

## **Lecturers' Readiness Towards Implementing Blended Learning Strategy in Teaching Islamic Education**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The learning process has been changed due to the development and advancement of existing technologies increasing rapidly. Thus, education took a chance on technological transformation in increasing the impact of teaching and learning process. The implementation of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in education has created a revolution to the way educators deliver the content and learning materials to ensure a learning objectives achieved. This paper is aimed to measure lecturers' of Islamic Education attitudes towards Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The study attempted as well to analyze the lecturers' readiness towards implementing Blended Learning strategy in teaching Islamic education. Data was collected from survey method. Seventy (70) lecturers of different experiences participated in the study. The data showed the attitudes of Islamic Education's lecturers towards ICT were positive. Somehow it was differed in terms of age and duration of working in the organization towards ICT. Yet, the findings also showed lecturers' readiness to implement a blended learning strategy in teaching the Islamic Education course were moderately high. Therefore it is proposed to the Islamic Education department itself to provide a training courses related with ICT and technological pedagogical applications in order to meet the demands and needs of digital net citizen culture in learning.*

**KEYWORDS** - *Information Communication and Technology (ICT), Islamic Education, Blended Learning, Readiness.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The teaching and learning process in tertiary level has moved to transitional phase from traditional learning to online learning in parallel with the ongoing technological development, thus, allowing the students to access course contents as well as carrying out discussions with the instructor, facilitator, lecturer as well as their peers synchronisingly and asynchronisingly in virtual settings [1]. Basically, students in this digital era had involved in online social network before furthering their study, hence their readiness to abreast in new technology are high [2]. Lecturers also access their course contents, download teaching aids from internet, updating information in web pages, carrying out discussion and other online activities, transforming the passive pattern of learning to active learning with the aid of lecturer in exploring and synthesizing information. Face to face learning was replaced by virtual and web based learning [3]. Whilst the integrated combination of traditional learning with web-based online approaches [4], the combination of media and tools [5, 6, 7, 8] and the combination of a number of pedagogical approaches, irrespective of the learning technology used which known as blended learning [9, 10] were also applied in this century.

Rapid technological development in teaching and learning as well as technology based learning products has somehow driven the lecturers to rethink the approach, strategy and appropriate technique to be used with, the so-called millineum generation [11, 12]. Lecturers need to apply appropriate strategies to interact with the needs of this group of learners, which is more challenging to cater. Therefore, the core of second strategic planning of National Higher Education Strategic Planning is allowing flexibility in revamping the curriculum in improving the curriculum with effective, innovative with world based teaching and learning approach to fulfill the current and future needs [13].

Hence, this paper analyze lecturers readiness to implement blended learning strategy in teaching Islamic education in two dimensions: (i) attitude towards Information Communication and Technology (ICT) and (ii) teaching readiness based on blended learning environment.

### 1.1 Definition of Blended Learning

*Blended Learning* is a learning model which combined and integrated the delivery method of electronic online learning, collaborative softwares, web based courses and computer aided teaching [14] as well as traditional face to face learning [15]. It involves multiple supports for educational technological with the use of various equipment such as video teaching, forum, podcast, wiki, blog, twitter, online courses, tele-conferences which involved the role of lecturer and students' initiatives [7, 8] to enable students to experience effective learning. *Blended Learning* also consists of collaborated format, media, experience, synchronuous and asynchronuous learning, autonomous learning and facilitated learning [5].

Imam Sujadi [4] stated that *Blended Learning* is a type of e-learning approach which combines multiple components such as class space, online materials, email, forum, discussion, Learning Management System (LMS) and autonomous or grouped learning. Blended Learning as well enhances the knowledge acquisition for the reason it can enables lecturers in creating meaningful learning [16, 17, 18]. *Blended Learning* is also known as hybrid learning model which combines learning modes; web based mode combines with traditional teaching where significant learning materials are located online, while lessening the face to face sessions but not eliminated [19] which is hoped to establish constructivist learning [20]. The goal of the hybrid course is to combine the best features of face-to-face teaching in class with the best features of online learning and digital learning to ensure that active learning, learning in depth [21] and opportunities for independent learning [22, 23, 17].

There are variety of reasons for a lecturer, coach or student to choose blended learning as an option over a selection of teaching methods. Graham [24] has identified six reasons why many individuals choose to use blended learning system in teaching and learning. The reasons are (i) the wealth of pedagogical aspects, (ii) access to knowledge, (iii) social interaction, (iv) personal agencies, (v) effective expenses, (vi) easy to study. Blended learning combines the characteristics of the advantages found in both methods of face to face and online learning. Most individuals choose blended learning strategy on three main reasons: (i) to improve the pedagogy, (ii) to improve access and flexibility, (iii) to improve effectice expenditure.

### 1.2 Blended Learning Model

Blended learning models significantly benefit as modern instructional model which contains three instructional features: (i) to improve the teaching effect through the provision of optimal instructional resources to meet the needs of students (ii) service area that can be expanded even outside of regular class where students can participate in instructional activities at home or in other places through the internet communications called virtual learning, (iii) save time and costs because online learning can be completed outside the classroom and save time. Computer purchasing can save costs compared with the costs of human resources [8]. Figure 1 shows a blended learning model implemented in the instructional process.

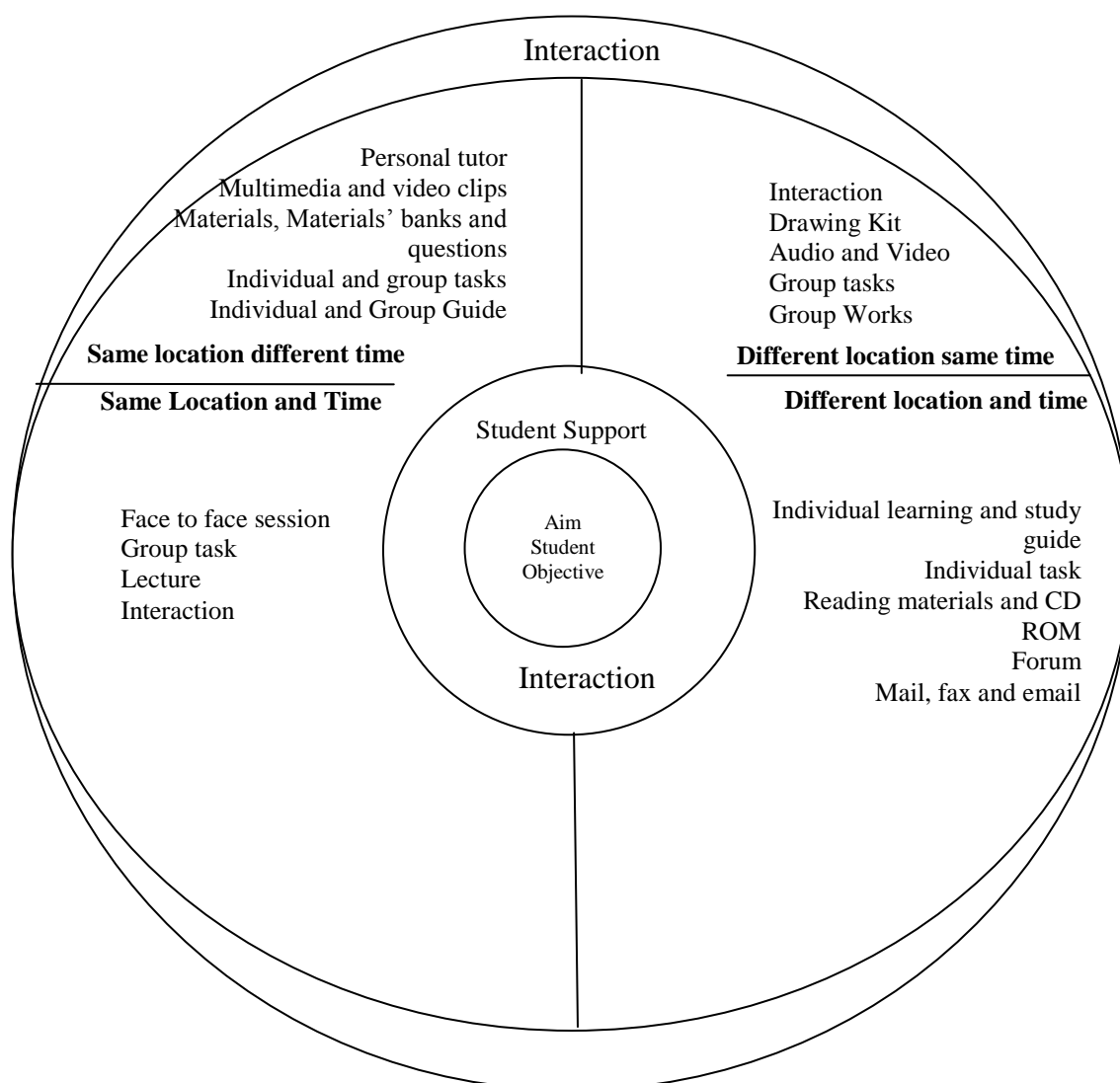


Figure 1: Blended Learning Model [8]

The process to build blended learning courses combines three design components such as learning proposed by Bower [25]: design content, design activities and design technology. Three taxonomies has been selected to represent the three design components. Each taxonomy have different levels of measurement, so the model map need to combine the three components. Bloom-Redeker-Guerra Model (B-R-G) was divided based on the design of learning model to combine the three taxonomies as shown in Figure 2.

Guerra scale in Table 1 and Model maps in Figure 2 were aimed to achieve the lowest thinking level of Bloom taxonomy (knowledge and understanding), taxonomy Redeker of receptive learning which is good enough that can be supported by technology in the Guerra scale levels 1, 2, 4 and 5 (PDF, link, motion and Multimedia Elements). The moderate level of thinking for Bloom taxonomy (applications and Analysis) are more easily achieved through taxonomy Redeker of interactive learning environment. Interactive learning is supported with Level 3,6,8 and 10 of Guerra Scale (Quiz/ Feedback, Workbook User Input, Simulation and Virtual). Thinking in this level can be created in two modes: independent and collaborative learning. However, at this level, interactive learning only requires independent learning where students interact with learning objectives. On the other hand, higher level of Taxonomy (Analysis, Evaluation and Synthesis) are less complex to be achieved with the use of collaborative environmental learning from Redeker taxonomy. This collaborative

learning can be supported with level 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Guerra Scale ( community repository knowledge, simulation, guided simulation and Virtual). Level 8 and 10 of Guerra Scale can be supported with collaborative learning. Learning objectives or analysis thinking are repeated and level 2 and 3 of Redeker taxonomy. This is due to the belief that analytical thinking level can be supported with both interaction and technology [26].

Table 1: Guerra Scale: Level of Experience – Online Users

Scale	Level of Experience	Status
1	PDF	Satisfactory
2	Links	Satisfactory
3	Quiz/Feedback	Satisfactory
4	Movement	Good
5	Multimedia elements	Good
6	Workbook input for users	Good
7	Community repository knowledge	Good
8	Simulation	Good
9	Guided Simulation	Excellent
10	Virtual	Excellent

Source: Guerra Scale adapted from Guerra and Heffeman [27]

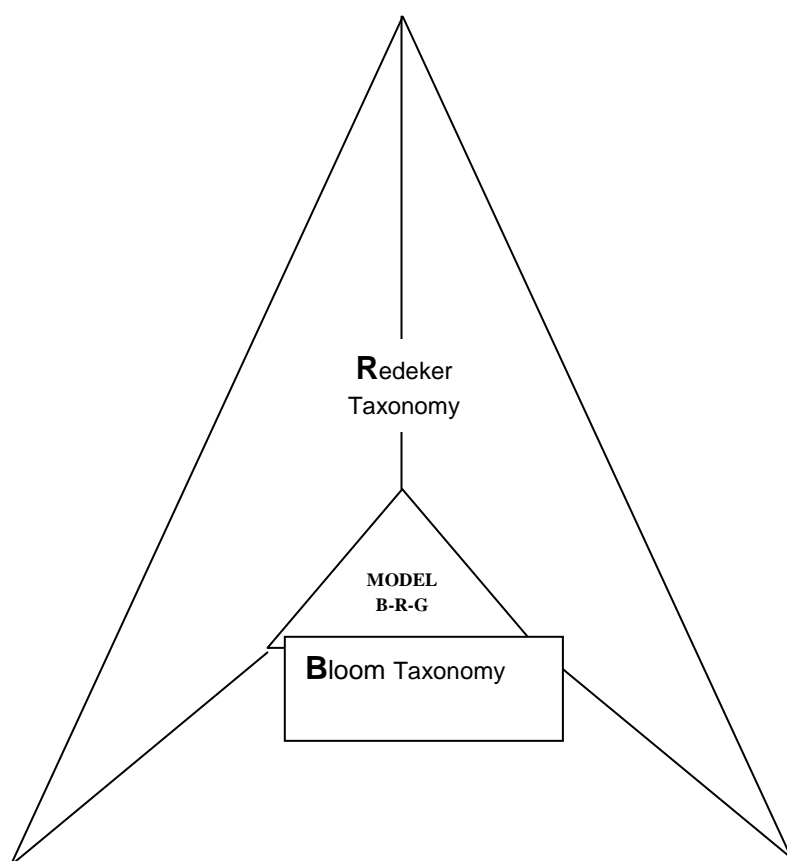


Figure 2: B-R-G Map Model [26]

Table 2 displays the sample of technology usage which is classified with the use of B-R-G model map

Table 2: B-R-G Model Map

Bloom	Redeker	Guerra technology	Sample of Electronic Learning Technology
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Taxonomy (Content Design)	Taxonomy (Activity Design)	Scale (Technology Design)	
Knowledge Skill	Receptive	SG1, SG2, SG4,SG5	Glossary, pdf, slides, video and audio, podcast, e-book
Application Analysis	Interactive	SG3, SG6,SG8, SG10	e-assessment, simulation (stand alone), games, mobile learning, virtual (stand alone)
Analysis Assessment Synthesis	Collaborative	SG7, SG8, SG9, SG10	Video conference, email, wiki, chat, blog, forum, virtual classroom, collaborative, simulation and games

Source: Bower, M [25]

Due to the course taken by all degree level students of the University regardless of diversity of background, it is vital to cater diversified characteristics of the student. Blended learning which combines face-to-face learning and online learning is suitable to maintain some effective teaching methods to fulfill students' interest. Students will be able to choose suitable online teaching methods. Therefore, the connection between humans through classroom teaching and computer applications can be benefited via face to face or online interaction. Indirectly, this phenomenon could give positive impact to the students so that the course is not only accepted but are also included with the elements of Islamic education and the application of technology that is not found in any other learning strategy.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Research Design

In this study, the researcher has chosen quantitative approach using descriptive survey study design and qualitative approach through the use of open-ended question to assess lecturers perception of attitude towards ICT and teaching readiness based blended learning strategy.

### 2.2 Research Population

100 lecturers from northern, southern, eastern and western zone from UiTM campus branches participated in the research. The number was chosen based on the formula developed by United States Office Of Education in Gay et al. [28] where the population is all 5000 individuals in the system, the desired sample size is 500. As the number of Islamic Education lecturers are 428 from all the branch campuses, so it is appropriate to me to choose only 100 lecturers in this study. Meanwhile from a total of 100 lecturers participated in this study, only 70 lecturers which resulting a 70% responds for this cohort. According Gay et al. [28], the rule of thumb for your survey response rate, based on a good sample, is 50%.

### 2.3 Research Instrument

Research data is collected via quantitative data collection through the use of survey questions which are distributed to lecturers who teach Islamic Education in diploma and degree level. The survey is appropriate for current survey which involves large number of respondent compared to interview. The questionnaire is adapted from the questionnaire developed by Janudin [29] and Hallinger [30]. The questionnaire consists of four parts: lecturer demographics, lecturer's attitude towards ICT, teaching readiness based on blended learning strategy and recommendations to improve the course. The questionnaire consists of two types of items that are closed and open ended.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was carried out to answer Question 1, 2 and 3 by using frequency, percentage, and mean score. In answering questions on the lecturer's attitude towards ICT and teaching readiness based blended learning strategy, the researcher uses interpretation of mean score as in the table 2 below.

Table 2: Mean Score Interpretation

<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>4</b>	High
<b>3</b>	Moderately High
<b>2</b>	Moderately Low
<b>1</b>	Low

Source: Nunally [40]

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

3.1 Results

Table 3 shows the respondents' background. The research respondents were Islamic Education lecturers of Mara University of Technology from different fields of specialized. There are 38 (54.3%) of the respondents were male and 32 (45.7%) were female. Most of the respondents are from age 20-30 years old (40%), followed by 31-40 years old (24.3%), 41-50 years old (21.4%) and the least respondents are from 51-60 years old (14.3%). With regard to the knowledge in ICT, 64.3% (45) of the respondents were having basic knowledge in Microsoft Office and 18.6% (13) of the respondents were having intermediate knowledge in Microsoft Office, where 8.6 % (6) of the respondents having skills in statistical softwares and only 8.6% (6) of the rest were skillful in varieties of softwares and applications of technology tools. The table also shows everybody attended the ICT courses, but the frequencies are differed for each person. Almost a three-quarter of the total respondents (72.9%) attended the ICT courses for 1-5 time, while the other 24.3% of them attended the ICT courses for 6-10 time. None of them have chosen to attend the ICT courses for 11-15 time and only 2.9% attended the ICT courses more than 15 time.

Table 3: Respondents Demographic

<b>n= 70</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
• Male	38	54.3%
• Female	32	45.7%
<b>Age</b>		
• 20-30	28	40%
• 31-40	17	24.3%
• 41-50	15	21.4%
• 51-60	10	14.3%
<b>Knowledge in ICT</b>		
• Basic Microsoft Office	45	64.3%
• Intermediate Microsoft Office	13	18.6%
• Statistical softwares (SPSS, SEM-AMOS, NVIVO, ATLAS.TI)	6	8.6%
• Skillful in varieties of softwares and applications of technology tools	6	8.6%
<b>Frequencies attending ICT Courses</b>		
• 1-5 time	51	72.9%
• 6-10 time	17	24.3%
• 11-15 time	0	0
• > 15 time	2	2.9%

Source : Questionnaire

Referring to the table 3, this implied that overall lecturers were lacking of training in ICT and this in line with the feedbacks in the open ended questions from respondents which indicates:

*"...Lecturers should be exposed to the technology pedagogical skills deeper and require training..."*

*"...enhancing lecturer's skill in using ICT..."*

*"...Provide staff with the ICT skills, vigorous application and use of ICT, and always encourage staff to use ICT in order to improve the skills in tecnology...."*

Thus, the university needs to be more actively organized an ICT training workshop and software applications to expose the lecturers about the benefits of the latest technology. The faculty also needs to support and inspire

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them or else provide additional incentives to those who are able to teach through the integration of technology with excellent.

Table 4 displays the lecturers' readiness towards ICT in the teaching of Islamic Education in the public higher institution. The table shows that the lecturers attitude were highly positive towards ICT. The highest mean was the use of email facilitates me more easier to interact with members of the organization (3.7), the use of an electronic database allows me to keep information more organized (3.7) and followed by my presentation is more interesting while using an electronic presentation software (3.68). Lecturers are also concerned about the knowledge of ICT with a mean value (3.34) which I can guide students to conduct an online search for information which related to courses taught and I can integrate the web facility with courses taught (3.2). However there are items which are under the minimum level 3.00 (medium-low) due to the skill in ICT, among that I take a long time to understand new things which taught related to ICT (2.94) and I am skilled in the use of ICT (2.82). Meanwhile the item 'I have high confidence when attending ICT courses' (3.07) was the third lowest which related to the skill in ICT. Though the mean value was above than 3.00 but it could be calculated since this item is also related with the skill. The results of the quantitative analysis revealed that the attitude and knowledge in ICT among lecturers had more positive feedbacks compared to the skill in ICT possessed by the lecturers.

Table 4: Lecturers' attitudes towards ICT

n= 70	Attitudes Towards ICT	Mean	Strongly Disagre	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<b>Use of email facilitates me more easier to interact with members of the organization</b>	3.7	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	12 (17.1%)	55 (78%)
	<b>The use of an electronic database allows me to keep information more organized</b>	3.7	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	14 (20%)	53 (75.7%)
	<b>My presentation is more interesting while using an electronic presentation software</b>	3.68	-	2 (2.9%)	18 (25.7%)	50 (71.4%)
	<b>I do not mind using ICT</b>	3.35		4 (5.7%)	37 (52.9%)	29 (41.4%)
	I am skilled in the use of ICT	<b>2.82</b>	-	<b>23 (32.9%)</b>	<b>36 (51.4%)</b>	<b>11 (15.7%)</b>
	<b>I feel comfortable when using ICT</b>	3.4	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.9%)	35 (50%)	32 (45.7%)
	<b>I'm not afraid to learn something new when using ICT</b>	3.34	-	2 (2.9%)	38 (54.3%)	30 (42.9%)
	<b>The use of ICT is not confusing me</b>	3.20	-	17 (24.3%)	36 (51.4%)	17 (24.3%)
	I have high confidence when attending ICT courses	<b>3.07</b>	<b>1 (1.4%)</b>	<b>11 (15.7%)</b>	<b>40 (57.1%)</b>	<b>18 (25.7%)</b>
	I take a long time to understand new things which taught related to ICT	<b>2.94</b>	<b>1 (1.4%)</b>	<b>17 (24.3%)</b>	<b>37 (52.9%)</b>	<b>15 (21.4%)</b>
	<b>I will accept a task that requires the use of ICT in teaching</b>	3.22		6 (8.6%)	42 (60%)	22 (31.4%)
	<b>I was able to overcome many difficulties that arise when using ICT</b>	3.11	-	11 (15.7%)	40 (57.1%)	19 (27.1%)
	<b>I can integrate the web facility with courses taught</b>	3.2	2 (2.9%)	4 (5.7%)	42 (60%)	22 (31.4%)
	<b>I can guide students to conduct an online search for information which related to courses taught</b>	3.34	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.1%)	33 (47.1%)	31 (44.3%)
	<b>I'm not worrying to use online databases to obtain materials for teaching purposes</b>	3.17	1 (1.4%)	7 (10%)	41 (58.6%)	21 (30%)
	<b>I would not refuse the chance to use materials from the site for the purpose of teaching</b>	3.41	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.1%)	28 (40%)	36 (51.4%)



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<b>I do worry about managing the website for the courses that I am taught if I am required to do so</b>	3.12	1 (1.4%)	9 (12.9%)	40 (57.1%)	20 (28.6%)
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Source : Questionnaire

Table 5 shows overall lecturers ready and very willing to teach in a blended learning environment based. There are over fifty (50) lecturers of seventy (70) lecturers agree and strongly agree Blended Learning strategy has a positive impact on the teaching of Islamic Education. The lecturers were also shown their willingness to implement and create a blended learning strategy based teaching with the total percentage exceeds 50%. But even if the item is in the overall mean for 3.00 but it still shows the readiness of lecturers are actually moderately high and not approaching excellence. There are no mean values which can be categorized above than 3.50. The highest mean value was I found Blended learning strategy is beneficial to me (3.25), I am willing to create a blended learning environment in teaching of Islamic education courses (3.24) and followed by I found Blended Learning strategy will increase my teaching productivity due to have more flexible time (3.24). While the item skills to implement blended learning is among the lowest mean, I found blended learning strategy is easy to be carried out by me (3.05) and I found blended learning strategy is easier for me to do a variety of teaching techniques (3.05). The mean value for I found Blended learning strategy is easier to improve my skill in teaching strategy was also consider the lowest (3.05). Hence we could be conclude lecturers readiness in implementing blended learning strategy in teaching Islamic education were concurred moderately high thus far.

Table 5: Lecturers' readiness in implementing blended learning strategy

n= 70	Readiness in teaching environment based blended learning	Mean	Strongly Disagre	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
	<b>I found Blended learning strategy is beneficial to me</b>	3.25	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)	36 (51.4%)	27 (38.6%)
	<b>I found Blended Learning strategy will improve my quality of teaching</b>	3.22	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)	38 (54.3%)	25 (35.7%)
	<b>I found Blended Learning strategy will increase my teaching productivity due to have more flexible time</b>	3.24	2 (2.9%)	5 (7.1%)	37 (52.9%)	26 (37.1%)
	<b>I found blended learning strategy is easy to be carried out by me</b>	3.05	-	12 (17%)	42 (60%)	16 (22.9%)
	<b>I found Blended Learning strategy is easier for me to do a variety of teaching techniques</b>	3.05	1 (1.4%)	10 (14.3%)	43 (61.4%)	16 (22.9%)
	<b>I found blended learning strategy is easier to interact with students</b>	3.17	1 (1.4%)	7 (10%)	41 (58.6%)	21 (30%)
	<b>I found Blended learning strategy is easier to improve my skill in teaching strategy</b>	3.05	1 (1.4%)	12 (17.1%)	39 (55.7%)	18 (25.7%)
	<b>I intend to use blended learning strategy in my teaching</b>	3.18	1 (1.4%)	7 (10%)	40 (57.1%)	22 (31.4%)
	<b>I intend to implement a blended learning strategy in my teaching exceed the requirements set by the university</b>	3.1	1 (1.4%)	11 (15.7%)	38 (54.3%)	20 (28.6%)
	<b>I am willing to create a blended learning environment in teaching of Islamic education courses</b>	3.24	1 (1.4%)	5 (7.1%)	40 (57.1%)	24 (34.3%)

Source : Questionnaire

### 3.2 Discussion

The results showed that nearly 50% of respondents involved in the study, aged between 20-30 years. However they mostly only have basic skills in ICT. Their frequency of attending the course is at the lowest level of 1-5 times. These findings have some correlation with the attitude of respondents towards ICT and willingness of respondents to implement the *Blended Learning* strategy. Although the respondents have a positive attitude

towards ICT but due to the lack of ICT skills, make them even less skilled to implement teaching environment based blended learning.

The findings are in line with Norizan [31], factors influencing computer use or not to use computers in teaching is due to lack of training, lack of access to computer technology and the experience of educators. Certain level of computer skills is needed to ensure the use of computers can be integrated across the curriculum to ensure effective implementation in an institution. This was agreed by Rosnaini [32] in her study found that the readiness of ICT in teaching include knowledge, skills and attitudes. All three have combined to ensure that the use of ICT teaching methods should be implemented. Munir [33] concluded that the UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization), proposed there are four educational principles: (1) Learning to know, (2) Learning to do, (3) Learning to live together, and (4) Learning to be. The implication to the instructor as planners, developers and implementers, they need to have high teaching competencies and ability to implement the teaching process which can accommodate with the development of knowledge and technology. Thus the emergence of the models of ICT-based learning such as e-Learning, Blended Learning, Virtual Learning, Computer Based Training, Open and Distance Learning is not separate from the curriculum as implementation learning design.

Blended Learning is acknowledged in previous studies [34, 8, 35, 36] have a significant effect on the motivation and interest of students with diverse learning styles. It involves combining a variety of learning methods in face to face teaching and online learning which definitely requires a variety of skills to implement the prefix before wisely. Factors of less lecturers attended the ICT courses cause knowledge of lecturer in ICT were at a primary level which requires immediate action to be taken to ensure the successful implementation of blended learning strategies. Successful implementation of Blended Learning is influenced by nine elements: course content, technical, flexible, community learning, motivation, sharing, feedback, complementary learning and self-study [37]. In the addition, according to Chapnick [38] technological skill and information technology readiness is a part of the required factors to be consider before implementing e-learning and likewise a blended learning.

Lecturers need to have the skills to provide course content that meets the principles of learning with appropriate design. Lecturers also be able to overcome the technical problems encountered during teaching sessions conducted so that the implementation of blended learning could be run more smoothly. Which is why Al-Syaibani [39] pointed out in selecting teaching methods or strategies, no single teaching method that is useful for all purposes of education and all subjects. Neither is there a better method for all educators in all circumstances. It should be adapted with the purpose of learning outcomes to be achieve or subjects to be taught. Although the strategy of Blended Learning has the privilege features for teaching purposes but if the readiness in terms of the skills are still at a low level it will greatly influence the success. Integrated blended represents an opportunity to take what exists and evolve it into a different dimension using new technologies [15]. Therefore, lecturers need ongoing ICT courses in order to improve their knowledge and skills in integrating it for teaching purposes. Furtehermore, knowledge and skills need to be practiced so as to benefit the members of the organization.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The study concludes that lecturers have a positive attitude towards the use of ICT in teaching and learning, but most of them still do not have the basic knowledge and skills of ICT, strong and deep ICT basic achievement. Thus this study suggests that Islamic education lecturer given intensive and regular courses in ICT from a variety of angles to provide the latest revelations about pedagogical agents which appropriate if blended learning strategy is aimed to be implemented. It is aimed that the lecturers have the opportunity to get maximum exposure of the next latest pedagogical methods and techniques to choose the most appropriate to the nature of Islamic Education Course. In addition, it can aligns between the interest of generation Y and the lecturers approach in the teaching to ensure the learning outcomes achieved.

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