

# Leveraging the Supremacy of Blended Teaching and Learning Provisions in ECD Environments in Gweru Urban Schools

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## ABSTRACT

Soon after the Covid-19 induced lockdown era, blended teaching and learning provisions gained tremendous popularity, and schools are endeavouring to laud its advantages in teaching and learning environments. This study delved on the how to leverage blended teaching and learning facility in ECD settings in Gweru Urban Primary Schools in a bid to attain sustainable education. Blended teaching and learning combine the traditional classroom teaching with emerging technology provisions and online educational facilities, making learning more real, funny, interesting, contextual, and engaging. The Blended Learning Model Theory by Garrison and Kanuka (2004) formed the theoretical framework for the study. The theory explains how blended learning combines face-to-face learning and online learning facilities to create a more effective and engaging learning environment. Interpretivism paradigm, qualitative research approach and a descriptive survey research design formed the research methodology of this study. Questionnaires, interviews and observations were data collection instruments used to collect data from ten primary schools in Gweru Urban. Results were thematically presented, where emerging themes were analysed in relation to research questions. Blended teaching and learning provisions proffer higher learner achievement in ECD settings. It emerged that the utilisation of blended teaching learning facilities in ECD settings was facing multitudinous challenges. The study, therefore, recommends a multifaceted approach to arrest challenges affecting both teachers and learners when utilising blended teaching and learning facility in ECD environments.

**Key Words:** Leveraging, Supremacy, Blended Learning, Primary Schools and Sustainable Education.

## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Thoughtful merging of face-to-face lessons and e-learning facilities has taken precedence in the current world of education. This became more conspicuous during and extended after the Covid-19 pandemic era which rocked the world between the period 2019 and 2021. The pandemic greatly affected humanity in diverse forms across all continents, putting the whole world in a panic mode. The education sector was not spared by this tsunami either, hence e-learning platforms were adopted for teaching and learning. Covid-19 tremendously affected mostly Early Childhood Development (ECD) learners due to their vulnerability than any other group of learners in schools. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 4 advocates for inclusivity and equitable quality education towards lifelong learning and opportunities for all children (UNICEF, 2019 & Muchandiona & Manyumwa, 2024). Covid-19 induced lockdowns caused extended school closure globally, bringing about and strengthening the use of e-learning platforms in the education sector. This was because remote teaching and learning were seen as the only ways to allow learners to continue with their education, when face-to-face lessons were rendered impossible.

Since the whole world was caught unaware by the Covid-19 pandemic, most schools were not prepared to embrace and capitalise e-learning platforms in the teaching and learning processes. Antwi-Boampong & Bokolo, (2022) explain that throughout the Covid-19 era, some learners, staff members and institutions benefited a lot from e-learning facilities. A number of schools across the globe, especially in developed nations