"The Role of Blended Education in Developing Creative Thinking" A qualitative Study

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Abstract:

T he study aimed to analyze the role of blended education in developing creative thinking from the point of view of teachers and educational supervisors in the schools of Education - Yatta. The researcher relied on the qualitative and adopted the interview as a main tool for the research. It was implemented on the participants and represented by respondents interested in blended education (primary education teacher and primary education supervisor). The results were analyzed using Gilligan's methodology, deducing the coding from the folds of the interview and accessing themes that fit the study questions. The study found teachers' fluency in adapting to reality, their flexibility in changing the beliefs and culture of education, the expansion of the pedagogy developed in blended education, the teacher's sensitivity to creativity and support, the challenge of creative educational leadership to the new reality, originality and unfamiliarity. The researcher recommended strengthening teachers' attitudes and expectations for the blended learning model.

Keywords: Blended education, Creative thinking, Directorate of Education - Yatta.

Introduction

There has been necessary importance of blended learning in developing teacher creativity. The blended learning model is possibly developed using creativity-based learning activities for teachers, which can be reflected in students' performance. It may also encourage

and enhance teachers' practical skills for their future. This can help improve teachers' creativity and satisfaction with teaching activities, making their teaching and learning more effective and creative.

Furthermore, blended learning and ICT-based methods are two ways to increase access to creative thinking. Educators provide unique answers to society's most pressing difficulties and problems using these technical tools. (Nanjundaswamy, 2021)

Hence, the importance of the study stems from the importance of the subject of the study centered around the role of blended education in developing creative thinking. In line with this development, the education system found itself compelled to re-engineer its educational processes in line with the spirit of the modern era. Therefore, the education systems found this option that ensures them to deliver and generalize their education to the largest possible segments of society, and this type requires possessing skills It is great in dealing with modern technologies and the use of the Internet, but it has several negatives, the most important of which is that its feedback may be weak or incomplete, especially in its asynchronous type.

Therefore, the study aimed to reach the role that blended education plays in developing creative thinking from the point of view of teachers and educational supervisors in the Directorate of Education - Yatta. It also aimed to investigate the creative educational indicators stemming

from the activation of blended education in the schools of Education - Yatta.

The problem of the study stems from the presence of a need to diversify the teaching strategies used in the field of education, as the researcher noticed, through practical practice in supervising English language teachers in the Directorate of Education - Yatta, the teachers' lack of diversification in teaching strategies, and their lack of integration of modern technology with the usual teaching methods. , which may be attributed to the teachers' lack of experience and knowledge of how to combine the internet and digital media with the methods used in the classroom, which requires the active participation of the teacher and student, and therefore there is a need to diversify strategies that would develop creative thinking, skills and develop their attitudes.

The objectives of the study were achieved by answering the study questions as follows:

What is the role of blended learning in developing creative thinking? What are the indicators of creative thinking that appeared in activating blended learning?

Concepts of the study:
Blended Education: It is education based on integrating face-to-face meetings (normal classes) and e-learning through various technological systems through an integrated educational model that enables students to take advantage of all available methods, capabilities, and e-

learning tools to provide learning that suits the characteristics of students, the nature of the curriculum, and objectives. educational. (Al-Ruwaithi, 2020)

Creative thinking skills: The sum of mental skills to measure teachers' scores to activate: flexibility, fluency, originality, expansion, problem sensitivity, and challenge to improve the teaching process and achieve its goals. (Al-Ruwaithi, 2020)

Blended Learning Pedagogy: Interaction, flexibility, and appropriate types of assessment are key characteristics of the blended learning methodology (Smith & Hill, 2019). There are many alternatives to blended classroom designs: integrating face-to-face and online education, fundamentally rethinking instructional design to organize Student participation, restructuring, and replacement of contact hours with traditional classes.

In addition to the above, students need to be involved in solving real-world problems at work by making an integrated project based on blended learning that can help them apply their theoretical knowledge in the real world. This type of integrated project work will better prepare students to adapt and thrive in the workplace by allowing them to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace to build leadership capabilities. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, leadership development appears to require a shift in education from traditional learning environments to those that allow teaching methods (Spanjaard, 2019).

Creativity and creative thinking from an educational perspective: Creating a new environment and encouraging creativity are among the most important aspects of education. As a result, the teachers' creativity will allow them to come up with something new. Moreover, in the latest blended education ranking, creativity is one of the most important and highest talents. The term creative thinking refers to solutions to problems in the form of elements, including the problem of students dropping out of school due to force majeure circumstances, and therefore creative thinking is a tributary to the solution (Wahyudi, Waluya, Suyitno, and Isnarto, 2020)

The concept of creativity (Hong et al. 2019) referred to factors that develop creativity and include: **Knowledge:** Teachers with creative skills provide creative professional knowledge. For example, sufficient professional knowledge is required for creative performance, otherwise, creative products will not be created and the effect may become worse. **Intention**: Intention covers the personality traits of attitude, inclination, and commitment, which are separate from skills or ability. And **ability**: Creativity is the cognitive ability of a person. Showing creativity requires some skills and strategies.

In the study conducted by (Al-Ruwathi, 2020) entitled "The impact of a proposed model based on blended learning in developing creativity skills and self-efficacy in the design of education for graduate students," where the researcher prepared an assessment scale that includes gradual levels of creative skills necessary for the design of

educational products, which is fluency Flexibility, expansion, and sensitivity to problems. The study showed that there are differences in the creativity skill rating scale between the experimental and control groups. (Al-Hajri, 2020) also conducted a study entitled the effectiveness of employing blended learning in developing creative thinking skills in Islamic education for ninth-grade students in the State of Kuwait. The researcher used the semi-experimental approach (experimental group and control group). The researcher prepared a list of creative thinking skills and their behavioral indicators. The study found that there are statistically significant differences between the arithmetic averages of the experimental and control groups in the employment of blended learning.

Creative thinking skills: Creative thinking skills are divided into the following: **Fluency:** It is the ability to produce and generate a large number of ideas, alternatives, synonyms, or uses in response to a specific stimulus, and speed and ease of generating them. As well as **originality:** It is novelty and uniqueness and depends on the quality of the creative output within the members of the same group, and the lower the degree of prevalence of the idea, the higher the degree of its originality. In addition to **flexibility**, it changes the individual's mental state by changing the situation or the ability to generate diverse and unfamiliar ideas and transform the course of education in line with the requirements of the stimulus or situation (Al-Hajri, 2020). Al-Ruwathi (2020) adds the skill of expansion: the ability to add new and diverse details to an

idea, problem, or product to develop and implement it. And the skill of sensitivity to problems: is awareness of the existence of problems, needs, or weaknesses in the environment or situation, awareness of errors, and then adding new knowledge or introducing improvements or existing products. This classification is the one that was adopted in the current study due to its suitability for blended learning based on the development of creative thinking.

Methods for developing creative thinking: Creative thinking skills can be developed in many ways, and they have been mentioned in (Ibrahim, 2019) and (Kalyuzhnaya, 2018) as follows: Urging the use of scientific stimuli (open-ended): characterized by their results are not known, induction on activating the method of inquiry and discovery: it provides an opportunity to practice mental operations and skills of inquiry and discovery. Brainstorming: It aims at diversity, multiplicity, and originality of ideas. Teaching strategy with examples: through the use of induction, conclusion, and case study, urging to activate role-playing, using e-learning tools and social networks: enabling teachers to prepare online research on a topic or an idea, stimulating the collaborative teaching method. (Social skills), which contributes to the exchange of ideas and the development of creative thinking skills.

Methodology: The researcher relied on the study of the qualitative approach with qualitative methods to know this important role. Therefore, the researcher followed this

methodology in achieving the objectives of the study because it corresponds to the nature and objectives of the study. Where the researcher focuses on understanding the participants' views in determining their role in developing creative thinking through blended learning by clarifying their practical experiences in this over the previous year of work in this field. This methodology also provides the opportunity for in-depth analysis through a comprehensive approach to points that may not be addressed in the quantitative curriculum.

Instrument of the study: To achieve the purpose of this study, which is to identify the role of blended education in developing creative thinking, the researcher adopted the interview as the main tool for research in the Directorate of Education - Yatta.

Participants: Interviews were conducted with two respondents in line with the objectives and merits of the study, who had experience in blended learning and creative thinking in schools affiliated with the Directorate of Education - Yatta. The demographic characteristics were as follows:

Job description of the participant Academic qualification and specialization Years of experience

Elementary Education Supervisor	Methods of teaching science less than a year in the current job capacity.
Elementary Education Teacher	Bachelor of Elementary Education more than ten years

Mechanism of data analysis: After the researcher conducted the interview and its procedures by targeting the

concerned participants, the results were analyzed by deducing coding from the folds of the interview, and arriving at themes that fit the study questions to achieve the objectives of the study. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using content analysis of the interview text. Content analysis is a research technique to make repeatable and valid conclusions from texts (or other things that are meaningful and appropriate to the objectives of the study) in the context of their use. In the process of content analysis of the interview texts, **Gilligan's methodology** and a system of themes were followed that reflect the main elements of the texts obtained. These themes can be defined either inductively (derived from the literature) or (only from data). Inductive themes are recommended especially when the researcher aims to reveal new findings. The texts were encoded independently and then the primary topics were discussed. To refine the introduction to the topics and create the main themes.

Analysis of the results: The study focused on the role of blended education in developing creative thinking in the Directorate of Education - Yatta, the extent to which this type of education is practiced in the schools of the Education Directorate of Yatta City, and indicators that suggest the development of creative thinking as a result of using and activating blended education. After extrapolating the analysis of the interviews independently from the researcher, the main ideas were compared, then an attempt was made to embellish them in a way that suits the subject and questions of the study, a procedure aimed at ensuring

the credibility of the results, which provided an accurate description of the context and topic of the study.

Procedures: procedures were made to the educational literature related to the subject of the study, and the participants were deliberately selected for the researcher's knowledge of these respondents and their relationship to the subject of the study under study, and the formulation of interview questions, and setting personal dates with the respondents in line with their circumstances and time and analyzing the answers in the interviews based on **Gilligan's Methodology** and deduction of categories and themes **The following is a presentation of the analysis according to Gilligan's methodology:**

First voice: Key points (participants, what was talked about, context)

The two participants, one male, and the other female have several years of experience in teaching, and they have good experience in blended learning during their work in teaching and educational supervision, as well as they, had a school administration that was supportive of creative learning and blended learning. Where the two participants talked about blended learning skills, their role in developing creative thinking, and the obstacles they faced during their experience, especially during the Corona pandemic. In addition to the indicators that show their practice of creative thinking skills in blended education.

Second voice: The culture of the participants

The two participants place themselves in a school environment that supports blended learning, where there is

a school leadership that supports blended learning that aims to develop creativity and provides the basics of blended learning and creative education such as preparing programs, providing appropriate times, supporting equipment, rewards, and incentives for that. In addition, they have good technical skills to apply creative thinking through blended learning. Not to mention the interactive environment with students' parents through multimedia.

Third voice: Relationships

The two participants have positive, supportive relationships with each of the students' parents on an ongoing basis, and they have a relationship with the Directorate of Education, the heads of the technology and supervision department, and the technical director in the directorate. They also have a relationship with technology, multimedia and e-learning programs such as the TEAMS program and WhatsApp and others. It facilitated blended education between teachers themselves, between teachers and educational leadership, and between teachers, students, and their parents through the development of means of communication at any time... And the work between the parties to the educational process became unified teams with a unified goal.

Fourth voice: Feelings and hearings

The researcher felt the extent of **fatigue and effort** exerted by the participants in the blended learning during the work period, and the extent of the time spent in applying the blended learning skills, which made them feel that they had complete **satisfaction** and conviction in the extent of the success achieved in developing creative thinking,

especially that some obstacles and challenges were transforming without achieving the desired goals of blended learning. Especially the extent of **responsibility** the participants felt in their experiences in implementing blended learning activities. There is also a feeling of **conflict** between the school workers' supporters and opponents, and this made them **confused** at work at different times.

The fifth voice: Repetition, speech-language, and metaphors

When the two participants mention their experience in blended learning and its role in developing their creative thinking, it turns out that the challenge formula in the verbal language was clear through the repetition of **phrases such as "challenges, difficulties, and obstacles" and "persistent problems".** The word **"results"** was repeated more than once by the participants, and this suggests positivity in the verbal language that the participants used, and this stems from their full conviction of the importance of blended learning in developing their creative skills.

The sixth voice: Contradictions

The contradiction emerged in the participants' feelings. One of them said: It had a great impact on my skills in following up on electronic lessons in more than one specialty and more than one skill. I also benefited from the teaching methods that teachers use during the lessons. I also benefited from scientific information and technical observations by following me. The educational supervisor says: "I have an imbalance in knowledge and skills, and I'm

turning to the correct way to understand, apply and use them."

> Where we find that he possessed many skills and in return, he says that he has an imbalance in knowledge. This is a positive contradiction towards achieving the goal.

There is also a contradiction between using vocabulary such as **success and achieving satisfactory results**, and between vocabulary such as **problems, challenges, obstacles, difficulty...**

The seventh voice: Social Places and description of social dictates.

The two participants raised in their talk about the **nature of time** in implementing blended learning, where the elementary education teacher says: "We find that we face a challenge in getting all the students to join the **class** at the time the class begins, and some students find that some of them do not have **internet**, and others do not have a phone or computer "Sometimes you hear the voice of the young students' brothers while he is at home **screaming** or looking at the phone or computer screen to participate in the folds of the class."

The basic dictation that appears in the interview is "Facing challenges and problems to continue developing creative thinking for them and students as well" in addition to "let your father bring you down on the Internet next time." Also from social dictates is the freedom of teachers to express their educational ideas, and this is reflected in the students

and their time and enhances the value of the students with a more sense of responsibility.

The eighth voice: what was interviewed by or contradicted the ideas of the researcher

What the researcher witnessed in the interview reinforced the researcher's **positive attitude**, which was met with the researcher's impressions of the importance of blended learning in developing creative thinking despite the presence of many obstacles, obstacles, problems, and challenges. This is consistent with the opinion of the researcher.

The ninth voice: What was the idea learned after the interview

After interviewing with its questions to answer the study question "What is the role of blended education in the development of creative thinking", the interview had a great role and a prominent impact on the blended education develops the creative thinking and this is what reinforced the idea of the researcher because what was interviewed, they experienced blended learning in detail and talked about their experiences. In detail, about the creative skills, they acquired as a result of their blended learning experience. The main idea was that the challenge is the key to creative thinking despite the obstacles and challenges and the lack of an adequate blended learning structure. It also showed the emergence of new behaviors among participants in the implementation of the blended learning process and its role in developing creative thinking skills.

The following is a presentation and discussion of the results of the study:

The first question: What is the role of blended learning in developing creative thinking?

To answer the study question, the interviews conducted and analyzed, the following was found:

The first theme: Fluency in adapting to reality: The participants in the study answered that with the development and spread of the use of technology and the Internet among most people, including the student segment, and the spread of their use of smart devices, it became necessary to employ them in something useful for them. Given the difficult conditions that students went through during the Corona pandemic, which caused an imbalance in the educational system, it became necessary to find a solution to reduce losses. Therefore, blended education was a useful way to reduce these losses, and blended education could be used to enrich students and treat the weakness of some due to the inability to do so during class time. Many countries have resorted to this method of education to reduce the time that students gather in the same place. Therefore, blended education has become an urgent need because humanity faces natural and biological disasters that harm humans and prevent assembly in educational institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to find alternative educational methods that achieve the purpose without causing harm to humans. Because of the interruption that occurred during the depressions, the period of strikes, and the Corona period,

which led to a delay in explaining the required material, integrated education had a great impact on continuing teaching. In the beginning, the subject was kind of difficult in terms of mastering the Thames program and tiring in terms of the long time required to prepare a class electronically to be at a good level to deliver the information smoothly, but with time these difficulties became simple and the problem remains that all students do not adhere to electronic classes. When examining the extent to which students benefited from these lessons during the face-to-face lessons, the student's participation had a significant contribution to achieving the educational process effectively and creatively. On the other hand, blended education had an experience during the spread of the Coronavirus, as the Ministry of Education adopted this system to reduce the time present in the classroom, and the experience was good. The experiment was successful, and the change took place in the shift from the lecture method in teaching to the one that focuses on the student himself, where technological progress in design had a great impact on the implementation and design of educational situations and this raised the quality of education as well as the efficiency of the teachers themselves. The primary Education Supervisor says:

"I tell you frankly… My experience was difficult, but it was distinguished by following up on teachers and students in educational and electronic lessons. I advised teachers and students in some situations, such as using new teaching strategies, and I also benefited from them in the lessons in

many things such as computer skills and applications on the Internet." The phone is like using Google Drive.

The second theme: Flexibility in changing teachers' beliefs and education culture.

The participants agreed that when the teacher develops himself and searches for any way to deliver information to the student strikingly and attractively, he is a creative teacher. There is a great relationship between creative thinking and blended education. Resorting to blended education is a kind of creativity in finding alternative ways to continue the educational process in the presence of a problem that traditionally prevented the continuation of education. In blended education, the teacher and student acquired new creative skills that they learned during the normal situation. What helped this is that there are a large number of teachers and students with creative talents and speed in teaching, which made the students gain the largest amount of information in record time. The Elementary Education Supervisor added that there is clear evidence of the change in the teacher's culture of education, which led him to a change in teachers' beliefs about the education process, which are commensurate with the skills of the twenty-first century.

 The Primary Education Supervisor says: "*Mm. Look... Creativity is not linked to a specific type of education and is not linked to blended education only, because the person wants to be creative in any field or method of education that he loves and wants to be creative in. But as far as I can add, creative thinking is linked to it. Also, with*

creativity and creative thinking, because the fields are open, one turns to new things in educational situations that are complex and not easy.

The third theme: Expansion of the newly developed pedagogy: The participants agreed that the use of blended education developed teachers' skills in many themes, including the electronic field, acquiring new ways to communicate with students, acquiring new teaching methods and methods, increasing communication with parents and determining the extent of their satisfaction with the teacher's style. I dealing with students as well by employing different strategies in line with blended learning, and working to develop skills by taking many educational courses and keeping abreast of everything new and the possibility of using it in education. It also facilitated blended education between teachers themselves, between teachers and educational leadership, and between teachers, students, and their parents through the development of means of communication at any time... The work between the parties to the educational process has become unified teams with a unified goal.

The Elementary Education Supervisor says*: It has had a great impact on my skills in following up on electronic classes in more than one specialty and more than one skill. I also benefited from the teaching methods that the teachers use during the lessons. I also benefited from scientific information and technical observations by following me. I have an imbalance in knowledge and skills, and I am turning to the correct way to understand, apply and use them."*

The primary education teacher also adds: "*Blended education is based on flexibility in education, as this flexibility leads to the use of many teaching methods and methods such as brainstorming, problem-solving, and free-thinking.*

The blended learning at work also helped to increase the teacher's skills, such as designing lessons such as PowerPoint presentations, using educational games for students, and creativity in presenting the Thames lessons interestingly and attractively to students.

The Elementary Education Supervisor says: *"The sweetness of this education is that it satisfies the individual needs and learning styles of students according to their levels, ages, and times… I can also add that this focuses on educational outcomes to a greater extent.*

The resort to a new pedagogy through the use of new programs on the phone and in the design of educational programs that were distributed to teachers, as well as securing the Internet constantly and how to create a creative environment for follow-up, especially since the Yatuan society(المجتمع البطاوي) is tainted by chaos, especially in homes. The continuous communication between the teacher, the supervisor, and the school administration with the parents through WhatsApp, Facebook, and TEAMS pages continuously to achieve the greatest goals of creative thinking based on blended education.

The Elementary Education Supervisor says: *"I am with you frankly... Many teachers have excelled in blended learning by designing wonderful worksheets and cartoon tests. Also,*

in some of them, they designed targeted and quick educational situations to reach the largest number of students, and this created a kind of creativity"

Fourth Theme: Teacher's sensitivity to creativity and support: The participants agreed that there is a difference in parents' attitudes towards blended education according to their understanding of this new approach to education and according to the availability of technical means to them. Negative due to several reasons, including they are used to the traditional method, and do not understand the nature of the new situation, the lack of electronic devices, the lack of smart devices and the Internet for everyone, the pressure that occurs when more than one student is at home, and the difficulty of controlling time and following up on all children. A large segment of parents considers that face-to-face education is sufficient and e-learning is not required, but there is a segment of parents that follow electronically and facilitate the participation of their children to benefit from the matter. Young children who are out of school are imitating their brothers by repeating the titles of some of the lessons that their brothers learn from the teacher and trying to emulate that with a kind of spontaneous innovation.

The Primary Education Supervisor says: "*You want to be frank, the parents were different between for and against. The one who was in favor provided his children with all means to benefit from the integrated education and even saw the positive result of this thing. But those who were opposed did not do anything for their children because he was not convinced of this education and he It frustrates those around me."*

The Primary Education Supervisor says: *"In the beginning, their attitudes and opinions were negative… But when e-learning became a reality, the attitudes changed, nothing good because they were convinced that there is no alternative and that this type of education bridges the gap in education without affecting the health of their children. And it is also a thing… Mothers are at-home learning with their children and following them in their duties and the dates of their classes on the Internet. This is nothing but a kind of interaction between home and school and this in itself 1. I did not provide any opportunity to learn everything new and contributed to facilitating the delivery of information to the student.*

The role of the supervisor and the teacher was clear throughout the struggle based on trying to communicate with parents to explain the nature of blended learning, and how to use devices and communicate remotely.

Fifth theme: The Challenge of Educational Leadership for the new reality:

The two participants in the study agreed that educational leadership has a great impact in activating the blended education to be polished with creative ideas, as their role was limited to follow-up, organization, and work on developing the teacher's capabilities in terms of training and guidance courses, as well as organizing education and making available means and tools for teachers and students as well as possible, which increases interaction Between students, teachers, students, content and external sources. But we cannot overlook the fact that school administrations differ from administration to administration, so some

administrations provide an adequate educational environment with all its contents (experience, electrical tools, prizes), and distribute time to ensure that creative educational situations occur and goals are achieved.

The second question: What are the indicators of creative thinking that appeared in blended education?

Changing convictions and beliefs: This can be touched by observing the impact of blended learning on students' participation and results, and can also be seen through parents' observations on the extent to which their children benefit and the feedback provided by

The effectiveness of blended learning was demonstrated by measuring student outcomes and student interaction. Where the results were satisfactory and a large part of the students were able to continue their education through the use of blended learning, the result is the basis for verifying the success of this type of education. And when the belief that blended education was not achieved was one of its goals, those beliefs changed positively after a period of experience with the conviction of the need to adapt to obstacles for this type of education, such as electricity cuts, lack of internet, or opposition from several parents to this type of education.

The Supervisor of Elementary Education says: *"Before I tell you about these things...let me tell you that it is blended education, except that we have an internal conflict. How do we adapt to many jobs that hinder education...Sometimes we go to school and sometimes at home...Sometimes we find the electricity cut off. ...and the indicators were in how he adapts to the constant power cuts, also in his job is the task of how he adapts to the different levels of students in*

the class and how we deal with them according to their circumstances and the living conditions of the students' families."

Authenticity and the study of the unfamiliar: The participants agreed that the use of new practices in education, breaking out of the unfamiliar, thinking outside the box, and using different strategies such as singing, educational games, practical activities, computerized classes, and others, all contribute to the development of the teacher and student by following unfamiliar work steps for the teacher on the one hand and the one hand. The student on the other hand. Creativity also emerges through the teachers' freedom to express their educational ideas, and this is reflected in the students and their time, and enhances the students' value by feeling more responsible. The most important indicator is to follow the unfamiliar in following the new methods and means through the methods of delivering information, designing educational situations, and designing tests electronically.

Recommendations:

Based on the foregoing, the researcher recommends the necessity of improving teachers' attitudes towards blended learning because of its great importance in developing creative thinking skills based on originality, fluency, flexibility, and expansion in adaptation to reality. The researcher also recommends the need to exploit all creative means, methods, and strategies that simulate the reality of students and the curriculum. As well as designing the best paths for obtaining knowledge and creative skills to achieve the goals of blended learning.

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