

## **Theoretical Review of Organisational Commitment, Secondary School Teachers' Digital Phobia and Blended Learning Effectiveness: Implications for Sustainable Education**

<sup>1</sup>**Mobolaji T. AYANSHINA**

*mobolajiyanshina@gmail.com; +234 803 388 6606*

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<sup>2</sup>**Afolakemi O. OREDEIN**

*orcid.org/0000-0003-2051-4730*

*opefolake1@yahoo.com; a.oredein@lcu.edu.ng*

*+234 805 514 5060*

<sup>1&2</sup>*Department of Educational Management*

*Faculty of Arts & Education Lead City University,*

*Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria*

This theoretical review applies the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to explain the relationship between organizational commitment, secondary school teachers' digital phobia and blended learning effectiveness in Ibadan Metropolis and its implication on sustainable education for development. We explore the moderating variables of UTAUT that may change the way a teacher responds to the usage of technology, in this regard- blended learning. Variables such as job satisfaction, management or stakeholder support, empowerment, and social status to examine how it will affect the use of blended learning teaching approach in secondary schools using literature review. The study examines the implications of these factors for sustainable education. The findings suggest that organizational commitment is positively related to blended learning effectiveness, while digital phobia is negatively related to blended learning effectiveness. The study recommends creating a supportive organizational culture, addressing digital phobia, and providing flexibility in teaching methods to promote sustainable education in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Organisational commitment, teachers, digital phobia, blended learning effectiveness, sustainable education

**Word Count:** 152

### **Introduction**

Ever since the beginning of education in the 18th century in Nigeria and far back to Socrates, teaching-learning activities in schools have always been face-to-face in the conventional way, where teachers and pupils will be within the four walls of a classroom. Teachers make use of chalk and the blackboard

using different methods to teach while students make use of pen and paper. However, the effectiveness of teaching methods is constantly evolving due to advances in technology. Blended learning, which combines traditional classroom methods with online learning, has become increasingly popular in recent years. It has the potential to improve learning outcomes, increase student engagement, and enhance teacher effectiveness. The basic principles of blended learning were first applied in the 1960s in corporate and higher education in the United States but the term itself was first used in 1999 when the American Interactive Learning Center began to launch software programs designed for teaching over the World Wide Web (Fedorova, 2021).

Blended Learning is the future of education and the Covid-19 pandemic has enforced teachers into online and blended learning activities, where their commitment as teachers is being tested. Organizational commitment has everything to do with the degree of attachment an individual or teacher has to her organization. It is the level at which a teacher is willing to go to ensure that the set goals and objectives of his/her school are met or succeed (Martha & Wilton, 2018). A teacher may have affective, continuance or normative commitment to her job, however, a teacher with a deep-rooted fear or phobia especially in the area of technology may find it difficult to have any affection for the teaching profession any longer. A phobia is an excessive and irrational fear or reaction and there are different types of phobias; in fact, there is an A to Z of phobias, from Achluophobia to Zoophobia (Lawrenz, Osborn&Raypole, 2022). One of these phobias is a digital phobia. A digital phobia is a fear of using digitalized technologies and it exists in different forms such as technophobia, nomophobia, cyberphobia, telephonophobia, selfiephobia, loremophobia, ovetechnophobia, nosophobia, ergophobia and clasmaphobia (Oredein & Akinnola, 2022). To master all these phobias, teachers and students need to learn the virtual method of disseminating knowledge as this involves skills and mastery of the digital platforms.

The digital world has transformed the concept of education, and the teaching process from the way we know it since the advent of Covid-19 and if education for sustainable growth will be achieved by the year 2030, then all educational stakeholders hands need to be on deck to ensure that every human being acquire the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and values necessary to shape a sustainable future<sup>5</sup>. Sustainable Education requires participatory teaching and learning approaches such as blended learning that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2014).

Having a sustainable future depends on blended learning effectiveness, and the effectiveness of blended learning depends on several factors, including organizational commitment and digital phobia. This article presents a theoretical review of the relationship between organizational commitment, secondary school teachers' digitalphobia, and blended learning effectiveness and the implications for sustainable education.

## **Organizational Commitment**

In every facet of life, in every human endeavour, there are duties and roles to perform. In the traditional family setting the father is the head of the home and seen as the provider, the mum is the caretaker while the children are to obey and carry out the instructions of the parents. Likewise in organizations, there are different functions to be performed. Organizational commitment refers to the degree to which employees identify with and are committed to their organization's goals and values (Bhat, 2023). It is possible for an employee to be engaged in his work, but not committed to the organization. In this regard, the employee loves his work but has little or no love for the organization he works for and can leave at the drop of his hat. Employees can also be committed to an organization but not engaged in their work and in another instance, he or she can be neither committed nor engaged to the work or organization they work for (Prause, 2020). In 1991, Meyer and Allen proposed the first model of commitment known as the Three-Component Model (TCM) of commitment. The three components talk about the varying type of commitment: the affective, continuance, and normative commitment.

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment that employees have to their organization. Teachers who have high levels of affective commitment are committed to their school because they feel a strong sense of loyalty and identification with it. They enjoy their work and are proud to be associated with their organization (Collen, 2018). Affective commitment is essential for promoting sustainable education as teachers who have high levels of affective commitment are more likely to be dedicated to their work and contribute to the development of the school.

Continuance commitment refers to the extent to which employees feel that they need to remain with their organization. Teachers who have high levels of continuance commitment may stay with their school because they feel that they have no other choice or options, either because of the high cost of leaving or the lack of alternative employment opportunities (UNESCO, 2014). Continuance commitment is less desirable than affective commitment as it is not based on a positive attachment to the organization. Teachers who have high levels of continuance commitment may not be fully committed to their work, which can have negative implications for student outcomes (Prause, 2020).

Normative commitment refers to the extent to which employees feel a sense of obligation to their organization. Teachers who have high levels of normative commitment feel that they have a moral obligation to remain with their school and contribute to its development. Normative commitment is essential for promoting sustainable education as it reflects a sense of responsibility and accountability to the organization and its stakeholders. There are factors that can influence normative commitments such as the thought that leaving could affect school or organization's operations, the organization or school that has trained them and supported their professional growth or their rewards (pension) may be affected if they leave (Collen, 2018).

## Digital Phobia

It can be scary at times at the rate at which digital technology evolves, smartphones for example. Each year; there is always a new upgrade, new software that people can hardly keep up with. It is no wonder that some people have developed a phobia for anything technology or digital technology. People use the term technophobia and digitalphobia interchangeably, a proper definition of these two terms will put them in a clearer perspective.

Technophobia and Digital-Phobia are both derived from two root words: technology and phobia, digital and phobia. Technology is defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industries (Britannica, 2022). It is sometimes phrased as the change and manipulation of the human environment. It is the creation, usage and knowledge of tools, techniques, crafts, systems or methods of organization to solve a problem or serve a purpose or an end (IGI Global, 2022).

Digital, on the other hand, describes electronic technology that generates, stores, and processes data in terms of two states: positive and non-positive. Digital is a subset or part of technology. Digital technologies are electronic tools, systems, devices and resources that generate store or process data. Well-known examples include social media, online games, multimedia and mobile phones. Digital learning is any type of learning that uses technology. It can happen across all curriculum's learning areas (Victoria State Government, 2019). A phobia is an uncontrollable, irrational, and lasting fear of a certain object, situation, or activity. This fear can be so overwhelming that a person may go to great lengths to avoid the source of this fear. One response can be a panic attack. This is a sudden, intense fear that lasts for several minutes. It happens when there is no real danger (Hopkins, 2022).

Digital phobia can be a significant barrier to the effective implementation of blended learning, as teachers may be hesitant to adopt new technologies or may lack the skills and confidence necessary to use them effectively. It is a growing concern in today's world, where technology has become an essential part of our daily lives. Research has also shown that digital phobia can be caused by other several factors such as:

*Lack of access to technology.* For instance, many schools in Nigeria do not have the necessary infrastructure and resources to support the use of technology in the classroom. This makes it difficult for teachers to incorporate technology into their teaching, and they may feel overwhelmed and anxious when they are required to do so (Teater&Haawood, 2022).

*Lack of training and support.* Teachers who are not familiar with technology may feel intimidated and unsure of how to use it effectively. They may also be afraid of making mistakes in front of their students, which can lead to feelings of embarrassment and shame.

*Cultural and societal factors* also play a role. There is a preference for traditional teaching methods, such as lecturing and note-taking. This can create a reluctance to embrace technology and digital

devices, as they are seen as unfamiliar and disruptive to traditional teaching methods. To overcome a digital phobia, teachers need access to technology, training and support, and a cultural shift towards embracing technology in the classroom. By addressing these issues, we can help teachers to feel more comfortable using technology and digital devices in their teaching, which will ultimately benefit their students and improve the quality of education (Teater & Haawood, 2022).

### **Blended Learning Effectiveness**

The purpose of all learning models is to ensure that students engage in the teaching-learning process for the desired result. One of the benefits of Blended learning is that it helps teachers to understand the best way students learn and how technology can aid them to ensure a more attentive; stimulating, engaging, and thought-provoking classroom (Annie, 2021). As in all other methods of learning, BL requires curriculum planning as it entails a teacher knowing what he or she wants to teach and the type of technological platform to use to achieve the desired purpose. To get started with blended learning, a teacher needs to think about what type of blended learning method he or she wants to use as there are different types of blended learning. Furthermore, a teacher needs to have it in mind that blended learning involves complimentary online and in-person training or teaching. In fact, a class with just an online teaching on the whim face-to-face or vice-versa without structure is not a blended learning approach of pedagogy (Learning A-Z, 2022).

For instance, in a flip-rotation model of blended learning, a teacher may decide to teach the theories of a particular subject or topic, she then gives the students short videos or online notes before the class for them to study and afterwards, they converge to carry out activities such as a debate. She may also decide that the lesson will take the form of group discussion online using social media platforms (Learning A-Z, 2022). It is worth noting that blended learning may affect the seating arrangement of a class. It is also worth noting that there is a clear difference between blended, hybrid and online learning. Blended learning is the combination of online learning and traditional face-to-face method of teaching and learning. Hybrid learning is the combination of any teaching techniques that will satisfy students' learning needs, it is essentially designed to maintain an equilibrium between online and offline learning, while online learning is education that takes place via the internet (Ariele, 2022):

### **Nexus between Organizational Commitment, Secondary School Teachers Digital-Phobia and Blended Learning Effectiveness**

Organizational commitment is a vital factor in determining the effectiveness of blended learning. Blended learning is becoming an increasingly popular approach to education in recent times in the developed nations, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As noted earlier, blended learning combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, creating a more flexible and

personalized learning environment which aids students to be more versatile and forward-thinking in their learning. While blended learning has many potential benefits for students, it is important to consider the role of teachers in its effectiveness. Specifically, the level of organizational commitment among teachers may play an important role in determining the effectiveness of blended learning (Learning A-Z, 2022).

In a blended learning environment, teachers take on more complex roles, working with real-time data, assessments, software, and content from a myriad of sources to ensure that their students get the richest education possible. Teaching, therefore in a blended environment is not a spectators' sport. Research shows that “blended courses are most successful when challenging and engaging online learning activities complement face-to-face activities.” (Learning A-Z, 2022). With the guidance of the teacher in these one-on-one interactions, students are more motivated to participate and prepared for deadlines, and take more ownership of their learning, not only that they can learn at their own pace (Edgenuity, 2017). Therefore, for blended learning to be effective teachers have to be affectively committed to their job not even normative commitment will work. As it takes only a committed teacher to navigate every possible challenge that may arise including technology and curriculum design for blended learning.

Furthermore, the effective implementation of blended learning depends on the ability of teachers to use digital technologies effectively, which can be hindered by digital phobias such as Technophobia; fear of technology or being uncomfortable around advanced technology, Nomophobia: fear of being without a mobile device; Cyberphobia: fear of computers or the Internet; Telephonophobia: fear of telephone; Selfiephobia: fear of taking a photograph of oneself; Loremophobia: fear of losing phones; Ovetechphobia: fear of overwhelming technology; Nosophobia: an abnormal fear of virtual teaching; Ergophobia: persistent fear, and Clasmaphobia: fear of virtual classroom management (Oredein & Akinnola, 2022).

Digital-Phobia can manifest in different ways among teachers, including avoidance behaviour, resistance to change, or anxiety when faced with new digital tools. Such attitudes can significantly affect the effectiveness of blended learning, as teachers may not fully engage with the technology or may not be able to create meaningful learning experiences for their students (University of the People, 2022). Therefore, it is important to explore the underlying factors that contribute to digital phobia among teachers and how they can be addressed to promote blended learning effectiveness.

### **Theoretical Review**

A theoretical framework that can be used to explore the relationship between digital phobia and blended learning effectiveness is the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). This model identifies four key factors that influence an individual's intention to use technology: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Performance

expectancy is the degree at which an individual believes that using a technology will help him or her achieve more gains in job performance (Kalinic & Todorovic, 2022). Effort Expectancy is the use of ease or perceived difficulty in using a system. Social influence signifies the levels to which an individual believes the usage of the technology is important to others and facilitating condition refers to the availability of organizational and technical infrastructure to facilitate the use of technology (Marikyan & Papagiannidis, 2020). UTAUT also incorporated four moderating variables: age, gender, experience and voluntariness of use, meaning that the theory did not only put into consideration the attitudes of the respondents on the observed characteristics alone, but also gave room to identify the difference that may occur in respondents' attitudes due to the moderating factor of age, gender, experience and voluntariness.

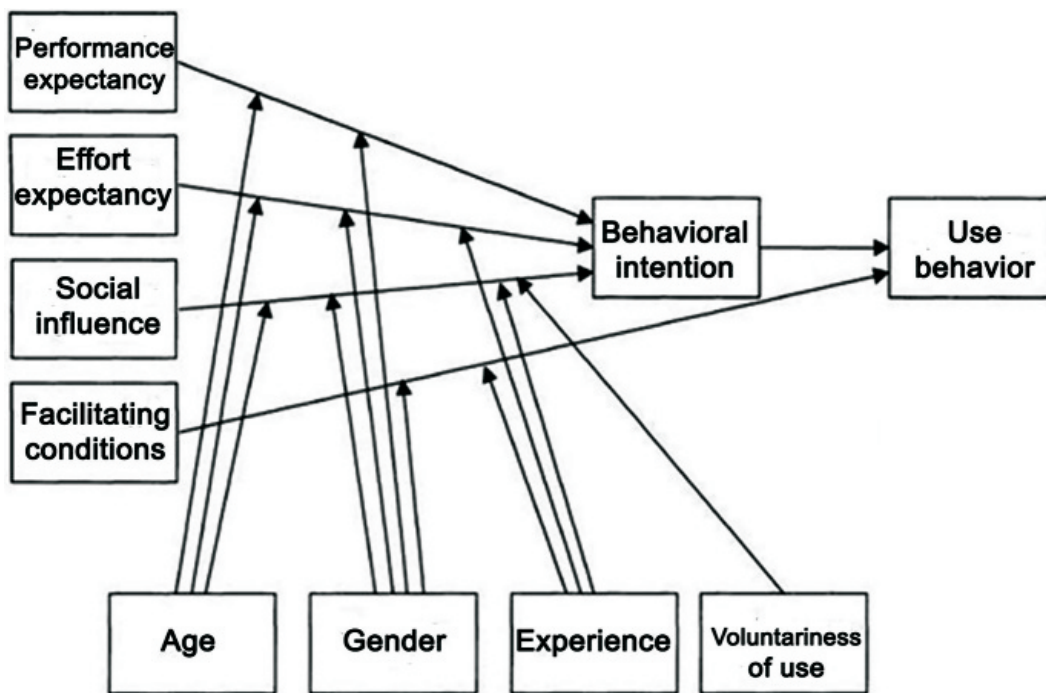


Figure 1

Source: Venkatesh et al. Basic Form of UTAUT model. (2003)

### Adapted UTAUT Factors for Blended Learning

UTAUT posits that the actual use of technology is determined by behavioural intentions (Frontiers, 2022). A teacher that has affective commitment towards teaching may have an affinity for technology seeing it as a positive influence rather than a nuance. On the other hand, a teacher that has a continuance commitment may allow digital phobia to hinder his or her commitment to her job. Going the extra mile to get the training that blended learning requires may be seen in the negative rather than positive, stumbling block rather than a mile stone. Factors in UTAUT can be adopted into the use of Blended learning.

**Perceived Expectancy:** if a teacher believes that using a teaching method in this case blended learning will help him or her achieve more incentives or gains in her job performance, there is a higher chance that the teacher may likely overcome any challenges including phobias.

**Effort Expectancy:** if a teacher perceives that there is ease in using blended learning at the long run not minding the initial difficulties and challenges, they will be increase in their job performance and willingness to overcome all phobias.

**Social influence:** Everyone likes to be in the know and not feel left out. Once a teacher knows that using blended learning is important to all stake holders and that the use of technology is required in the 21st century, not only to be on par with other professions but also for a sustainable future, a teacher may let go of all phobias.

**Facilitating Conditions:** Having organizational and technical infrastructure to facilitate the use of technology. Knowing that there will be constant training and management support on the tech and curriculum design of Blending learning will help most teachers to banish away their phobias.

Moderating variables that may determine the level of organization commitment to blended learning effectiveness in this regard are:

**Job Satisfaction:** refers to the degree of happiness, contentment or pleasure a teacher feels in their job, which can be influenced by different factors such as the nature of the teaching itself, school environment, school culture, and relationship with school management, co-teachers and students (Genius, 2023).

**Management Support:** Teachers that are well supported technically and organizationally are most likely to feel happy at work and therefore are more motivated and productive. Not having management support makes teachers feel stressed and burnout especially when they are left to believe they are working alone.

**Empowerment:** teachers' empowerment refers to the factors that motivates and energizes them towards achieving goals, enhancing self-efficacy by reducing powerlessness and enabling them to do what they find appropriate and meaningful for a certain purpose<sup>7</sup>. There are two main concepts of empowerment (Jason, 2022):

- Structural empowerment: the ability to get things done and to mobilize resources.
- Psychological empowerment: psychological perceptions/attitudes of employees about their work and their organizational roles<sup>24</sup>.

**Social Status:** Teachers perception that they are the least paid among other professions and the value placed on them by the society, may not allow them to be heartily committed to their profession. It will help if teachers are seen as important as medical doctors and paid in the same capacity.

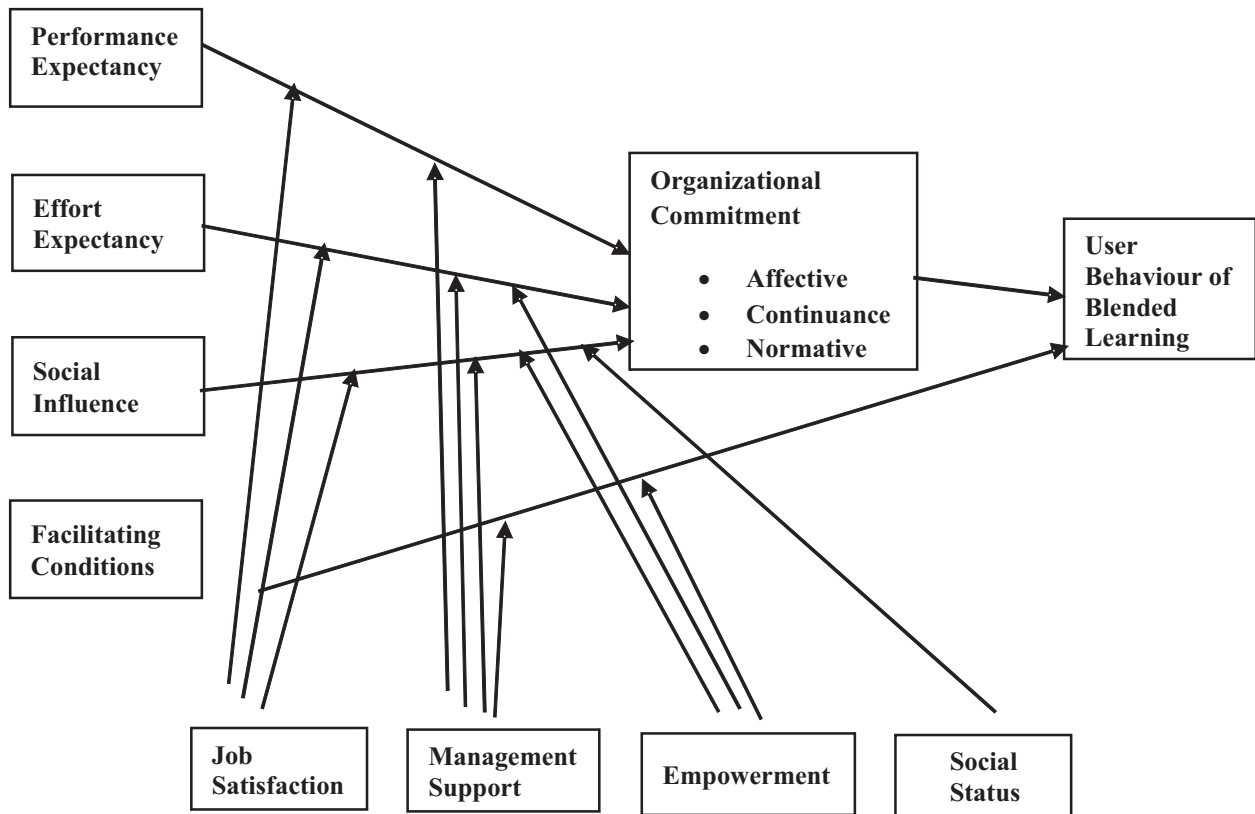


Figure 2

Source: Ayanshina and Oredein. Modified UTAUT Model for Blended Learning

### Implication for Sustainable Education

The implication of organizational commitment, digital phobia, and blended learning effectiveness to sustainable education is significant. Sustainable education refers to the ability of the education system to meet the current needs of students without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The use of blended learning in secondary schools have the potential to enhance the quality of education and promote sustainable development.

Organizational commitment is essential for promoting sustainable education. Teachers who are committed to their organization are most likely to be dedicated to their work and have a positive attitude towards their job (Smith, 2015). This can translate to improved student outcomes and a better overall learning experience. A supportive organizational culture that fosters organizational commitment is necessary to ensure that teachers feel valued and motivated to perform their duties effectively. Teachers who feel supported and recognized are more likely to be committed to their organization and contribute to the development of sustainable education.

Digital phobia is a significant barrier to the adoption and effective use of blended learning. Many teachers especially in Nigeria are not familiar with digital technology, and some may be afraid of

using it. This fear can lead to resistance to blended learning and limit the effectiveness of this teaching approach. Addressing digital phobia by providing training and support in the use of technology can help teachers overcome their fear and embrace blended learning. Teachers who are comfortable with technology are more likely to use it effectively, which can enhance the quality of education and contribute to sustainable education.

Blended learning effectiveness is indispensable to achieve education for sustainable development. The use of blended learning has the potential to improve student outcomes and enhance the quality of education. However, the effectiveness of blended learning depends on several factors, including teacher training, access to technology, and student engagement. To promote sustainable education, it is essential to ensure that blended learning is used effectively and that it is tailored to the needs of students. Ongoing assessment and evaluation of the effectiveness of blended learning can help to ensure that it remains an effective teaching approach and contributes to sustainable education. Blended learning is the class of the future for secondary schools as it helps students to broaden their outlook irrespective of where they are in the world thereby not only encouraging sustainable development but also equal education for all.

### **Conclusion**

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) gives factors that may influence the use of new technology through behavioural intentions. These factors alone are not enough to get secondary school teachers to commit to using the blended learning teaching approach if they have digital phobia. Adding the appropriate moderating values such as job satisfaction, management or stakeholder's support, and empowerment to make them feel they can do what is right and not be looked down upon including raising their social status goes a long way to ensure that teachers commit to their profession, if not affectively but at least normatively. This will go a long way in developing education for sustainable development.

Organizational commitment, digital phobia, and blended learning effectiveness have significant implications for sustainable education for development. Creating a supportive organizational culture, addressing digital phobia, and promoting effective blended learning can enhance the quality of education and contribute to sustainable development in any country. To ensure that sustainable education is achieved, it is important to recognize the importance of these factors and to invest in strategies that support them.

The theoretical review suggests that organizational commitment is positively related to the effectiveness of blended learning while digital phobia is negatively related to it. The study recommends creating a supportive organizational culture, addressing digital phobia, and providing flexibility in teaching methods to promote sustainable education. These recommendations can help to ensure that teachers are able to effectively use blended learning to enhance student learning outcomes and promote sustainable education.

## **Way Forward**

- i Government to boost teachers' job satisfaction that can make to be more committed to their job and able to fall in the affective domain of organisational commitment.
- ii. Government to organise training and retraining for teachers on technology use
- iii Teachers need to acclimatise to the use of technology to

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