

Can Blended Learning Enhance Intrinsic Motivation to Learn Political Science Education among Undergraduate Students: A Review of Empirical Studies

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Abstract

The growth of information and communication technology (ICT) has lent some transformation in the educational system through the application of modern equipment and blending same with the conventional classroom interaction between teachers and students/learners thereby introducing the blended learning system of instructional delivery. It has given rise to e-instructional methods that is both synchronous and asynchronous like blended learning. While there is growing research on the benefits of blended learning across various disciplines, there is a gap in understanding how it specifically influences intrinsic motivation within Political Science education. This study aims to fill that gap by examining students' perceptions of blended learning and its effect on intrinsic motivation to learn among Undergraduate students. This paper addressed the review in threefold objective by exploring the conceptualization of blended learning, political education, the role of intrinsic motivation in learning, as motivation is an all-inclusive trait in human behaviour, and provided insights into how blended learning interjected to improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: Blended learning, intrinsic motivation, political science education.

Introduction

Education has undergone significant transformation in the 21st century, with technology playing a pivotal role in reshaping how students learn and how instructors teach. This change in narratives with regards to knowledge construction, reconstruction and distribution is sequel to information and communication technology (ICT). ICT is simply the use of technological

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tools in sending and receiving information across (virtually) all areas of human endeavour. ICT has transformed the educational system into multi-choice learning environments based on individual preference, time and place in complementarity to classroom instruction interface (Nat & Ibrahim, 2020). This has occasioned a paradigm shift from the sole talk and chalk cum face to face teaching interactions to a more complex online cum distance learning model. This innovation from teacher to learner centered model across all levels of learning in education through ICT initiated a combined system which blends face to face interaction with an online instruction (Tiedemann, 2020) otherwise known as blended learning. Blended learning, as the name implies, is an instructional practice in the classroom that combined face-to-face instruction with online tools (Tucker, 2012). In other words, it is an instructional model that merges different forms of media such as text, audio, video and audio-visual at different time scales (synchronously or asynchronously) with the face-to-face method of instruction within the same course (Roseth, Akcaoglu, & Zellner, 2013). This method offers a more flexible, accessible, and personalized learning environment, which can cater to the diverse needs of students. Moreover, students tend to do well when their drive to learn is self-driven, intentional and focused. Though such factors as outmoded chalk and talk instructional strategy, low motivation, large pupil to teacher ratio (against 35–40 students to 1 teacher National Policy on Education delimitation), drought of learning equipment/instructional material for result oriented instruction, subject-phobia, feelings of deficiency, low self-esteem, anxiety etc pose as drawback (FRN, 2017; Lawrence & Ezegebe, 2021; Okoro, Ugwu, Ike, Ogbu, Nnadi, & Onyekwere, 2022). It suffices to state therefore, that the above factors unarguably weigh proportionate negative brunt emasculating students, in particular, the undergraduate students in tertiary institutions. The postulation that students exhibit frail and puny drive in pursuit to academic goals in the face of insufficient academic motivation is in tandem with the worrisome situation (Lawrence & Ezegebe, 2021). The reservation is whether blended learning could enhance intrinsic motivation among students? Motivating students to learn, though, is an indispensable aspect of instructional delivery, yet, students' general perceptions to instruction determine the extent to which they learn.

The effectiveness of any learning method depends not only on the availability of resources but also on students' motivation to engage with the material. Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, is a critical factor in determining how well students perform and persist in their studies. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive to learn for personal satisfaction, curiosity, or interest, rather than for external rewards such as grades or social recognition (Ryan

& Deci, 2020; Lawrence & Ezegebe, 2021). In this regard, blended learning has been suggested to foster a learning environment that promotes intrinsic motivation, due to its ability to offer autonomy, self-paced learning, and interactive tools that engage students more deeply in the learning process. This paper seeks to review literature on the role of blended learning in enhancing the intrinsic motivation to learn political education among undergraduates. **Political science education** means teaching students to take risks, challenge those with power, honor critical traditions, and be reflexive about how authority is used in the classroom. Political education refers to the process of educating individuals to actively participate in society through cultural organizations, social movements, political parties, and trade unions. The political system in Nigeria has discouraged citizens to be interested in political matters and as such it has also become difficult to relate the learning contents in political education to the real life. For this reason, students lack the interest to learn politics (Ayoola, 2023). It is very necessary to make students understand the importance of political education in their lives and their existence in society. This may be possible with the use of a technologically related method like blended learning. The efficacy of this method may appeal to students and enhance their interest in leaning political education. Hence, in this study this paper, reviewed literature in this respect.

Conceptualizations of Blended Learning

Blended learning has been widely defined as the integration of traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning activities, creating a hybrid model of education. Blended learning offers a transformative educational experience by combining the best aspects of both in-person and online teaching methods. Conceptualising blended learning categorises it into four different groups based on intended purpose(s) namely to: namely to: a) combine or mix modes of web-based technology (e.g., live virtual classroom, self-paced instruction, collaborative learning, streaming video, audio, and text) to accomplish an educational goal; b) combine various pedagogical approaches (e.g., constructivism, behaviourism, cognitivism) to produce an optimal learning outcome with or without instructional technology; c) combine any form of instructional technology (e.g., videotape, CD-ROM, web-based training, film) with face-to-face instructor-led training; and d) create mixing or actual training or mixing of technology to create harmful tasks and work tasks. This method according to Bonk and Graham (2012) allows for flexibility and provides students with greater control over the pace, place, and time of learning and has the capacity to foster autonomy, competence and relatedness; the key concepts of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This approach is particularly

beneficial in higher education, where students often need the autonomy to manage their own learning schedules as a traditional face-to-face instructional and digital learning tool which has gained prominence in instructional delivery, implying that in particular it can benefit undergraduate political science students in Enugu State.

In this context blended learning is delineated as a teaching and learning system in which students learn (political science/education) via electronic and or online media as well as traditional in-person interaction. This indicates that the synergy of online educational material and the conventional corporeal interaction is what blended learning entails. In blended learning instructional paradigm, while classroom interface offers an opportunity for immediate corporal meeting between and among the students, the online medium offers self-paced erudition with interactive media; making it accessible to the learners' from their home page(s) in such forms as games, video, tutorial, quiz et cetera under a learning management system. In recent years, the adoption of blended learning has increased due to advancements in technology and the need for innovative teaching methods (Picciano, 2019). Al-Busaidi (2013) had earlier reported 30–79% of lesson or content been delivered online, making the approach a blended pedagogical method or a blend of didactic methods and delivery styles. Educational institutions have begun to realise that blended learning is not merely a technological shift but a pedagogical one that emphasises active learning and students' engagement. The shift to blended learning environments enables educators to incorporate multi-media content, discussion forums, and interactive assessments, fostering a more dynamic learning process.

Blended learning can take several forms, depending on the level of integration between online and face-to-face instruction. Bonk and Graham (2012), Staker and Horn (2012), Graham (2013), Horn and Staker (2015) and Allen & Seaman (2017) classified blended learning models into several groups. The commonest categories include:

- a) Flipped model (the type that enables learners to engage with online content before participating in an in-person learning);
- b) Rotational model (the type that learners rotate with various learning modalities ranging from face-to-face instruction to online learning and collaborative group activities);
- c) Enrich virtual model (the type that primarily takes place (fully) online with periodic face-to-face sessions for hands-on activities assessments and collaboration, this form avails a synergy autonomy and structured interaction);
- d) Face-to-face driver model (the relying on person instruction as the core of the learning experience supplemented by online components); and

e) Flex model (the type that offers learners significant autonomy to choose when and how to access online content)

Importance of Blended Learning

Blended learning has become increasingly important in modern education due to its flexibility and ability to meet the diverse needs of learners. One of the key benefits of blended learning according to Means, Toyama, Murphy, and Baki (2014) is its capacity to enhance student engagement. This offers at best the admixture of offline and online training or teaching/learning approaches, taking into account every type of learner, irrespective of preference. Another key benefit is, it breaks the monotony of single learning approach, meaning that students who engage with blended learning models are more likely to participate actively in discussions and collaborative activities. Blended learning also provides opportunities for personalised learning, where students can progress through the material at their own pace. According to Means *et al*, (2014), the personalised nature of blended learning enables instructors to provide more tailored feedback and support, which can enhance student performance. Another benefit is, it cuts cost and enhances retention of information. It also facilitates corporate training, making it easier to monitor and measure the effectiveness of blended training programmes. It can be customised thereby provides ultimate flexibility in learning. It widens knowledge horizon and predisposes instructional delivery to enthusiastic, exciting cum exploratory activity in the lives of learners. Suffice to say that in political science education, where students often engage with complex theoretical concepts, the flexibility and adaptability of blended learning can help deepen students understanding of key topics.

Despite its many advantages, blended learning also presents several challenges. One of the primary concerns is the digital divide i.e. the gap between those who have access to digital technologies and those who do not. In regions like Enugu State, where access to high-speed internet and reliable technology may be limited due to poor network system, the implementation of blended learning can be uneven (Mtebe & Raisamo, 2014). Additionally, institutional readiness plays a critical role in the success of blended learning initiatives. Institutions investing in the necessary infrastructure, training, and support systems to ensure both students and instructors can effectively engage with blended learning platforms is a desideratum.

Another issue is the pedagogical shift required for successful blended learning. Instructors moving away from traditional lecture-based teaching methods to more interactive and student-centered approaches need be considered. This transition can be difficult for educators who are

unfamiliar with technology or resistant to change. Furthermore, the quality of the online components in a blended learning environment is crucial. Poorly designed online content can result in disengagement and a lack of motivation among students (Means *et al.*, 2014). This goes without saying that, any teaching and learning strategy or mode that is capable of enhancing learning is capable of enhancing students' motivation and even their performance because such strategy aid teachers to engage students in active learning. Besides, Bannister (2020) reported that a lack of physical classroom environment may hinder students' opportunities for collaborative problem-solving and immediate feedback. This implies that absolute preclusion of physical classroom contact would rather frustrate the constructive influence it yields in learners in terms of social interaction in the classroom and physical collaboration. In Rice and Carter, (2020) students reported decreased motivation and increased isolation in virtual classrooms (due to non physical contact) which affected their overall participation and performance. This is by implication suggestive of the admixture of both physical and online instructional delivery which is blended learning. This further shows that blended learning has the collaborative potent to boost students learning motivation visa vise undergraduate students in Enugu state. Motivating undergraduate students learning in Enugu would go a long way to boost their intrinsic motivation to learn more and that would in turn influence their understanding and achievement. However, the implementation of sole online learning is prone with drawbacks as Kusumaningrum, Kuncoro, Sulistyowati and Arigiyati (2021) reported reduced students interest in learning due to sole online learning implementation leading to digital fatigue. Thus balancing synchronous and asynchronous activities mitigates this issue (Tan & Wong, 2022).

Concept of Motivation

Motivation is a key psychological construct that robustly influences learning and academic performance. In educational psychology, motivation refers to the process that initiates, guides, and sustains goal-directed behavior (Ryan & Deci, cited in Okoro, 2022). For students, motivation is critical in determining how much effort they invest in their studies and how persistent they are in overcoming academic challenges. It is one indispensable factor present in every human activity including learning/teaching. Inarguably it is an all-inclusive trait or attribution in human doings generally and universally (Okoro, Ike, & Ologe, 2023). Motivation deducing from its Latin foundation "*movere*" implies to move, which is an active trait that is inevitably present in humans. It covers those internal and external forces that initiate actions that persist until a specific goal is achieved. Beulahbel (2019) defined it as the innate drive for

all our activities. Okoro, Ike, & Ologe (2023) defined motivation succinctly as the impelling force that incites and sustains behaviour. In this context, motivation is conceptualised as the originating and sustaining grits to satisfy a need (in political science). This denotes that motivation is the reason for doing anything. It is motivation that gets a person moving, keeps them going, determines where and the extent to which they go, making it a desideratum according to Benedetti, Diefendorff, Gabriel, and Chandler (2015) in teaching/learning. Emphatically implying that instructional delivery is inconclusive (i.e. the instructional objective/s is unachievable) without the requisite motivation, as all human behaviour is enthused by either events from outside them or spurred by motives from within them (Ryan & Deci, 2017) predicated on self-determination. Deci and Ryan did propose that the attitude of self-determination is present in every human activity, presupposing that self-determination is an inherent trait. It became a theory in 2000, positing that one is either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated at any given time. The theory categorized motivation into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Adamma, Ekwutosim, Unamba, 2018; Lawrence & Ezegbe, 2021) but it hinted that an amotivation could arise in the event of disinterestedness where one is not motivated.

Intrinsic Motivation: this arises from within the learner. It refers to the drive to engage in an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequence. It is driven by curiosity, personal interest, or a desire to develop competence. (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Intrinsic motivation is closely linked to self-determination, where students feel a sense of autonomy and control over their learning (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Students who are intrinsically motivated learn because they find the subject matter interesting or because they experience personal growth and enjoyment in the learning process. When goals for studying do not depend on external reasons for engaging in the study but rather on the sole glee or delight and satisfaction emitting from the inherent pleasure of the study, it is intrinsically motivated. Therefore, it explicates with pellucid that when the drive ensues from within an individual rather than from the outside or environment, the inclination is intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic Motivation on the other hand is driven by external factors, such as rewards, praise or the avoidance of punishment. Students may study to get high grades, to meet parental expectations, or to avoid failing a course. While extrinsic motivation can be effective in driving behaviour, it is often less sustainable and may not lead to long-term engagement with the material. Invariably, intrinsic motivation is often considered more sustainable and associated with deeper learning outcomes (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meec, 2014). This paper is interested in intrinsic motivation. A self-regulated motivation

without any external factor. Self-regulated learners are more likely to take initiative, monitor their own progress, and employ effective learning strategies. This is especially relevant in fields such as political science, where students need to engage deeply with complex theories, critically analyse political phenomena, and develop independent thought. Intrinsic motivation, therefore, is essential for achieving meaningful academic outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2020). In addition, intrinsic motivation is natural, i.e. it's an innate force driven by interest and enthusiasm in a given task and so exists within an individual other than deductible from external pressure, pleasure or desire for rewards. Intrinsic motivation also seeks out novelty and challenges, extends and exercises one's capability to explore and learn as an inherent tendency (Ryan & Deci in Lawrence, 2021a).

Concept of Political Science Education

Political science education is a discipline that focuses on the systematic study of government, political institutions, policies, and political behavior. It can be defined as a discipline that concerns itself with the application of the knowledge of Education in the systematic study and critical analysis of political thoughts, political theories, political institutions, political organizations and political activities of the State (Lawrence, 2021b). It is designed to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of political systems, governance structures, public administration, international relations, and political theories. The primary goal of political science education is to foster critical thinking, analytical skills, and informed citizenship among students, enabling them to engage effectively in political and civic activities (Dahl, 2020). Political Science Education, based on the enunciated philosophy, is established to among other aims and objectives, produce student teachers with adequate knowledge of the contents and principles of Political Science and its application in classrooms using educational theories and methodologies (Lawrence, 2021b)

At its core, political science education provides learners with theoretical and practical knowledge of how governments operate at local, national, and international levels. It encompasses various subfields, including comparative politics, political philosophy, public policy, and international relations (Shively, 2018). Through these areas of study, students gain insights into the complexities of political decision-making, power dynamics, and the role of institutions in shaping societal outcomes (Almond & Powell, 2019).

Moreover, political science education emphasizes research and inquiry, encouraging students to analyze contemporary political issues using qualitative and quantitative methods (Johnson, 2021). By engaging with historical and modern political developments, students develop the ability to assess policies, evaluate leadership, and understand the implications of governance decisions. This analytical foundation enables them to contribute meaningfully to discussions on democracy, human rights, and public affairs (Norris, 2020). In addition to theoretical learning, political science education often incorporates experiential learning through debates, case studies, and simulations. These activities allow students to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios, enhancing their ability to articulate arguments, negotiate, and propose solutions to political challenges (Smith & Vavreck, 2022). By integrating traditional and innovative teaching methods, political science education prepares students for careers in public service, law, academia, diplomacy, and various other fields requiring political expertise. Overall, political science education is essential for cultivating informed and active citizens who can critically engage with political issues, advocate for societal change, and contribute to democratic governance. Its interdisciplinary nature and focus on analytical rigor make it a vital field for understanding and addressing the complexities of contemporary political life (Verba, 2019).

The Nexus between Blended Learning and intrinsic Motivation

Blended learning has the potential to influence both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation by offering students greater flexibility, autonomy, and engagement with the learning material. One of the key strengths of blended learning is its ability to create a learning environment that fosters intrinsic motivation through personalized learning experiences (Means et al., 2014). Students can access learning materials at their own pace, engage with interactive content, and participate in collaborative online discussions, all of which contribute to a more engaging and fulfilling learning experience (Graham, 2013). According to self-determination theory (SDT), intrinsic motivation is supported when students experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Blended learning environments can provide these three conditions. For instance, online learning components allow students to have more control over their learning schedules (autonomy), while interactive quizzes and assignments provide immediate feedback that helps students gauge their understanding (competence). In addition, blended learning platforms often include collaborative tools that enable peer-to-peer interaction, fostering a sense of community and relatedness among students (Picciano, 2019).

Enhancing the intrinsic motivation to learn political Science education through blended learning

Similarly, Nat and Ibrahim (2019) found that interest, self-directed learning, individualized learning, computer self-efficacy, social perception, external expectations, and skill growth are the main drivers of students' acceptance to blended learning. And that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, tangent upon the instructor's background and knowledge about blended learning instructional techniques, weigh some persuasive or dissuasive influence on students' intrinsic motivation in blended learning. Alsalmi, Eissa, & Awwad (2021) in a study on blended learning in higher education: a study of its impact on students' performance, using a quasi-experimental design involving 268 university students in a statistics course compared the academic performance of students in a blended learning group with those in a traditional instruction group. The study observed a positive impact of blended learning on student achievement and noted that student engagement, which is often linked to motivation, was a factor influenced by the perceived effectiveness of blended learning, subsequently improving learning outcomes. Even though the study did not directly measure intrinsic motivation, the positive effect on performance and engagement suggested a potential connection as the context of a quantitative subject like statistics provides a specific perspective on the impact of blended learning. Zhang, Zhao, Zhou, & Zhang (2022) in meta-analyses of differences in blended and traditional learning outcomes and students.' Tselios, Dasiopoulou, проблем, & Tseliou (2023) studied blended learning in a higher education context: exploring university students' learning behaviour using questionnaires administered to 176 Greek university students shortly after the pandemic to investigate the perceptions of their learning behaviour in blended learning environments. The study found a strong association between blended education and student motivation, with students expressing positive perceptions of their motivation in such environments. Furthermore, students perceived blended learning as an effective approach for fostering learner autonomy, motivation, and a sense of responsibility towards their learning. This research directly examines student motivation within blended learning and reveals positive perceptions, linking it to key elements of intrinsic motivation like autonomy and responsibility, especially in the context of post-pandemic educational experiences. Lyu, Lai, & дракон (2023) carried a meta-analysis of effects of blended learning on performance, attitude, achievement, and engagement across different countries. This meta-analysis summarized the findings of previous studies on the effectiveness of blended learning across various countries, focusing on its impact on students' performance, attitudes, learning

achievement, and engagement. The study found that students in several countries, including the United Arab Emirates, China, Singapore, Vietnam, the UK, and the USA, demonstrated significantly more positive attitudes towards blended learning compared to traditional learning approaches. This broad, multi-country analysis reinforces the observation of positive student attitudes towards blended learning, suggesting a potentially widespread trend that could positively influence motivation. Ullah, Rehman, Khan, Ahmad, & Shafiq (2024) made a comparative analysis of blended learning and traditional instruction: effects on academic motivation and learning outcomes among 400 Bachelor of Science students, using a questionnaire to assess their opinions on the learning environment, instructor practices, benefits of blended learning, and its impact on academic motivation and learning outcomes. The research found that blended learning had a statistically significant positive effect on academic motivation. Additionally, the study indicated that teachers' instructional practices within the blended learning environment played a crucial role in influencing student motivation. This study suggests a positive association between blended learning and academic motivation in a science context which is also analogous to political science education. More so, De Bruijn-Smolers, & Prinsen (2024) had a study on effective student engagement with blended learning: a systematic review. The study analyzed 15 studies to determine the elements of blended learning designs that impact effective student engagement, breaking down engagement into academic, behavioral, cognitive, and affective dimensions. It was concluded that blended learning interventions generally had a moderate to high positive impact on overall student engagement, encompassing various dimensions that reflect motivation and investment in learning. While focusing on engagement, the study suggests that blended learning can positively influence the factors that contribute to a student's willingness to participate and invest in their learning, which are closely related to intrinsic motivation. Noteworthy is fact that discrepancies in the learning pace among male and female students exist in blended learning. This raises gender questions common to academic discourses. Gender, a perceived cultural construct in society is a supposition on what constitutes masculine and feminine. A societal prescription for persons based on sex, and a stereotyping behaviour based on sex per Okwo, (2023). It is as well used to denote role-play and responsibilities peculiar to males and, or females in society showing categorization into two natural grouping—male and female, man and woman, boy and girl—which based on socio-anthropological rationale, apportions roles, stances, and values deemed apposite to either male or female (Okoro, 2022). How, male and female students respond to blended learning vary, and could warrant unevenness in

implementation amongst male and female undergraduate political science students in the area under study.

How blended Learning can enhance Motivation

Several studies have shown that blended learning enhances motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, by creating a more learner-centered environment. For instance, Smith, Brown, and Davis (2021) noted in their study, collaborative case studies in blended political science learning; active learning in higher education, that collaborative case-study analysis via blended formats strengthened students' engagement with real-world political issues. Similarly, Martinez and Fernández (2021) in simulation games in blended political science courses: a motivation analysis, demonstrated that students using a political simulation game in a blended course showed greater motivation to master complex concepts like electoral systems. Garcia, Rodriguez, and Thompson (2022) in online debates and political engagement: a blended learning approach, found that structured online debates in a political science course increased students' motivation by creating a sense of community. More so, Wang and Chen (2022) in modular learning and student autonomy in political science, observed that modular online content combined with in-class discussions enhanced students' sense of ownership over their learning, leading to deeper political inquiry. Also, a study entitled choice-based learning in political science: impacts on motivation and performance by Khalil, Wong, and Dawson (2023) found that political science education students in blended courses reported higher engagement when given choices in assignment formats (e.g., podcasts, essays, or debates). Additionally, Lee and Park (2023) in adaptive quizzes and self-efficacy in political science education, found that adaptive quizzes in online modules improved political science education students' confidence, which correlated with higher intrinsic motivation. These findings show that students who participated in blended learning courses are more likely to engage in active learning strategies, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative discussion. And these elements are crucial for enhancing intrinsic motivation, as they encourage students to explore the material(s) out of interest rather than obligation. In political science education, blended learning can enhance motivation by providing students with a variety of resources and learning activities that appeal to their interests. Online simulations of political systems or virtual debates on current political issues for instance, can make the learning process more interactive and meaningful, thereby increasing, per Means et al (2014), students' intrinsic motivation to engage with the content. Johnson, Walton, Strickler and Elliot (2023) in

addendum, reported that collaborative online platforms foster peer interactions and problem-solving discussions. Similarly, Li, in Thomas and Mohammed (2024) did corroborate that online teaching and learning enhances students' problem-solving skill and conceptual understanding, enhances differences in students' engagement levels, and influences students learning outcome and overall academic achievement.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is pellucid that anything capable of enhancing students' interest to learn is capable of enhancing students' motivation, and blended learning either synchronously or asynchronously renders teaching/learning interesting with the clout to influence learning motivation positively, which is tantamount saying that blended learning has the potent to increase intrinsic motivation among the undergraduates in political science education, provided instructors properly blend the requisite learning tool. And moreover, at all times one is either intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, thus whatever that could boost intrinsic motivation to learn can consequently improve performance or achievement hence blended learning has a way of enhancing intrinsic motivation to learn among the undergraduate students in political science in Enugu state suggesting that the use of blended learning should be prioritized and implemented in instructional delivery.

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