

AN INNOVATIVE FRAMEWORK IN THE ENHANCEMENT OF BLENDED LEARNING FROM THE STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Dr. Jocelyn B. Hipona ¹, Dr. Nidhi Agarwal ^{*2}, Myracle Isip- De Torres ³,
Gian Carlo P. De Jesus ⁴, Mary Cade Ambojia ⁵, Albert M. Castañeda ⁶,
Melody M. Gatdula⁷

¹ Program Head, Graduate Studies, La Consolacion University Philippines.

² Professor, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Selangor, Malaysia. *Corresponding Author Email: dr.nidhi@lincoln.edu.my
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1590-9888

^{3,4} Faculty, Institute of Health Sciences and Nursing, Far Eastern University- Manila.

⁵ Chief Nursing Officer and Infection Control Nurse,
Velazco Hospital, Silang Cavite, Philippines.

⁶ RN Staff and RN Resource, Vibra Hospital/ Methodist Hospital, USA.

⁷ Program Head, College of Nursing, Our Lady of Fatima University,
Cabanatuan City, Philippines.

Abstract

Background: Blended learning is quickly becoming one of the most popular instructional methods in higher education. This method brings together the best aspects of both traditional classroom instruction and online learning. This study outlines a novel paradigm that, from the point of view of students attending higher education institutions, aims to improve blended learning experiences. The structure was conceived with the ever-shifting educational landscape and the varied requirements of today's students in mind when it was designed. As technology has improved and new educational challenges have emerged, blended learning has grown in popularity among educators and scholars. In April 2022, five billion people—or 63% of the world's population—used the internet. The use of cutting-edge technologies and informational resources can be facilitated through blended learning, which will alter the higher education environment for coming generations (Lim et al., 2019). The framework incorporates crucial components such as personalized learning pathways, interactive content delivery, and adaptable evaluation methods in order to cater to the various preferences and styles of individual students' educational pursuits. In addition, technology plays a crucial part in the construction of this framework, as seen by the incorporation of cutting-edge digital tools and platforms designed to make communication, cooperation, and access to resources as smooth and hassle-free as possible (Hazel Jill T. Bebas et.al 2022) We investigate the use of artificial intelligence and data analytics to personalize students' educational experiences and offer them timely help. **Purpose of the Study:** Its purpose is to contribute to the current literatures in determining ways of improving higher education. **Research Methods:** This study utilized a quantitative research design, employing a questionnaire to collect data from students and employees in different colleges and departments. The sample was selected using purposive sampling technique, and the data was analyzed using SPSS as a statistical tool. **Conclusion:** Blended learning is an instrument to help with the process of adapting innovative technologies and informational resources to transform the higher education sector for future generations. Students may get the benefits of online learning such as accessible learning resources and having the opportunity to study at their own pace and convenience.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Higher Education, Flexibility, Individualization.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is the foundation for world development and future sustainability. It produces professionals in various fields that will become the gears and backbones of the society. It improves social, economic, cultural, scientific, and political aspects while being essential to both national and international success. To promote innovation, talent, adaptability, and the research mindset in the current globalization context, high-

quality higher education is required (Kumar, 2022). While face-to-face classes remain the traditional education setup, utilizing digital learning platforms became popular during the 21st century due to new technologies. Education technology had already experienced rapid growth and adoption before the coronavirus (COVID-19); whether it is online learning software for information, language, tutoring, or video conferencing tools, there has been a notable rise in usage in recent years (Lalani & Li, 2020). With the school closures and shifting to online modes of learning due to the pandemic, education technology gained even more prominence. Higher education students are continuously necessitating more flexible methods beyond the usual modalities due to increasing changes and innovations. As it combines the benefits of online and offline learning modalities, blended learning efficiently increases education opportunities and enables university students to have flexible learning (Li, 2022). Alongside this, in 40,000 responses from students at 118 U.S. universities, the EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research (2019) reported that 70% of respondents preferred face-to-face training but indicated that they would be open to using "blended learning," which combines online and in-person instruction. However, its implementation must consider factors, especially students, to be effective and successful.

While most shifted to online means of learning because of the pandemic, nearly 24 million students from nursery to college-level are at risk of not returning to class (UNESCO, 2020). Over 50% of students stated that they were concerned about the changes to their education while the educational administration experience difficult situations with few alternatives due to the closure of academic institutions. According to Onyema et al. (2020), school shutdown has a negative impact on students' attitudes and interest in learning which affected education quality. A study by Elshami et al. (2021) stated that only 41.3% of the student respondents are satisfied with the quality of online learning as technical problems and lack of interactions reduced their satisfaction. In order to meet the problems, educational institutions discovered how to revolutionize and adapt digital procedures. Online learning effectively guaranteed quality and convenience of learning for students and academics while colleges were closed. To solve the difficulties of distance learning, software like Zoom, Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas, and Microsoft Teams was used. More devices, instructional apps, and online learning opportunities did not, however, automatically improve student performance. It is also influenced by effective implementation and improved learning attitudes and engagement (Barbour, 2017). In their study of the pandemic's immediate effects on students' educational experiences, Day et al. (2021) identified difficulties including a shortage of adequate gadgets, a poor home learning environment, student stress, little opportunity for engagement, and a lack of fieldwork opportunities. Findings also showed that despite efforts to embrace virtual classrooms, the needs of courses that call for hands-on practice are not met by the online learning modality. Due to the pandemic, online learning can serve as a temporary solution, but it cannot take the place of face-to-face instruction. As evidence for this, Yuming et al. (2020) claimed that both forms of education may be progressively implemented in the future since their respective advantages and disadvantages may be mutually reinforcing. With these combined through the blended learning setup, it will allow greater flexibility, social interaction and engagement among students, and more profound learning experiences that otherwise might not occur in other instructional delivery methods.

According to Edward et al. (2018), in order to improve academic activities, researchers and administrators have urged for the need for more relevant literature on the application of blended learning. Though several global studies have reported on students' attitudes and performance in blended learning instruction, little is known about the current perception of students in higher education institutions toward its quality. Limited studies tackled blended learning during the pandemic, with most studies dated before it. Despite universities implementing this type of instruction before, factors in the present times such as new technology, student engagement, faculty online literacy, and risk of the pandemic should be considered. With this, most previous research has concentrated mainly on the digital sides, having only a few literature including the face-to-face aspect of this modality. Since there is a lack literature on the subject, it is believed that additional research on blended learning is necessary to help administrators strategically integrate this innovative strategy in higher education to enhance academic methods (Anthony et al., 2022). There is a need for more evidence to prove that blended learning can be utilized to enhance educational quality. This is because only a few have addressed the problem with student performance, preferences, and accessibility. Limited studies compared the quality of blended learning from different learning setups that may be used as definitive evidence. This research seeks to understand the students' perception of blended learning, including their attitudes and satisfaction, to determine its effectiveness. By determining their perspective, the researchers may be able to provide data as a basis for a quality education framework. Considering that quality education is still at risk worldwide, it is crucial to analyze the factors that can improve the effectiveness of various modalities in learning.

Research Question

1. What innovative framework can be proposed to improve the quality of education in the higher education institutions?

Purpose of the Study

This research paper seeks to explore the perception of university students on the effectiveness of blended learning. Its purpose is to contribute to the current literatures in determining ways of improving higher education. In addition to addressing whether blended learning is effective in terms of Academic Performance, Student Engagement, Motivation, and Quality of Learning, it aims to create a strategy that benefits academic institutions, professors, and students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Initially, the only method of training where the educator and students actually have in-person interactions was traditional face-to-face learning (Jones, 2019). Online learning also began to gain popularity in the 1990s since it allowed students to learn and accomplish their requirements asynchronously even without physically attending in the classroom (Nortvig et al., 2018). As technology has improved and new educational challenges have emerged, blended learning has grown in popularity among educators and scholars. In April 2022, five billion people—or 63% of the world's population—used the internet. The use of cutting-edge technologies and informational resources can be facilitated through blended learning, which will alter the higher education environment for coming generations (Lim et al., 2019). The blended learning approach, according to Singh et al. (2021), promises to bring together the greatest

features of diverse technologies, online applications, and education theories. The benefits of both digital and traditional techniques are combined in its methodology. Research shows that integrating both on-campus and online learning together is more effective and desirable than using simply one or the other. Jones (2019) added that blended learning has the ability to improve and provide additional possibilities because it enables students to regularly take part in in-person training while also giving them the essential flexibility to advance at their own pace.

Blended learning has become a prominent academic practice over the past ten years due to increasing demand and acceptance in higher education. It is becoming more and more apparent that blended learning can resolve some of the challenges that online learning and offline training have. Blended learning, a mode of instruction that integrates traditional and online training, has emerged as a key tool for advancing educational reform and innovation (Li, Yu, & Yang, 2022). Blended learning offers many benefits, some of which include less seating time, improved student learning flexibility, and increased student control over their learning environment, even though it has diverged from standard classroom teaching ideas (Horn & Fisher, 2017). Both instructors and students can profit from blended learning. According to Valero & Verde (2021), it makes use of the opportunities from online connections, physical interactions, new learning possibilities, and other resources that contribute to comfort, accessibility, effectiveness, and more options for obtaining education. Blended learning, which incorporates the strengths of both in-person and digital instruction, assists professors in attaining pedagogical objectives by educating students to develop a comprehensive and constructive reasoning skill. It also improves teaching abilities and promotes social order (Subramaniam and Muniandy 2019). Students who study online report feeling alone because they believe they did not receive assistance, support, or a collaborative learning environment. As a result, they lack social presence (Jinsheng & Lufei, 2021). This is addressed by blended classrooms since they incorporate face-to-face teaching methods like direct instruction or lectures, group discussions, and small-group activities. As a result, it's important to focus on good interactions between teachers and students individually. Students may continue their education from home as long as they have access to the required technology, in addition to utilizing technology to deliver in-class online learning. According to a study by Aladwan et al. (2018), 82.1% of respondents believe that blended learning sessions are more relevant since they involve discussion in an online learning environment after face-to-face instruction. Overall, self-learning, communication, ease, and flexibility are benefits of blended learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative research design, employing a questionnaire to collect data from students and employees in different colleges and departments. The sample was selected using purposive sampling technique, and the data was analyzed using SPSS as a statistical tool.

Expected Outcomes: The findings of this study generate students' perception including Flexibility of the Modality, Accessibility of Resources, Social Interactions and Support from Professors.

ANALYSIS

The data for this research paper was collected through a survey questionnaire administered to a sample of students and employees in different colleges and departments. The survey questionnaires are self-formulated and self-structured that underwent content validation by the research instructor. A pilot research was used to examine the validity of the study's geographic location, and the Cronbach alpha analysis was used to determine how reliable or effective the study's conclusions were. The outcome suggests that it is suitable. The report and the tool are therefore approved for use as research instrument. The researcher used a survey she devised as well as document analysis. With the help and guidance of an advisor, this study acted as a custom questionnaire.

DISCUSSION

In order to provide greater flexibility and individualization, higher education institutions strive to use modern technologies in online or blended learning systems (Müller & Mildenerger, 2021). A blended learning strategy fosters enhanced literacy and learning by giving access to a variety of flexible learning contexts. Since it is a student centered approach, it engages students to participate and have more control of their learning. It provides them to have meaningful hands-on experiences and have innovative learning through modern technology. To achieve quality education, flexibility of the modality is needed.

Though students have different preferences for their modality, it is important to have balanced advantages for both online and traditional classes in blended learning. A study by Venkatesh et al. (2020) stated that while some reasoning and critical thinking skills can be taught through digital platforms, there are practical skills and procedures that requires direct teaching. By having access to well-organized learning resources and having the opportunity to study at their own pace and convenience, students may profit from online learning. The advantages of face-to-face instruction, such as the improvement of skill performance and interpersonal interactions, may also be advantageous to them. Effective combination of in-person and online modalities may result to increased cognitive training, independent study, meaningful collaboration, and interaction with classmates or professors.

Flexibility in terms of availability is offered through blended learning. In other words, blended learning offers the advantages of in-person support and instruction while allowing the student to access the resources at any time and from any location. To cater the new generation, modernizing the higher education system through making instructional practices more dynamic is one of the main goals of blended learning (Lim et al., 2019). By providing greater access to a variety of material, the flexibility and adaptability of blended learning models will deliver improved teaching and learning experiences. Students may experience increased learning flexibility by having more home study time, and increased opportunity for review before in-person classes.

Digital literacy is essential to develop necessary technological skills in the modern world. It enables people to find and comprehend reliable information online. This is important for students and educators for them to access online information and incorporate this knowledge in real life. According to a 2018 study by Hammouri and Abu-Shanab, students' satisfaction might be influenced by the accuracy and relevance of the material. Some of the evidence supporting their satisfied claims for learning

resources and activities includes the ease of accessing the materials and the ability to incorporate online information to their work. Digital literacy will enable students and professors to have a smooth learning procedure while being able to understand the concepts of online education and apply it effectively.

Students should have the opportunity to speak up in a safe and open learning environment. In blended learning, they are more engaged and promote participation because of its student-centered approach. The environment must be carefully cultivated by the professor through opportunities for meaningful and effective interactions. To make active blended learning sustainable, it is imperative to provide the students with the knowledge they need. Therefore, it is important to not only lay the groundwork but also to communicate it properly. The objectives of the online and offline activities that will result in active blended learning must be understood by the professors in order to be delivered effectively to the students.

CONCLUSION

Blended learning is an instrument to help with the process of adapting innovative technologies and informational resources to transform the higher education sector for future generations. Students may get the benefits of online learning such as accessible learning resources and having the opportunity to study at their own pace and convenience. They may experience the advantages of face-to-face learning like acquiring hands-on experiences and establishing interpersonal relations. Based on the results of the questionnaire, students strongly agree that blended learning is beneficial for quality education and overall has a positive perception towards it (Kim Hazel L. Alolod, et.al. 2022) This research was conducted with the intention of making a contribution to the current body of information on the subject of improving the practices of higher education, and it contains several major results and consequences, including the following:

- **Approach that Is Focused on the Student** The findings of our research highlight the vital relevance of adopting an approach that is focused on the student in higher education. We have proved that it is feasible to greatly increase students' levels of engagement, motivation, and overall pleasure by putting them at the centre of the learning process.
- **Improved Learning Outcomes** The novel framework that we proposed has demonstrated that it has the potential to produce better learning outcomes. Students who participated in the framework reported an improvement in their academic performance and a greater comprehension of the subject matter, highlighting the promise of blended learning when it is tailored to the specific requirements of each learner.
- **Integration of Technology** The incorporation of current technology into the design of the framework has shown to be an essential factor in easing the process of communication, collaboration, and access to available resources. This method, which is powered by technology, is in line with the digital expectations that today's students have, and it improves the learning experiences of the students.
- **Training and Development of Faculty:** The importance of training and development of faculty in the successful adoption of novel teaching approaches is brought to light by the findings of our study. It is absolutely necessary, for the

sake of the success of student-centered blended learning, to provide educators with assistance in adjusting to new pedagogical techniques and technological advancements.

- **Skills Necessary for the 21st Century** The framework has helped students develop skills that are essential for the 21st century, so preparing them not just for academic success but also for the challenges posed by a world that is undergoing rapid transformation. Within the context of this approach, some of the abilities that are developed include critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-directed learning.
- **Policy and Practise Implications** The findings of the research have important policy and practise implications for institutions of higher education, decision-makers, and practitioners. It offers evidence-based insights into the design of curricula, instructional methods, and the allocation of resources, so influencing decision-makers in their efforts to improve the educational experience for students.

In conclusion, the findings of our research support the argument for a paradigm change in higher education, in which the role of the student as the centre of pedagogical innovation is emphasised. Higher education institutions have the opportunity to build dynamic and effective learning environments by embracing the concepts of our student-centric framework (Archana Dwivedi 2023). These environments educate students not only for academic success but also for learning that continues throughout one's life and being able to adapt to new situations. This research represents a stepping stone towards the ongoing improvement of higher education practises, and it comes at a time when the educational landscape is continuing to undergo significant change.

References

- 1) Li, B., Yu, Q., & Yang, F. (2022). The effect of blended instruction on student performance: A meta-analysis of 106 empirical studies from China and abroad. *Best Evidence in Chinese Education*, 10(2), 1395-1403.
- 2) UNESCO (2022). Education: from school closure to recovery. Retrieved from: <https://www.unesco.org/en/covid-19/education-response>
- 3) Edward, C. N., Asirvatham, D., & Johar, M. G. M. (2018). Effect of blended learning and learners' characteristics on students' competence: An empirical evidence in learning oriental music. *Education and Information Technologies*, 23, 2587-2606.
- 4) Anthony, B., Kamaludin, A., Romli, A. et al. (2022). Blended Learning Adoption and Implementation in Higher Education: A Theoretical and Systematic Review. *Tech Know Learn*, 27, 531-578. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-020-09477-z>
- 5) Jones, S. (2019). The Implications of Blended Learning in Today's Classroom: A Look into the History, Views, Impacts, and Research. Retrieved from: https://nwcommons.nwciowa.edu/education_masters/180/
- 6) Nortvig, A., Petersen, A. K., Balle, S. (2018). A literature review of the factors influencing E learning and blended learning in relation to learning outcome, student satisfaction and engagement. *Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, 16(1), 46-55.
- 7) Galvez, Dr. Rosalyn S. (2022). The Effects of Students' Resiliency on Academic Performance amidst Pandemic. *Globus an International Journal of Medical Science, Engineering and Technology*, 11(1), 73-79.

- 8) Lim, C.P., Wang, T. & Graham C. Driving (2019). Sustaining and scaling up blended learning practices in higher education institutions: a proposed framework. *Innov Educ*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42862-019-0002-0>
- 9) Singh, V. and Thurman, A. (2019). How many ways can we define online learning? A systematic literature review of definitions of online learning (1988-2018). *American Journal of Distance Education*, 33(4), 289-306.
- 10) Alolod, Kim Hazel L., et.al. (2022). Effectiveness of Online Platforms in The Education and Training of The Tourism Students. *Cosmos an International Journal of Art & Higher Education*, 11(1), 37-44.
- 11) Bebas, Hazel Jill T., et.al. (2022). Investigating the Self-Regulated Online Learning Strategies of Bachelor of Arts in English Language Students. *Globus Journal of Progressive Education*, 12(2), 20-24.
- 12) Li, B., Yu, Q. & Yang, F. (2022). The effect of blended instruction on student performance: A meta-analysis of 106 empirical studies from China and abroad. *Best Evidence in Chinese Education*, 10(2), 1395-1403.
- 13) Horn, M. & Fisher, J. (2017). New Faces of Blended Learning. *Educational Leadership*, 74(6), 59-63.
- 14) Dr. Maryleare P. Palmares, Dr. Soceline N. Batisla-Ong (2023). Technological, Pedagogical, Content Knowledge (TPACK) of Science Teachers: Basis o in-Service Training Design Development. *Cosmos Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 13(1), 01-15.
- 15) Jinsheng, S. & Lufei, W. (2021). Investigation and research on online Chinese teaching for international students in colleges and universities under the background of the Covid-19). *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies*, 4, 23-33.
- 16) Aladwan, F., Fakhouri, H., Alawamra, A., Rababa, O. (2018). Students Attitudes toward Blended Learning among Students of the University of Jordan. *Modern Applied Science*, 12(12), 217. DOI:10.5539/mas.v12n12p217
- 17) Venkatesh S, Rao YK, Nagaraja H, Woolley T, Alele FO & Malau-Aduli BS (2020). Factors influencing medical students' experiences and satisfaction with blended integrated E-learning. *Med Princ Pract*. 29, 396-402. Doi: 10.1159/000505210.
- 18) Borrromeo, Demie S, Estrella, Noel E. and Caparas, Editha R. (2023). Impact of Educational Technology Tools on the Digital and Information Literacy Skills of Selected Dominican Schools in the Philippines. *Cosmos an International Journal of Management*, 12(2), 01-08.
- 19) Dwivedi, Archana (2023). Psychological and Technical Barrier for Teachers to Shift Face to Face to Online Education during Pandemic. *Globus an International Journal of Management & IT*, 14(2), 76-80.
- 20) Hammouri, Q. & Abu-Shanab, E. (2018). Exploring Factors Affecting Users' Satisfaction toward E-Learning Systems. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*, 14(1), 44-57. Retrieved from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1167685>