


# Chapter 6


## Navigating the Blended Learning Landscape: Mediating Role of Crisis Preparedness in Strengthening Educational Leadership in Ethiopia

**Shashi Kant**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4722-5736>

*Bule Hora University, Ethiopia*

**Metasebia Adula**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5732-2850>

*Bule Hora University, Ethiopia*

**Zerihun Kinde Alemu**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8546-2882>

*Ethiopian Civil Service University, Ethiopia*

### ABSTRACT

*With more blended learning policies being adopted in an effort to improve accessibility and quality of education, Ethiopia's education system is undergoing major changes. This study examines how these policies affect educational leadership, with a particular emphasis on how crisis preparedness initiatives function as a mediator. A survey was conducted with 400 participants, comprising educators, administrators, and policymakers in the field of education. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were used in the study to determine the underlying dimensions of the variables under investigation. Data appropriateness for factor analysis was evaluated using the Bartlett's test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) scale. Analysis of the mediating effects was done using Structural Equation Modeling*

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*(SEM). The results show that by bolstering crisis preparedness initiatives, blended learning policies may greatly improve educational leadership.*

## INTRODUCTION

Blended learning, a revolutionary approach to education that blends in-person and virtual learning, has attracted international recognition. Its importance has become even more apparent when considering crisis preparedness, which is crucial in light of the difficulties presented by political unpredictability, climate change, and medical issues. Implementing blended learning strategies through the use of crisis preparedness programs has special opportunities and problems that should be carefully considered in Ethiopia, where the educational infrastructure is changing (Jones et al., 2022). Ethiopian education is characterized by notable differences in both quality and accessibility. The worldwide movement toward digital education emphasizes the necessity for creative solutions in underdeveloped nations. By giving rural locations and underprivileged groups more opportunity, blended learning frameworks can improve educational fairness. Furthermore, the current state of the world makes it necessary for educational institutions to integrate blended learning and crisis preparation, as this would not only help Ethiopia enhance its technology capabilities but also enable it to become resilient against future shocks (Woldegiyorgis & Adamu, 2022)

The development of digital technology and the move in pedagogy toward learner-centric models are the sources of blended learning. Although the idea was first introduced in Western educational environments, it has since acquired popularity around the world, especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, which hastened the use of online learning modalities. Combining conventional and online teaching techniques offers a flexible way to educate that fosters accessibility and participation, which is important for Ethiopia's heterogeneous student body (Tarricone et al., 2023). The benefits of blended learning on student results, engagement, and retention are demonstrated by empirical research. Studies have indicated that the integration of technology in educational settings can support tailored training and accommodate different types of learners. According to research, blended learning can assist educational institutions stay open during interruptions and maintain learning continuity in the context of crisis preparation. Unfortunately, Ethiopia, a country where cultural, socioeconomic, and infrastructure issues affect educational efficacy, is not specifically covered in the research that currently exists (Woldegiyorgis, 2022).

Blended learning has a lot of promise, but there are a lot of obstacles in the way of its adoption in Ethiopian schools. These include a lack of teacher training on digital technologies, an inadequate technological infrastructure, and sociocultural

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