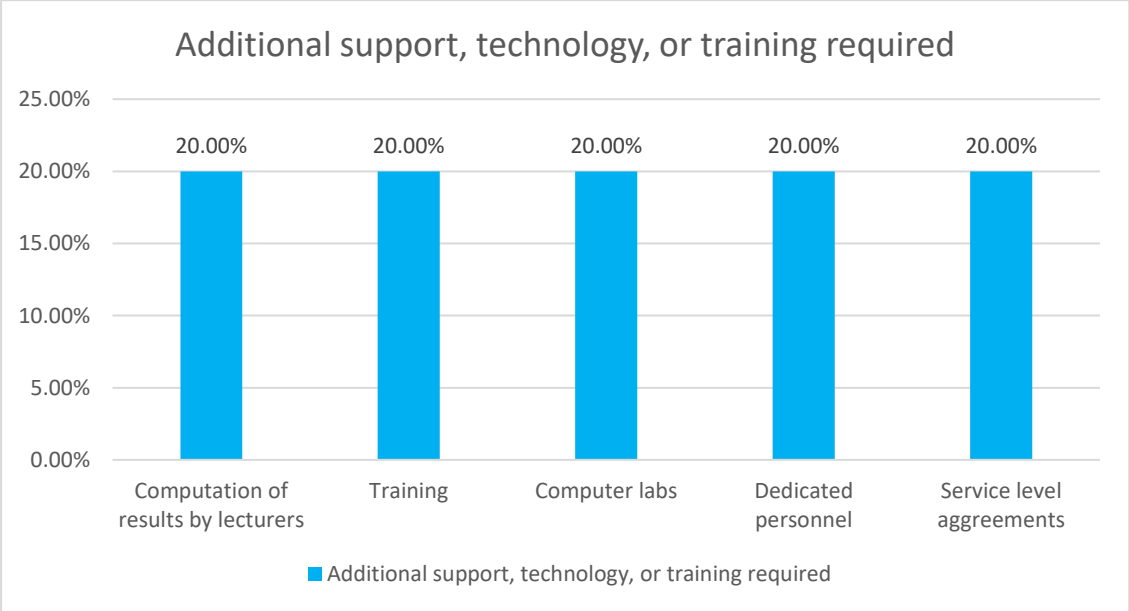

Figure 14: Response for additional support
N= 1 (20%), 1 (20%), 1 (20%), 1 (20%), 1 (20%)

4.3 Research Findings: Students, Lectures and Support Staff

The first category represented students enrolled for GSB. The respondents sampled were 100 from the May 2016 intake (50) and November 2016 intake (50) only. The data collected from respondents was analysed in line with the methodology described in chapter three (3) above.

The second category shows the responses by the Lecturers who are actively involved with GSB. These are those that give guidance and lecture to the student populous at the school. The reason for selecting this category of respondents was to affirm the findings from the students.

The third and final category reveals the responses from the support staff at the Graduate School of Business. These are the officers that are responsible for the day to day running of the school. These were selected to equally affirm the responses of the students.

The study among others sought to find the background information of respondents in terms of age distribution, gender, employment status, educational background and category of staff members. This information is aimed at establishing the caliber of those sampled for the study and their suitability to give an account of what pertains in the Graduate School of Business with regards to challenges experienced.

4.3.1. Student Challenges

The evaluation on students brought out the fact that complaints and queries were taking an average of 72 hours and more due to lack of a dedicated customer service person as indicated in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively. The above mentioned compromised the delivery of the programme as well as the quality of the service. Student challenges are discussed in detail in chapter five section 5.2.1.

4.3.2 Lecturer Challenges

Lecturers did not outrightly state challenges experienced however, from the results evaluated it can be noted that 80% of them indicated not having received formal training in Astria Learning despite knowing how to navigate the portal. 60% further indicated needing additional support in form of training, technology and general support to help in the effective delivery of the programme. Moreover, despite the blended programme having more advantages, Lecturers noted some disadvantages that posed as challenges. 30% were of the view that students usually solicit help when carrying out tasks hence knowledge impartation is somewhat limited. In addition to the above 50% thought internet was still a challenge and 20% said it limited the face to face interaction with students. The most notable challenge is that 80% have primary responsibilities prior to Lecturing courses under GSB.

4.3.3 GSB Staff Challenges

100% of the staff admitted that there was no formal training on how to use the e-learning platform therefore each member of staff was only familiar with the aspect of Astria Learning that concerns their job description. This in itself becomes a challenge when trying to assist students who query certain aspects of Astria Learning that the staff is not familiar with. Therefore, all respondents agreed that additional support in form of Training and computer labs among others are needed to enhance the delivery of the blended programme.

4.3.4 Programme Challenges

It is worth noting that from the results obtained from the three categories of respondents, the programme challenges mainly border on infrastructure relating to the e-learning platform and general administration. 93% of the student responses admitted to only encountering challenges when loading tasks on the platform at the same time (e.g. when everyone is submitting at assignment at 20hrs). The lecturers and administration staff however only admitted to experiencing challenges with the portal sparingly and these accounted for less than 50%. The administration of the programme has seen it going beyond 18 months for the first four intakes which can be attributed to the various challenges highlighted from the three categories of respondents.

A thorough analysis of the results indicated that it borders on lack of consistent delivery which is a direct reflection of what Figure 1(IOTM) in chapter 3 endevours to solve. The school should be able to deliver the programme on time through a consistent block release model whose timetable should be made bi-annually inconjuction with HELAM. This model uses six dimensions that students will use to evaluate Astria learning. These dimensions can also filter through to the administration responsible for the day to day running of the school which is discussed at length in chapter 5.

4.4 Summary

The chapter looked at the results of the study in detail starting with the data collected from the students, then the lectures and the support staff. One of the most notable findings on the part of the students included the school not having dedicated customer service service personnel to handle queries and complaints hence resolution basically took more than 72 hours while on the other hand, 100% of the Lecturers and Support staff both indicated on needing additional support with reasons illustrated in figure 8 and 11 respectively. Challenges experienced by students, lecturers and GSB staff were also highlighted with a conclusion on the suggested model illustrated in figure 1 given.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the challenges faced by the students and the GSB UNZA administration concerning the blended e-learning program. The solutions proposed based on the challenges established whilst conducting the survey are highlighted. A conclusion is then made from the study and a summary given for the research study.

5.2 Discussion

An extensive review of the literature cited in chapter 2 on E-learning environments, blended learning, lecturer and student characteristics, the LMS and the importance of e-learning with various related studies on the blended learning in developing countries were highlighted.

5.2.1 Challenges faced by students on the blended program

The above research objective was achieved by engaging respondents from the May 2016 cohorts and the November 2016 cohorts to answer a questionnaire.

The study found out that the majority (64.1%) of the students spent 10 hours or less on the GSB Astria learning platform weekly as all courses demanded online uploads of all assignments and exercises. 71.9% reported having challenges when loading content on the platform however, when probed further regarding the extent, 45.3% had the challenges more frequently while 43.8% only experienced them occasionally, the remainder 10.9% were happy with the e-learning platform. A good example sighted was when the May 2016 cohorts were given an online test in research methods which caused the system to collapse as all the students were answering the test within a stipulated time. It can be however noted that most students (70.3%) were given formal training on how to use the e-learning platform during induction while the rest of the 29.7% missed it due to circumstances beyond their control but are able to navigate through. Therefore, it was further noted the system performed badly only when students were trying to submit something at the same time.

The student's biggest challenge was the lack of a dedicated customer service personnel to handle all their complaints and queries with a reported 71.9% acknowledging it. This resulted into an average turnaround time of more than 72 hours for complaint resolution according to the student survey bringing out a dissatisfaction rate of 68.7% on the delivery of the e-learning blended program.

Other specific challenges derived from the data collected from students from both cohorts included;

i. The lack of a timely continuous assessment to enable students know whether they qualify to write an exam or not as the minimum requirement is 50% of the CA.
ii. The changing of time tables at short notice when students have to give adequate notice to employers in order to get approval to attend classes for those out of town.
iii. The late release of results by the school when the SLA states the publishing to be done 30 days from the date of the exam.
iv. The course going beyond the stipulated 18 months especially for the intakes under study. The period of the program was one of the reasons most students found the e-learning blended program very attractive.

Neo (2004) in his journal emphasised students being important stakeholders in the implementation of the blended learning and as such administrators should have them in mind during the whole process. Despite the above challenges, 86% of the students would still prefer enrolling in a blended learning learning environments with several advantages sighted. This is can be corroborated with the various literature sighted in chapter 2 that have highlighted the many benefits on blended learning.

5.2.2 Challenges faced by Lecturers

The biggest challenge facing most (80%)of the lecturers was that they had primary responsibilities before attending to any work assigned by GSB. 20% of these confirmed having very limited access to the portal and were unable to upload student results. Other challenges have been discussed under 4.3.2. Gilbert (2015) and Neo (2004) both emphasised how instructors can increase interaction on the online platform as they provide pre-requisite knowledge to students.therefore limiting accessibility to the mortal inhibits them from fulfilling their duties.

5.2.3 Challenges faced by Administration

The administration only brought out challenges attributed to needing additional support in form of training, technology, and dedicated personnel (for those(40%) that indicated that the school lacks one) to handle complaints and queries. The University of Washington (2013) stated faculty members needing training in order for them to effectively perform in an online learning environment.

5.2.4 General programme challenges

Most of the programme challenges are as a result of the challenges experienced by the respondents sampled. Lack of a dedicated customer service personnel means complaint and query resolution do not have specific people that handle them hence ownership is a challenge. This simply means that the school cannot hold anyone responsible as there is no one

mandated to carry out the role. The programme also has infrastructural support challenges as it freezes when tasks are being uploaded at the same time.

The school is also currently outsourcing 80% of its teaching staff hence time-tables have to be made to suit those that are mandated to teach. Furthermore,100% of the administration and teaching staff both highlighted the fact that additional support is required is required in form of traning and technology. All of these were experts on astria learning specific to what their role entails. This implies that the staff lacked overall product knowledge which is an essential part for any thriving business. Moreover, basic customer service techniques were lacking hence students complaining of issues taking 72hours and more to be resolved. It goes without saying that the programme has so far gone beyond the stipulated 18 months for the first four intakes. This compromised the overall quality of service promised to the students and some of them left to go to other universities as per statistics that showed a reduction in numbers overtime. A good example is the May cohort that started with almost 400 students but drastically reduced to 219 at per statistics collected in march 2018 from GSB. This inself resulted in loss of income for those that decided to discontinue the programme.

5.3 Comparison with Other Similar Works

Established theories, models, frameworks coupled with prior research have had an influence on other frameworks that have suggested the effectiveness of blended e-learning. Aguti et al (2016) suggested a framework that can be determined by evaluating four main dimensions namely; E-learning readiness, E-learning course delivery strategies, Quality e-learning systems and Effects of Blended e-learning. They stated that E-learning readiness in terms of costing and budgeting, policies, support, cultural awareness, and infrastructure have an influence on the quality of e-learning systems and e-learning course delivery strategies which in turn will have an impact on the effectiveness of blended e-learning. Other similar works have been highlighted under 2.7 in the literature review with those that are implementing the Block Release Model that is presently being used at UNZA also highlighted.

The literature review in chapter 2 further indicates how e-learning has evolved overtime taking into consideration how the implementation in other developing countries has been done especially for newly introduced programs. It is imperative that the GSB administrators consider the implementation of the models suggest due to the many advantages that it brings to the service delivery of the blended e-learning program.

5.5 Conclusion and Recommendation

The study with the use of a grounded theory approach came up with the Theory of Consistency. It concluded that, the successful implementation of the Blended Learning Programme depended on the consistent delivery of the current model. It further emphasised the various merits of using a consistent Block release model in conjunction with the Hexagonal model which uses six dimensions to evaluate an LMS. This will ensure effective and efficient delivery of the blended e-learning program at UNZA's GSB. Basheka, Lubega and Baguma (2016) also corroborate the benefits of using the block release model in African universities in their research findings highlighted under chapter two.

Ozkhan and Koseler (2009) coined the Hexangonal Model which through its dimensions can effectively work well with a consistent block release model for the successful implementation of the blended learning program at GSB. The conclusion was that the challenges mainly bordered on service, content quality,system quality and support issues which are some of the dimensions found in the recommended HELAM. The model also encompasses learner and instructor perspective which could continuously highlight student perceptions on the delivery of the program to enable the school come up with better methods of delivery. In customer service, feedback is very important as it encourages dialogue and brings about enhanced and streamlined delivery of service through suggestions given by either party.

It can therefore be concluded from this research that, the above mentioned models when consistently administered are key to the many challenges that the students and the school may be experiencing and could be meaningful tools in early diagnosis of future challenges as there is continuous feedback to the administration on the perception of service received. It can also help the administration to plan better and in advance which will translate into better delivery of service.

The research concluded that the school lacked customer service personnel to handle student queries and complaints. Therefore, the hiring of permanent customer service personnel can allow for identification of variables from the frameworks which can easily help assess students' perceived satisfaction on the quality of the e-learning system overtime. This can help create patterns to enable administrators deal with the root cause of the problem within the service level agreement which should be clearly displayed for ease of reference on the part of the students. It will further help in the segmentation of students into various categories so that solutions that are tailor made can be given to suit each segment. Consistent implementation of the suggested models will enable effective and efficient delivery of the

blended program backed by information which will continuously be collected from the actual target market. The school can further organise yearly work shops for members of staff in customer service as every member of staff will need to vested with the basic techniques on how to handle students (customers) and be effiecient enablers to their colleagues. Additionally, trainings in all aspects of Astria Learning will be required from time to time.

It was further concluded that the school lacks an adequate number of permanent lecturers hence time-tables are sometimes made to suit the schedule of the particular lecturer. GSB may therefore look at having at least several lecturers to avoid short notice changes in the time-tables which greatly impacts the schedules of students who have planned based on earlier timetables. The purpose of this study was to suggest a model that would help mitigate the challenges faced by students on the blended program at GSB. It further focused on data sources for GSB students and administration only and achieving this objective was necessitated by examining the challenges they both faced regarding the blended e-learning program. Lubega and Williams (2003) highlighted that providing a learning process with variety of teaching and learning methods during an education process greatly improved learning.

5.6 Future Works

In future research, there are opportunities to get deeper into the two models and also further look at drivers of blended e-learning to come up with factors that influence its effectiveness in universities. A deeper assessment into Student performance against teaching staff would also be imperative. UNZA GSB must be the go to school through the eyes of the potential students. Having feedback forms for potential and current students would enable the school to continuously improve their service delivery. Furthermore, annual accreditation of all staff in service delivery must be mandatory to ensure uniformity.

5.7 Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings, providing conclusions and their importance made from the study in terms of having a consistently running block release model combined with the hexagonal model as a solution to the many challenges experienced by the students and the administration. The school was also encouraged to have yearly work shops on customer service for members of staff as well as training in all aspects of Astria from time to time. It further gives a comparison of similar works and concludes with future works that can be looked at to enhance the current findings of the study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix i: interview questions

The University of Zambia
Graduate School of Business

E-learning: Challenges of the University of Zambia's GSB Blended program for the Students

By Tikambenji F.Z. Siulapwa (GSB 150432)
MSC Operations, Projects and Supply Chain Management

For more information or any queries, kindly get in touch on 0977-745429

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the University of Zambia in my final stage pursuing a Master of Science in Operations, Projects and Supply Chain Management. As partial fulfillment for the award of a Master of Science degree, I am conducting a baseline study on: "***challenges of the UNZA GSB blended program for the students"***

You have been randomly sampled to provide information for the topic indicated above. The information being collected is purely for academic purposes as such, it will be treated with maximum confidentiality. Subsequently, you are not supposed to indicate your name or any personal information that can lead to revealing of your identity.

Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

For more information or any queries, kindly get in touch with the following:

Project Supervisor: Dr. Jackson Phiri (0966 693 731) or
GSB Coordinator: Dr.Chowa (0968 010 922)

Blended Online Learning Student Survey

Please answer the following questions as clearly as you can by checking the box or line, as appropriate. BLENDED learning is a delivery approach which blends face-to-face classroom learning and online learning.

SECTION A: BIO DATA

1. **Gender**:

Female	Male

2. **Age**:

18-25 5	26-35 4	36-45 3	46-55 2	Above 55 1

3. **Education Level:**

Certificate 4	Diploma 3	Bachelor's Degree 2	Master's Degree 1

4. **Professional qualification**:

	Qualification	Year Obtained
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

5. **Employment Status:**

Employed 3	Self-Employed 2	Unemployed 1

6. **Organization (Specify):**

Parastatal 3	Public 2	Private 1

7. **Current position Held:**

8. **Intake**

Nov 2017 5	May 2017 4	Nov 2016 3	May 2016 2	Nov 2015 1

SECTION B: LEARNING EXPERIENCE

1. **Working hours**

	0-10 hours	11-20 hours	21-30 hours	31-40 hours	40+ hours
Number of working hours per week?					

2. **Hours spent on GSB**

	0-10 hours	11-20 hours	21-30 hours	31-40 hours	40+ hours
How many hours per week do you spend on the GSB program?					

3. **What program are you enrolled for?**

No	Program
1	MBA General
2	MBA Entrepreneurship
3	MBA Finance
4	MBA Human Resource Management
5	MBA Project Management
6	MBA Strategic Management
7	MSc Accounting & Finance
8	MSc Corporate Communication
9	MSc Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship
10	MSc Operations, Projects & Supply Chain Management
11	MSc Human Resources Management

4. **Courses taken.**

	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	16+
Including courses this term, how many blended courses have you taken so far?					

5. **On average, how many students do you feel can be effectively taught in the blended format?**

5-25 5	26-50 4	51-75 3	76-100 2	Above 100 1

6. **Do you have any challenges with the e-learning platform (AstriaLearning)?**

Yes	No

7. **How often do you encounter challenges in loading content on the on the e-learning platform?**

Never 4	Less Often 3	Often 2	Very Often 1

Comments:

8. **Did you receive any formal training on how to use the e-learning platform?**

Yes	No

9. **How would you rate the amount of interaction by students on the e-learning platform?**

Very Good 5	Good 4	Medium 3	Bad 2	Very Bad 1

Comments:

10. How long do you take in submitting of assignments on the e-learning platform?

Immediately 5	Before due date 4	Just before due date 3	On the due date 2	after the due date 1

Comments:

11. How would you rate the system performance during submission of assignments on the e-learning platform?

Very Good 5	Good 4	Medium 3	Bad 2	Very Bad 1

Comments:

12. Is there a dedicated personnel to carter for all your queries and complaints?

Yes	No

Comment:

13. How long does it take on average for your complaints and queries to be resolved?

More 72 hours 4	72 hours 3	48 hours 2	24 hours 1

SECTION C: GENERAL PREFERENCES

1. Satisfaction of blended learning.

	Very satisfied 5	Generally Satisfied 4	Neither 3	Generally dissatisfied 2	Very dissatisfied 1
In general, how satisfied are you with your blended online learning?					

Please share any comments you have about theblended courses

2. Choice on another blended learning program.

	Definitely 5	Possibly 4	Undecided 3	Not Possibly 2	Definitely not 1
Given a choice, would you enroll in another blended online course at UNZA?					

3. In general, how do you feel the technology component of your blended online learning affects the following?

	Much better 5	A little better 4	Medium 3	A little worse 2	Much worse 1
a. The amount of your interaction with other students					
b. The quality of your interaction with other students					
c. The amount of your interaction with the instructor					
d. The quality of your interaction with the instructor					

Comments:

4. Blended learning experience

	Strongly agree 5	**Agree 4**	**Neutral 3**	**Disagree 2**	**Strongly disagree 1**
I'm more likely to ask questions in myblended online courses					
There are more opportunities to collaborate with others in blended online learning					
My blended online learning experience has increased my opportunity to access and use information					
I have more opportunities to reflect on what I've learned in blended courses					
Blended learning helps me better understand course material					
Generally, I understand course requirements better in ablendedonline environment					
Because of theblended online learning, am more likely to get my masters degree					
Generally, I am more engaged in my blendedonline learning					
My personal devices help with my learning					
I have strong time management skills					
I am motivated to succeed					
Unza provides the resources necessary for students to succeed in blended courses					

5. Which class modality do you prefer?

___ Entirely face-to-face
___ Minimal use of the Web, mostly held in face-to-face format
___ An equal mix of face-to-face and web content
___ Extensive use of the Web, but still some face-to-face class time
___ Entirely online with no face-to-face time

6. What are your primary reasons for choosing the blended online learning (choose all that apply)?

___ I like the flexibility of accessing the class content anytime online
___ I prefer technology in classes
___ Blended courses "fit" in my schedule

___ I have no choice because some are only blended courses
___ I like the convenience of not coming to campus as much
___Other (please explain):

SECTION D: RECOMENDATIONS

1. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the blended online learning?

2. What advice would you give to a student new to theblendedonline learning?

3. Any useful information:

The University of Zambia
Graduate School of Business

E-learning: Challenges of the University of Zambia's GSB Blended program for the Students

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MSC Operations, Projects and Supply Chain Management

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For more information or any queries, kindly get in touch with the following:

Project Supervisor: Dr. Jackson Phiri (0966 693 731) or
GSB Coordinator: Dr.Chowa(0977 010 922)

Blended Course GSB Survey for Teaching Staff

SECTION A: BIO DATA

Please tell us about yourself:

1. **Gender**:

Female	**Male**

2. **Age**:

18-35 **5**	**36-45** **4**	**46-55** **3**	**56-65** **2**	**Above 65** **1**

3. **Classification (check one):**

Lecturer 3 **5**	**Lecturer 2** **4**	**Lecturer 1** **3**	**Associate Professor** **2**	**Professo r** **1**

4. **Education Level:**

Certificat e **5**	**Diplom a** **4**	**Bachelor's Degree** **3**	**Master' s Degree** **2**	**P.H.D** **1**

5. **Professional qualification**:

	Qualification	Year Obtained
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

6. **Position Held:**

Full Time Lecturer **5**	**Part Time Lecturer** **4**	**Full Time Lecturer- Other Unza Department** **3**	**Unza Support Staff Part Time Lecturer** **2**	**Other** **1**
				Specify:

7.

1	**Directorate/School**	
2	**Department/Unit**	
3	**Current Position Held**	

8. **Courses Taught:**

	Course Code	**Name of the Course**	**No. of Students**	**Academic Year**
1				
2				
3				
4				

SECTION B: TEACHING EXPERINCE

We would like to ask you some questions regarding your teaching experience. Please answer the questions that apply to you.

1) On average, how many students do you feel you can effectively teach in the blended format?

5-25 **5**	**26-50** **4**	**51-75** **3**	**76-100** **2**	**Above 100** **1**

2) How many times in a year does your course appear on the timetable?

5 or more	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**

Comments:

3) Do you have any challenges in terms of loading content on the e-learning platform (AstriaLearning)?

Yes	**No**

4) How often do you encounter challenges in loading content on the on the e-learning platform?

Never 4	**Less Often 3**	**Often 2**	**Very Often 1**

Comments:

5) Did you receive any formal training on how to use the portal on the e-learning platform?

Yes	**No**

6) How would you rate the amount of interaction by students on the e-learning platform?

Very Good 5	**Good 4**	**About the same 3**	**Bad 2**	**Very Bad 1**

Comments:

7) How long do students take in submitting of assignments on the e-learning platform?

Immediately 5	**Before due date 4**	**Just before due date 3**	**On the due date 2**	**after the due date 1**

Comments:

8) How would you rate the system performance during submission of assignments on the portal?

Very Good 5	**Good 4**	**About the same 3**	**Bad 2**	**Very Bad 1**

Comments:

9) Did you use any of the following instructional technologies in the blended course?

Categories of Instructional Technologies	**Currently Use**	**Planning to use**	**Interested in Using**	**Not planning to use**
Content Management (Lecture Capture, Wikipedia, course wiki, blogs, RSS feeds, Podcasts)				
Communication (chat, web/video conferencing)				
Student Response Systems (iClicker, Turning Technology, eInstruction)				
Plagiarism Detection Software (e.g. Turnitin.com, Web Assign)				
Other—explain				

SECTION C: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Is there any additional support, technology, or training you feel could be provided that could help with the blended online learning?

Yes	No

2. If yes, List as required.

No	Tools Required
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

3. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of teaching a course in the blended format?

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4. Any other useful information?

The University of Zambia
Graduate School of Business

E-learning: Challenges of the University of Zambia's GSB Blended program for the Students

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Project Supervisor: Dr. Jackson Phiri (0966 693 731) or

GSB Coordinator: Dr.Chowa (0968 010 922)

Blended Course GSB Survey for Administration Staff

SECTION A: BIO DATA

Please tell us about yourself:

9. Gender:

Female	**Male**

10. Age:

18-35 **5**	**36-45** **4**	**46-55** **3**	**56-65** **2**	**Above 65** **1**

11. Education Level:

Certificate **5**	**Diploma** **4**	**Bachelor's Degree** **3**	**Master's Degree** **2**	**P.H.D** **1**

12. Professional qualification:

	Qualification	Year Obtained
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

13.

1	**Directorate/School**	
2	**Department/Unit**	
3	**Current Position Held**	

SECTION B: ADMINISTRATION EXPERIENCE

Please answer the questions that apply to you.

1) What is your role in the Graduate School of Business?----------
---
---

2) How long have you been in the position?

4	3	2	1

3) How familiar are you with the e-learning and blended program?

Not familiar 4	Not very familiar 3	Quite familiar 2	very familiar 1

4) How familiar are you with the current e-learning platform being used by the Graduate School of Business?

Not familiar 4	Not very familiar 3	Quite familiar 2	very familiar 1

5) Did you receive any formal training on how to use the e-learning platform?

Yes	No

6) Do you have any challenges with the e-learning platform (AstriaLearning)?

Yes	No

7) How often do you encounter challenges on the e-learning platform?

Never 4	Less Often 3	Often 2	Very Often 1

Comments:

8) How would you rate the amount of interaction by students on the e-learning platform?

Very Good 5	Good 4	About the same 3	Bad 2	Very Bad 1

Comments:

9) How would you rate the system performance during uploading of documents or registration of students on the e-learning platform?

Very Good 5	Good 4	About the same 3	Bad 2	Very Bad 1

Comments:

10) Do you have any dedicated personnel to attend to all queries and complaints by students?

Yes	No

11) If yes, how many?

5	4	3	2	1

Comment:

12) Is there any service level agreement in place on the handling of complaints and queries?

Yes	No

13) If yes, what is the average turnaround time for the resolution of student complaints and queries?

More than 72 hrs 4	72 hrs 3	48 hrs 2	24 hrs 1

SECTION C: RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Is there any additional support, technology, or training you feel could be provided that could help with the blended online learning?

Yes	No

6. If yes, List as required.

No	Tools Required
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

7. Any other useful information?
