

Blended Teaching Technique in the Modern Educational System: its Opportunities and Obstacles
for Tertiary Level Students of Bangladesh

By

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A thesis to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

English and Humanities

BRAC University

September 2021

Declaration

It is declared hereby that-

- This thesis represents my research results while doing my Bachelor's degree.
- Except for the mentioned references, this paper does not contain any writings from any content written or published earlier by any third party.
- The thesis does not include any content that has been authorized or submitted before any other degree or diploma at any university or other institution.
- I have acknowledged all the primary sources of help

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Approval

The thesis titled “Blended Teaching Technique’s effectiveness in The Modern Educational System” submitted by Tasneem Islam Audity (17203009) has been acknowledged as acceptable in part completion of the requirements of Bachelor of Arts in English Degree.

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the comprehensive meaning of blended teaching, its proper design, and formation with a view to elaborating how learners adopt blended learning with the usage of online and traditional classroom environments simultaneously. Moreover, the study sheds light on the boundaries and limitations of blended teaching in the context of our country by discussing various factors that are viewed to be negative and complicated. It uses a close-ended and opinion-based questionnaire; an online survey for the students and a semi-structured interview questionnaire for teachers to collect information for analysis. Finally, the paper recommends effective solutions to overcome the possible issues related to blended teaching and learning.

Keywords: Blended teaching, Blended Learning, Blended curriculum design, Online learning, Online teaching.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis work of mine to my mother who has always been a wonderfully supportive person by my side.

Acknowledgment

First and foremost, through Allah's favor, I am capable of continuing my education and writing this thesis paper. Next, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my mother for her unwavering support and encouragement in helping me achieve my goal of completing my education. In addition, I want to give special thanks to my supervisor, Mohammad Mahmudul Haque. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to my friends and classmates, who have been such a comforting presence in my darkest hours. In addition, I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of the participants and interviewees who generously shared their thoughts and perspectives and assisted me in doing my research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

With the tremendous development of internet technology affecting different aspects of modern lives, the education sector has also become equipped with new and advanced ways of teaching and learning. The traditional method of education has been associated with e-learning in a way that facilitates both online and offline learning concurrently. This new system of blending both online and offline classroom activities is termed blended teaching and learning. This relatively latest and remarkable system of teaching and learning has gained the attention of the concerned parties.

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

This research aims to find out how blended teaching can be implemented with its proper design and formation. It also tries to assess whether blended teaching is appropriate or not in terms of the tertiary level of our country by analyzing student's and teacher's attitudes towards it with a view to suggesting some measures that can help to achieve successful teaching and learning through a collaboration of online and offline activities.

1.3 Methodology:

The methodologies employed in this study are as follows:

- Data collection from students through an online quantitative survey
- Teachers interview through zoom meetings and phone calls

Thus, the research referred to be a mixed-method study

1.4 Limitations of the Study:

First of all, due to the pandemic, all the educational institutions were closed and as a result, all the data were collected online. The researcher collected 90 student's responses through an online survey. These students are from different public and private universities. In addition, interviews were taken of three teachers working in both schools and universities. All the interviews took place through zoom meetings and phone calls. The data collection procedure would have been easier and richer if the pandemic had not occurred.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Blended Teaching:

The best and most effective way to describe blended teaching, as the name suggests, is that it is a mixture of e-learning and traditional techniques. In other words, It is a fusion of physical classes and virtual learning. (Finn & Bucci, 2004). Brown (2003) described blended learning to be supporting all the positive aspects of e-learning such as cost reduction, time efficiency, location convenience, etc. Along with face-to-face learning and its benefits like one-on-one understanding and motivation.

Singh & Reed (2001) defined a blended technique as two simultaneous modes of learning in action, which optimizes the learning outcome and cost of program delivery. Blended teaching and learning, according to Thorne (2003), combines the innovative and technological breakthroughs offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered by the best of traditional learning to solve the problems of adapting learning and development to individual needs.

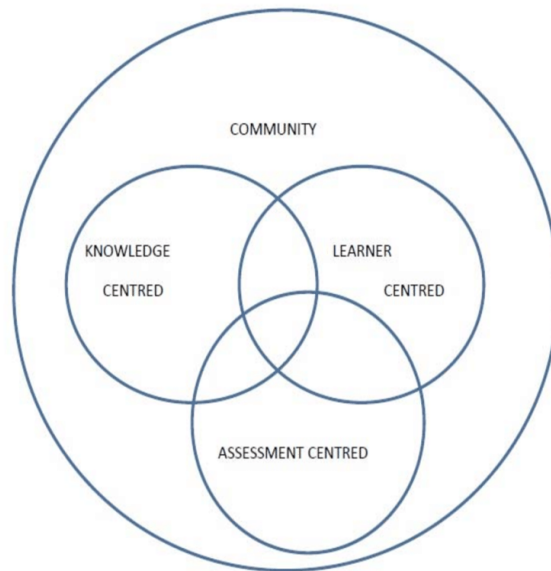
Osguthorpe and Graham (2003) opined that a blended learning environment creates an equilibrium between traditional face-to-face learning and e-learning with the help of different learning styles and experiences, online resources, and the experience of trainers. Morris (2010) claims that the blended education method improves the face-to-face interface between teachers and students by using the internet. In recent times, the blended teaching technique has become very popular. In this technique, time allocated for classroom activities is replaced with online activities with a view to achieving the learning objectives (Bock. et al., 2018). Blended learning,

according to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), is the intentional blending of face-to-face and online learning sessions, resulting in a unique learning experience that blends the best of both worlds. It's a total renovation, with a new structure and approach to teaching and learning.

2.2 Design and Format of Blended Teaching:

To implement a blended teaching and learning environment, it can be thoroughly suggested that an effective and well-designed curriculum must be set. The combination of both online and offline materials and usages should be balanced and organized systematically. According to L. Smart & J. Cappel (2006), such technological tools must be selected that provide authentic learning activities, facilitate student's activeness regarding learning, and make them actively involved in critical thinking. According to Shea (2007), to measure the effectiveness of blended learning, we must go through certain aspects of learning in general terms. He stated, to comprehend blended learning, we must first comprehend a number of underlying and interconnected questions. These include how learning happens in general, among grownups, and in technology-mediated contexts. Saying that Shea (2007) suggested considering some factors related to learning, adult learning, and online learning to judge the effectiveness of blended learning. To answer the question of how people learn or what an ideal learning environment is, Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) developed a model of a successful learning environment's element known as How People Learn or HPL. Their words imply that a successful; learning environment has four certain characteristics. They are Learner-Centered, Knowledge-Centered, Assessment-Centered, and Community-Centered.

Figure 1. Bransford, et al. (2000) “How People Learn”



Shea (2007) stated in his work that, to justify the effectiveness of blended teaching and learning, it must be examined whether it meets the HPL model’s elements or not. In terms of learner-centeredness, a blended learning environment must meet learner’s goals, objectives, needs, and interests. He suggested that, while designing a successful blended learning environment, the responsible parties must consider the targeted students, their abilities, their passions, and goals based on which they should make learning activities.

As per knowledge-centeredness or the second lens through which blended learning must be assessed, scholars have come up with many aspects. It is opined that for a blended learning environment to achieve knowledge-centeredness, it is necessary to balance online and face-to-face learning in a way that is understandable and can be transferred to new settings (Bransford et al., 2000).

The third aspect through which the effectiveness of blended teaching can be assessed is the process of adult learning. Chickering and Gamson (1989) outlined seven principles for successful undergraduate teaching practice. These principles include proper and regular contact between students and instructors, student engagement and cooperation, active learning, receiving feedback, allocating adequate time for the job, communicating high expectations, and respecting and accepting varied skills and learning styles. Fellenz & Conti (1989) have also stated that some components preach successful adult learning and they are learning objectives, independence, self-direction, and ownership of learning.

Garrison, Anderson & Archer (1999) have developed a work on the community of inquiry model for online teaching and learning that focuses on online pedagogy and processes. To measure the effectiveness of blended teaching and learning this mentioned area must be taken into account. In this regard, Garrison, Anderson, and Archer's (2000)'s work are significant. In the lack of 'face to face interaction, they devised a model that emphasizes the significance of focusing on multiple forms of 'presence.' They're instilling social and cognitive presence in their students.

As Shea (2007) has elaborated in his work, for a blended teaching environment to achieve the HPL model's 'Learner-Centeredness', learner's goals, objectives, aims, and interests must be focused on. The concerned party or the teachers or designers responsible for designing a blended environment must identify what the learners know, what they desire to know along with their abilities, capacities, and passions and then they should create or select activities aligned to them.

Shea (2007) also described that, for blended teaching to achieve ‘Knowledge-Centeredness’, a classroom environment and teaching materials and learning activities should be designed in a way that supports understanding and is transferable to new settings. To do so, it must be studied what the learners bring to the learning environment. It must facilitate understanding more than memorizing. It is more preferable to identify the use of the target knowledge to encourage learning. As it is said, “Ideas are best introduced when students see a need or a reason for their use—this helps them see relevant uses of knowledge to make sense of what they are learning” (Bransford et al., 2000, p. 139). Shea (2007) also suggests that understanding how environments can be constructed to present new ideas when needed is a critical component of creating an effective blended education environment.

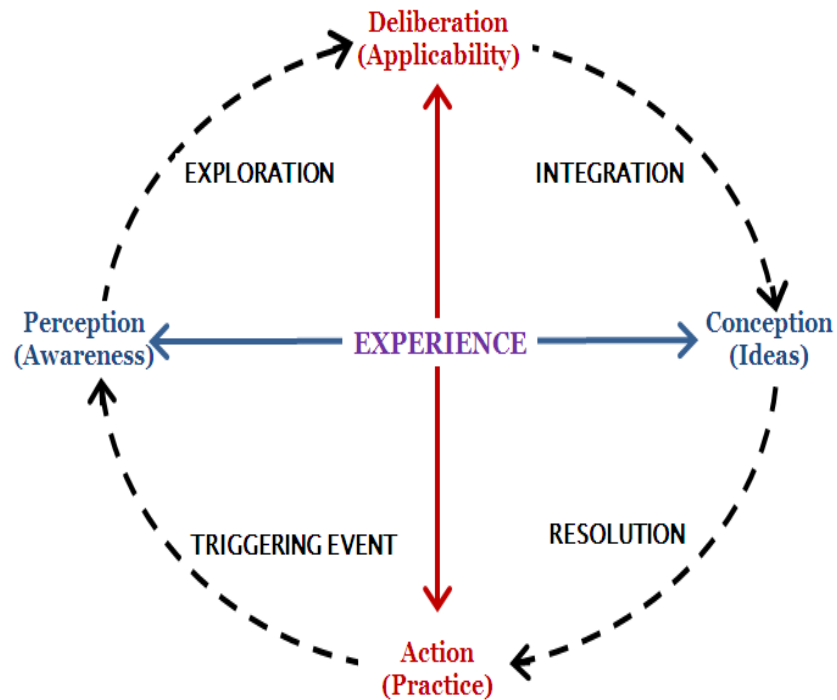
Shea (2007) then described that to achieve ‘Assessment-Centeredness’, the blended environment must facilitate the concept or design the method in such a pattern where learners make their thinking visible. Thus, feedback and revisions must be visible. It is furthermore stated that to conduct more easy and effective feedback giving, an MCQ-based online questionnaire and grading may be very suitable for a computer-mediated environment.

To meet the fourth content of the HPL model; ‘Community Centeredness’, the blended teaching and learning environment must be designed in a way that will reach a sense of connectedness and collaboration. It is suggested that those learning environments that promote a

sense of community belonging along with connectedness have deep importance to develop prompt learning (Bransford et al., 2000; Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1991).

To justify the well-structured pattern of blended learning, Garrison's Practical Inquiry Model of Cognitive Processing is another approach to focus on. Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2001) worked to create the "practical inquiry" model. This model was mainly established to assess the outcomes of online collaborative learning, especially for higher education.

Figure 2. Garrison's Practical Inquiry Model



This model represents the four phases of critical thinking and cognitive presence and keeping this in mind, it can be assessed that online learning progress can go through these four phases. Triggering event that begins the dialogue about a particular issue. Then the exploration phase is where the learners move between a private reflection and social exploration. The integration phase is where learners begin to construct meanings or solutions then finally the resolution phase where the proposed solution is "vicariously tested" (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2001). Hence, in computer-mediated communication, if this model is applied for the learners then it can strongly be desired that learning outcomes might bring the best of the results.

2.3 The Effectiveness and Possible Implementation Hazards of Blended Teaching and Learning

2.3.1 Online Collaborativeness

Online learning has been through many criticisms due to the lack of human interaction. However, blended learning, since it is a mixture of both online and offline, can reasonably overcome the possible constraints of only online learning or only face-to-face learning. It is said that blended learning manages to promote online collaborative learning (Carr-Chellman et al., 2000; Gabriel, 2004; Graham, Scarborough, and Goodwin, 1999). In this matter, it is said that face-to-face interaction is needed to promote interaction but when it is not convenient, the instructor can design online activities that engage the learners to be working together and when a meeting is convenient, activities can be designed suitable for offline (Yu, 2015). It is also argued that the goal of blended learning is to utilize students' time through the use of technologies in the collaborative learning process, rather than to save face-to-face time for them (Bohle Carbonell et al., 2013).

However, it is also identified that blended learning can be a total failure if learning and teaching are not blended properly or if there is not a well-maintained balance between online and offline activities, brain mechanisms, and teacher's correct pedagogy (Yu, 2015). It is argued that, though a blended learning environment is designed to target collaborative learning, sometimes it will fail to support the kind of sustainable procedure to facilitate learning (Shea, 2007).

2.3.2 Learning Outcomes

Blended learning can stably and strongly promote learning outcomes among the learners. Learners can arrange their study or learning time according to their will and can utilize the time for online activities based on their convenience. This could create a sense of freedom with self-dependence and encouragement. Also, they will be bound to invest themselves in offline

classes. This boundness will lead to encouragement. Thus, this could ultimately promote a flexible learning mode (Yu,2015). Students' perceptions and grades are likely to increase if they make the best use of online learning in the blended setting and if teaching styles encourage student moderating (Ginns and Ellis, 2007). A concerning fact about getting the desired outcome is the correct use of technology by the instructors. If instructors fail to utilize and support appropriate technologies then the learning outcome will get damaged badly (Kaur, 2013).

2.3.3 Dealing with Large Numbers of Learners

One of the most significant benefits of blended learning is that it allows a wide range of learners to participate in the activity online and understand the teachers' shared knowledge (Su,2015). Moreover, they can access it whenever they want. Simultaneously, learners can ask questions to clarify any of their doubts and get on the spot feedback from the teachers during face-to-face interaction. Teachers will also be benefited from this by understanding or assuming a student's degree of participation in face-to-face interaction (Su,2015). Therefore, for maintaining a proficient learning environment for a large class, blended teaching can be a suitable option.

Here, organizational and instructional challenges may hinder the progress while dealing with a large number of students. Overcoming the notion that online education is not as effective as traditional classroom system, managing and evaluating individual participant's progress, making the online interaction communicative rather than just talkative, matching the best

medium for performance objectives are issues that need to be highly considered by the instructors while following blended teaching (Hofmann, 2011).

2.3.4 Technological Issues

According to Zinsar (2012), since technology and globalization are transforming the world into a global village, a new set of academic skills is required on the part of the newly transformed society. This new skill is incomplete without proper technological literacy. Blended learning, according to Krasnova and Sidorenko (2013), is a strategy that includes efficient face-to-face teaching techniques with online interactive collaboration to create a system that operates in a constant correlational single context.. Surely, technological issues are one of the main concerns of blended teaching and learning. However, in many cases, the technology can serve as a hindrance for the students to conduct online learning. Higgins (2014), in this regard, stated that virtual learning is not always user-friendly.

2.3.5 Advantages and Hindrances of Blended Teaching in Higher Education

Blended learning has the capacity to truly alter higher education, according to Dziuban, Hartman, and Moskal (2004). Blended learning, as per Garrison and Kanuka (2004), has a significant impact on altering and boosting higher education quality. According to Garrison and Kanuka (2004), adopting blended learning in higher education redefines the role of higher educational institutions by stressing more learner-centered and self-centered teaching and learning paradigms. Woodall (2010) justified the value of online learning by saying that virtual classrooms allow instructors and learners to be in different places at the same time. This

flexibility allows both teachers and students to carefully examine the shared materials and discourse patterns. This flexibility can be a great means in higher education.

Along with these mentioned merits, there are also some hindrances located while establishing blended teaching in Bangladesh. It is opined that the universities of our country are facing countless challenges in integrating blended teaching (2021). According to Moskal et al., (2013), a stable and robust infrastructure is required to assist students and instructors. The biggest hurdles include a slow internet connection, a lack of online learning tools, and insufficient electrical supplies. He also suggested that a strong IT infrastructure and network system and highly qualified technical personnel should be presented while implementing successful blended learning.

2.3.6 Teacher's Role in Blended Teaching

Blended teaching and learning have some disadvantages along with advantages. For many teachers and students, as per Bonk (2010), blended teaching and learning deliver a crucial and complex latest model. Lack of independent motivation, time management, and patience with online activities are all major challenges of blended learning, according to Johnson and Marsh (2014). Senior (2010) pointed out the blended teaching technique's problem with teachers by saying that this technique requires the teachers to redefine their roles by dealing with the changing roles of teachers of the 21st century. It makes the teachers reconsider their parts in their student's life in a progressively interconnected world. Ocak (2011) identifies another problem with blended teaching and learning by mentioning that many a time unclear and improper

clarification of teacher and student's role often confuses them and ultimately it leads to being the problem of constant delivery and online application of skills. Krasnova and Sidorenko (2013) suggested that a well-structured and well-planned syllabus is critical to the successful implementation of blended learning. Therefore, teachers must play a significant role while designing a blended curriculum for the students and designing a curriculum that facilitates learning in the most effective, suitable, and justified way.

2.4 Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to find out the answers to the following questions.

1. How to comprehensively describe blended teaching
2. What is the appropriate design and formation of blended teaching
3. What are the opportunities and challenges of blended teaching
4. How effective blended teaching is in terms of tertiary level students of Bangladesh

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Methodology:

This chapter explains the research approach that was used to carry out the study. A survey and semi-structured interview were used to collect data, with the participants filling out a questionnaire. This chapter also includes information on data, sampling, surveys, discussions, and data analysis. This paper's research methodology is based on a mixed approach.

3.2 Methods of Data Collection:

According to Rajasekar et. al. (2006), research is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. To have a rational, balanced, and organized approach for the current study, the researcher adopted a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. As Newman and Benz (1998) opined, qualitative and quantitative should be considered two sides of the same continuum. Therefore, the researcher conducted a combination of both qualitative and questionnaire research, which is a mixed method. The researcher prepared the questionnaire based on relevant and appropriate questions according to her. The interview questions were written on paper and were asked to the interviewees during the interview.

3.3 Sampling:

To gather relevant data, the researcher chose students and teachers as her participants. The students and teachers were almost known personally to the researcher. The researcher sent the survey questionnaire via Facebook messenger and requested all the participants to honestly fill up the questionnaire form. The interviewee teachers were personally called via messenger or zoom meeting by the researcher. The data is gathered in two ways. One is the survey by collecting data from the students and another is a semi-structured questionnaire interview with the teachers. The questionnaire is considered to be semi-structured because it had questioned both open-ended and close-ended. Therefore, the interviewees were able and allowed to add their opinion, contrast, and disagreed with the researcher and describe their views in an elaborated way. Overall, 90 students and 3 teachers have contributed to this research by expressing their points of view.

3.4 Survey:

The researcher gathered 90 responses from the participants. All these participants are students aged between 18 to 25, studying in various private universities across the country. However, it must be mentioned that most of the participants are from reputed private universities. The data was collected through an online Google survey form. The researcher sent the link of the google form to the participants and collected the final results within two days. All the participants willingly participated in the survey.

3.5 Interview:

Three teachers were interviewed for this study. Due to the global pandemic Covid-19, it was not convenient for both the interviewer and interviewee to conduct a face-to-face interview. Two of these interviewees participated in the interview through zoom meeting and one interviewee chose to talk over the phone. The interview questions were completely impromptu to them since they did not get the questionnaire before. Thus, the interview contained their raw experience and opinion which made the semi-structured questionnaire interview to be smooth and successful.

3.6 Data Analysis:

A total of 10 questions were asked to the students via a google survey form. All of these questions were based on their online learning experience. The researcher aimed to focus on an overall overview of the student's perspectives on both online and offline learning separately and

their views on blended learning. Likewise, the questions asked to the three teacher interviewees were primarily based on their online and offline teaching experience. Following the collection of data from both the survey and the interview, the researcher attempted to tie the dots by combining their experiences with what had previously been evaluated by blended learning researchers.

3.7 Obstacles Encountered:

Throughout the research, the researcher has encountered a few obstacles in terms of managing the interviewees for the interview. All these obstacles are primarily due to the pandemic situation. Another difficulty was collecting data from the teachers since they were too busy and had time convenience issues.

3.8 Ethical Considerations:

The ethical considerations were very important to the researcher. The purpose of the study was explained to each participant, and they were kindly asked to supply accurate information. The researcher was aware that some sensitive topics could make the interviews uncomfortable, so she purposefully avoided them.

3.9 Conclusion:

With the help of both the survey results and interviews, a logical analysis had been done keeping the ethical conditions in mind. Then a proper study has been presented by the researcher.

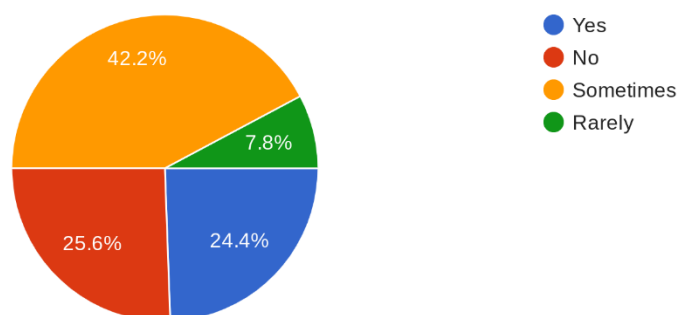
Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Student's General Perspective about Online Classes

Chart 4.1.1

1. Do you feel motivated to attend online classes?

90 responses

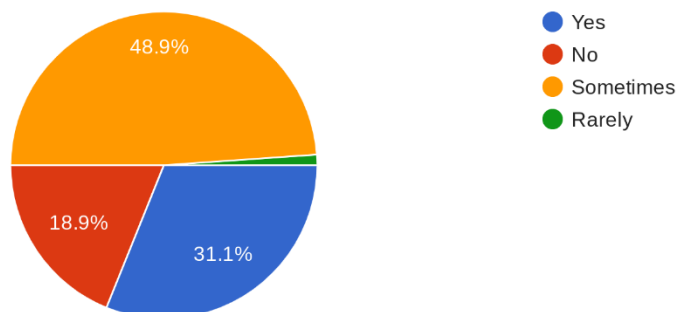


The survey shows that, out of 90 respondents, nearly 42% of students sometimes feel motivated to attend online classes and sometimes they do not. However, almost 24% said they feel motivated, and almost 25% said they do not feel motivated. And the other 7.8% expressed that they rarely feel motivated. In conclusion, it can be said that a large number of students are negligent towards online classes.

Chart 4.1.2

5. Do you feel online-based tasks/activities to be boring, non-effective, and irrelevant?

90 responses

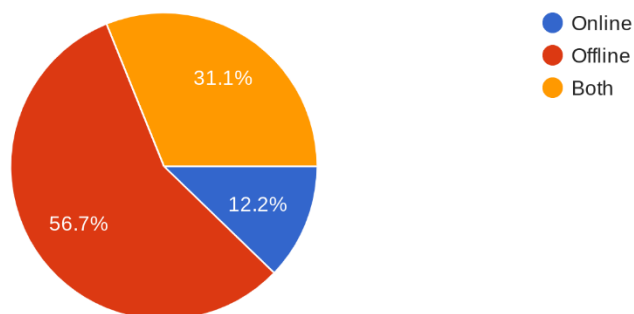


To answer whether students feel online activities to be boring, non-effective, and irrelevant or not, 48.9% of them said sometimes they feel so, whereas the second largest percentage 31.1% said yes and 18.9% said no. However, a very negligible percentage chose rarely.

Chart 4.1.3

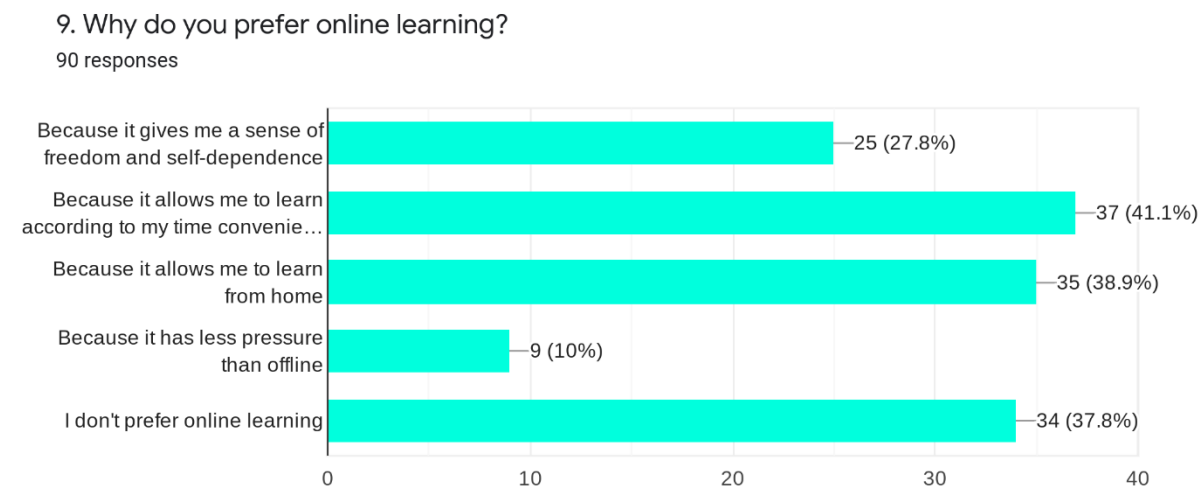
8. What is more effective for you, online learning or offline learning?

90 responses



As per the survey results, 58.7% of the students opined that they prefer offline learning, and 31.1% of them said they prefer both online and offline systems. And a very small number of students said they prefer online learning as 12.2% chose that.

Chart 4.1.4



To find out why students prefer online learning, it is observed that 41.1% prefer online learning because it allows them to learn according to their time convenience, 38.9% stated that they prefer so as it allows them to learn from home. 27.8% said they prefer online learning because it gives them a sense of freedom and self-dependence. 10% stated they prefer it because it has less pressure than offline. However, a large group of students; 37.8% said they do not prefer online learning.

Analysis:

The researcher found out that students have slightly a negative approach to online learning as it is analyzed that they do not always feel motivated to attend online classes and often

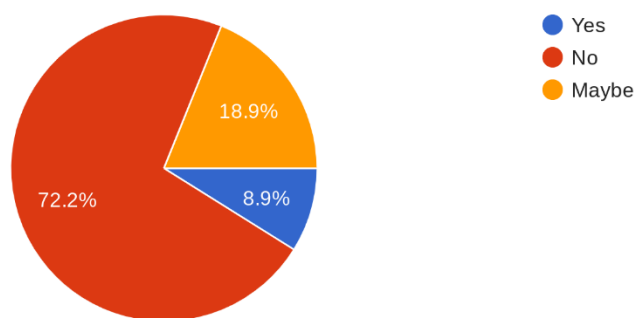
they find online activities or tasks to be boring and irrelevant. Student's disliking and negligence towards online learning can clearly be identified through the fact that a large group of students said they prefer offline learning more than online learning. However, those who prefer online learning have expressed that they do so because firstly it gives them the opportunity to learn according to their time convenience. Secondly, it allows them to learn from home, and thirdly it gives them a sense of freedom and self-dependence. Thus, overall it is ultimately observed that students do not wholeheartedly accept the concept of online learning.

4.2 Student's Perception of Online Teachers

Chart 4.2.1

2. Do you think all the teachers are efficient enough to take online classes?

90 responses

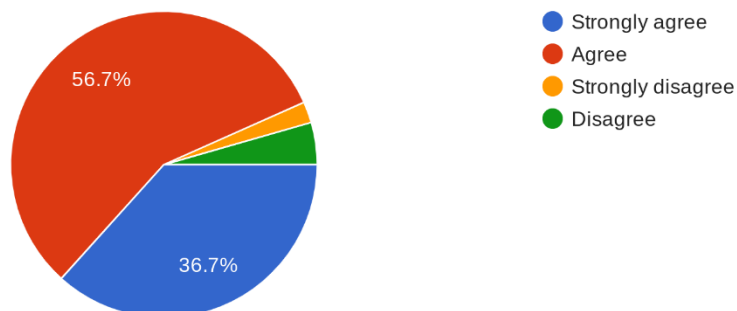


Here, most of the students feel that not all the teachers are efficient enough to take online classes as nearly 72% choose 'no' to be their answer. However, only 18.9% expressed that they feel all the teachers are efficient and a very little percentage; 8.9% expressed their confusion about that.

Chart 4.2.2

3. Do you agree that sometimes teachers provide unclear or improper instructions about online activities /tasks (such as exams, assignments, projects) and that makes the students suffer?

90 responses



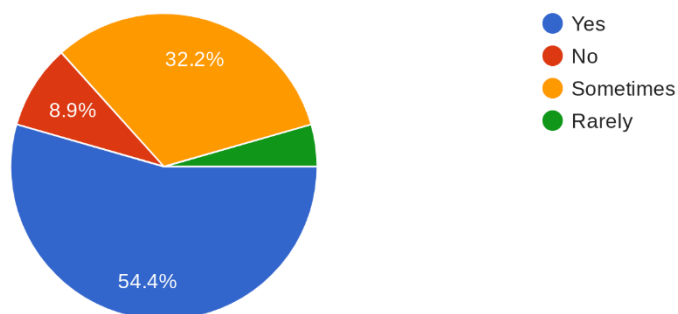
The survey found that almost all of the students agreed that sometimes teachers provide unclear or improper instructions about online exams, assignments, or projects which leads to the suffering of the students. Nearly 56% agreed to this and nearly 36% strongly agreed to this.

Whereas a very small group of students chose to disagree or strongly disagree with the question.

Chart 4.2.3

4. Do you feel lack of enthusiasm for taking part in online academic activities that do not contain marks or teacher's supervision?

90 responses



In this survey, the largest group of students, 54.4% confessed that they feel a lack of enthusiasm for taking part in such online activities that do not contain marks or teacher's supervision. 32.2% of students expressed that sometimes they feel a lack of motivation, and a tiny little group of 8.9% of students do not feel such a lack of enthusiasm. However, an insignificant percentage chose rarely as their answer.

Analysis:

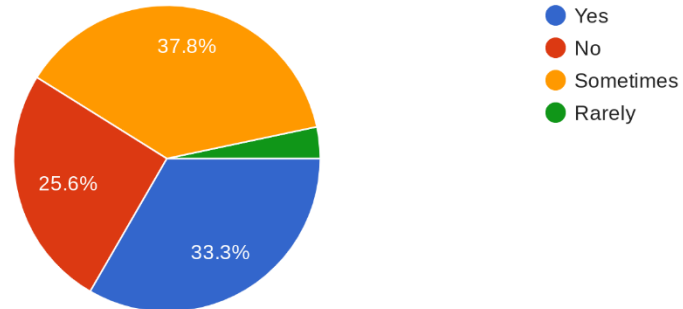
In this part, where student's perceptions about online teachers are observed, it is found out that the majority of the students think that not all teachers are efficient enough to take online classes. Furthermore, a large group of students claimed that unclear or improper instruction given by the teachers often makes them suffer. Furthermore, they feel lazy to conduct tasks and activities that have no marks or teacher's supervision. From analyzing all these three question answers, it can be concluded that a student's overall perception about teachers or online learning is not very satisfactory.

4.3 Students Opinion on Technology

Chart 4.3.1

6. Do you think that the technology used for academic purposes can be difficult, confusing, and problematic?

90 responses

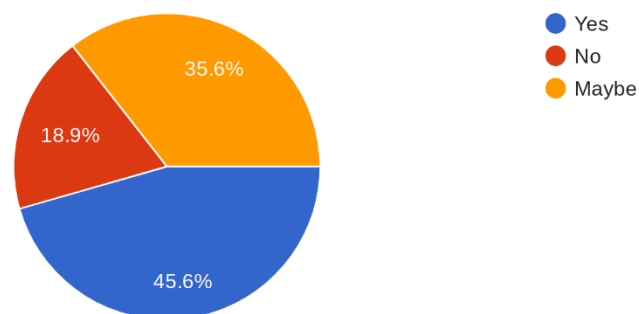


In the survey, it is seen that 37.8% feel that technology used for academic purposes can be difficult, confusing, and problematic. While 33.3% said sometimes they feel so. Whereas 25.6% said no and a few students said rarely.

Chart 4.3.2

7. Do you think online education system makes us more efficient, smart and advanced in using technology?

90 responses



Here, 45.6% expressed that they do feel that the online education system makes them more efficient, smart, and advanced in technology. Nearly 35% chose 'maybe' to be their answer as they are not certain about it and a very small percentage; 18.9% of people showed their disapproval by saying no.

Analysis:

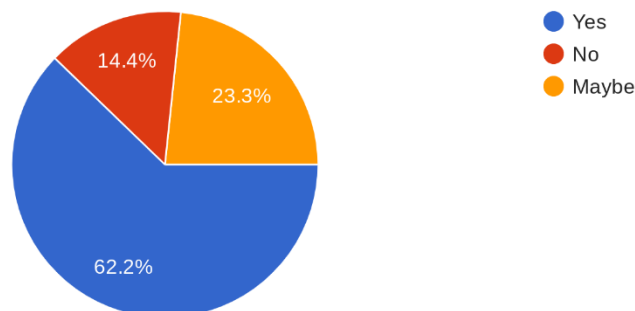
By analyzing student's overall perception of the technology used for academic purposes, they expressed that many a time online learning-based technology can be difficult, confusing, and problematic. Therefore, the researcher thoroughly felt that technology must be presented as conveniently as possible to the students by the teachers. Along with that, students need to be exposed to technology in a way that is easy, user-friendly, and available. For this, proper training or exposure is needed for them if blended teaching gets implemented. Another noticeable factor is that students more or less agree that technology for academics makes them more efficient, smart, or advanced in technology. This particular answer of the students can be taken as a positive approach in terms of blended learning. Since students agree to the advantages of technological use in terms of education, they are more likely to approve and accept blended learning sincerely.

4.4 Student's Acceptance to Blended Learning

Chart 4.4.1

10. Would you prefer blended learning technique to be implemented? (Blended learning means having a combination of both online and offline classes, activities and tasks)

90 responses



According to this survey, 62.2% agreed that they prefer the blended learning techniques to be implemented. Whereas 23.3% considered themselves to be confused as they chose 'maybe' and nearly 14% said no.

Analysis:

As per the survey, it is perceived that students have both positive and negative approaches to online learning. But interestingly, they would prefer the combination of both online and offline systems if they are mixed together and designed as blended learning. Therefore, the researcher opined that blended learning has a greater chance to be sincerely taken into account by the students.

4.5 Analysis of the Questionnaire Interviewees:

Question 1- At present, we are engaging ourselves in using technology for educational purposes. So what do you feel are the pros and cons of such use?

Theme: Using technology for academic purposes

Emergent Categories: Technological benefits

To answer this question, most of the teachers expressed that technology has got some great advantages that facilitate learning outcomes. When they were asked to elaborate their opinion, all of them expressed that using multimedia in the classroom deeply increases the learning process because undoubtedly students learn faster when things are shown virtually rather than only being explained. They also expressed that showing videos or pictures with the help of technology is beneficial for both parties. Along with the students, the teacher also enjoys teaching advantages as through showing things virtually, their explaining process gets easy and understandable for the students which ultimately saves the teacher's time in many cases.

Question 2- What do you personally consider to be the best advantages of using Blended teaching?

Theme: Advantages of using technology

Emergent Categories: Benefits of blended teaching

All of the participants agreed that the first and foremost benefit of blended learning is that students will gain expertise in terms of technology and be well prepared to lead in the modern world. The participants emphasized the fact that in this era, the usage of technology is an

unavoidable aspect, and to compete with the fast and modern world, all of us, especially the future generation must achieve technological competence. In blended teaching, students encounter technology-related learning and they get involved in that. As a result, their exposure to online classes, tasks, and activities ultimately leads them to achieve the skills required in the 21st century.

Question 3- What do you consider to be the biggest challenges of applying such a teaching method that has both online and offline methods?

Theme: Online teaching problems

Emergent Categories: Challenges of blended teaching for teachers

The interviewees mentioned that the problem lies with blended teaching primarily based on the online part. They stated since the traditional classroom system has been a well-established and practiced method, the teachers are well aware of this part but adopting the other part; online teaching is relatively a new concept for most of them thus almost all the complexities are related to this online part of blended teaching. All of them agreed on the fact that one of the biggest disadvantages of online teaching is the monitoring problems. They demonstrated that while in online classes, students often do not take the teacher's instructions seriously. For that, it becomes hard for the teacher to control them and often situations become chaotic, problematic, or unpleasant. Situations include students not attending online classes, being excessively unattentive, or following unfair means. The interviewees also conveyed that teaching online often includes health issues such as back pain, eyesight problems, and also being mentally tired

or devastated. Therefore, monitoring and controlling problems in addition to health problems are identified.

Question 4- As a teacher, do you feel that the blended teaching technique increases the workload? Or the teacher needs specialized training?

Theme: Teacher's pressure and progress

Emergent Categories: Blended teaching's requirement

Three of the interviewees agreed that blended teaching will certainly increase the workload as creating the same amount of interest for the students in both online and offline, material selection, method applying will be a matter of pressure for the teacher.

Since, due to the Covid-19 situation all the teachers are bound to take online classes, they are well-familiar with the concept and consequences of teaching online. Therefore, they all agreed that blended teaching will certainly increase the workload because teachers must gain technical proficiency and even specialized training in some cases. One interviewee expressed that for younger teachers, it is easier to adapt to technologies whereas teachers aged over 40 generally have a tough time adopting technological issues. That particular interviewee also stated that many teachers with a lack of technical skills often lose their job or quit their job to get rid of such hazards.

Question 5- What type of skills do you think are necessary for a teacher to have while teaching online?

Theme: Expertise needed to conduct online teaching

Emergent Categories: Teacher's skills required for blended teaching

Three of the interviewees expressed and emphasized different skills that are needed for blended teaching. There were some similar points shared by them such as technological skills, managing skills, brainstorming for designing online tasks and activities. They all agreed to the fact that since blended teaching needs a lot of online efforts, teachers can not but be fully proficient in technological terms. Along with that, managing a system that has both online and offline activities will be pressurizing and critical for a teacher thus managing skills are largely necessary. Furthermore, one of the main factors of blended teaching is designing the tasks and activities properly which needs a lot of brainstorming. However, one interviewee stated that blended teaching will be needed for communication skills. To elaborate on her statement, she expressed that if online classes remain one-way communication, the learning outcome will not be fruitful. To ensure the outcome to the fullest, a teacher must develop his or her speaking competence to engage the students within a communication. Also, based on her personal experience, engaging students within a communication online is harder than offline. Thus, in terms of blended teaching, enhancing mentioned skills is a must.

Question 6- While designing online-based tasks for students, what factors do you keep in mind?

Theme: Factors to consider while arranging online activities

Emergent Categories: Designing online tasks

Since all of my interviewees are currently teaching online, they are completely exposed to the job of designing and preparing online-based tasks and activities. They opined that while designing such tasks or activities at the very beginning they consider convenience, applicability, suitability, and presentability. However, one of the interviewees expressed that she considers learning with enjoyment the most. Thus, she always designs tasks in such ways that ensure both learning and enjoyment for the students.

Question 7- Do you feel that the blended teaching method must be applied for a certain group of students in terms of their age and social class?

Theme: Blended teaching and learning's restriction

Emergent Categories: Age and social factor

Since the interviewees are teaching at different levels at different schools and universities, they are aware of the impact of age and class differences in terms of education. They suggested that any student from any age group can adopt blended learning as there is not any age limit for online learning according to them. Though the interviewees mentioned that students might face some adaptation problem but they will eventually adopt it within a short time. Thus, they concluded that based on their experience, blended teaching is not restricted to any certain age group rather it can be applied to any age of the student. However, they expressed that as blended learning will certainly require online facilities, a particular group of students who are underprivileged in terms of having the facility of internet and technology will be exposed to

huge problems with blended learning. Therefore, such a group is not a suitable candidate for such a technique.

Question 8- How do you manage to avoid the possible hazards of online teaching?

Theme: Precautions to take while teaching online

Emergent Categories: Teaching strategies

Nevertheless, a concerning factor of blended teaching is overcoming the negative aspects of online learning that include student's laziness, negligence, and avoidance towards online classes as activities including cheating, plagiarizing, and following unfair means. To overcome these problems, the interviewees suggested that strict monitoring and academic instructions are very necessary. Also, replacing traditional questions with enjoyable, creative, and impromptu questions along with observing class performance with the exam results or task results. This is the case, the teacher must be very creative and dedicated to making the classes as enjoyable as possible accompanied by strict observation of the student's performance and wise to detect the student's plagiarism.

Question 9- How do you deal with those students who are technologically challenged and find online activities to be extremely difficult to cope with?

Theme: Student's problem with online

Emerging Categories: Technological challenges and solutions

According to the interviewees, some certain students do find it difficult to cope up with online learning. Their difficulty mostly consists of technological disability. Teachers opined that a group of students often suffer from adopting technology and often they get demotivated or scared to conduct tasks that require technological competence. For such students, the teachers provide special attention and support as much as possible. The interviewees even shared their experiences of providing customized activities for such students who are totally unable to access certain online activities. They provide class, recording, slide screenshots, etc for the students who require it. Hence, all of them admitted to providing extra help and assistance for the technologically challenged students.

Question 10- To overcome the challenges of blended teaching, what measures should be taken into account?

Theme: Steps to follow by the teachers

Emerging Categories: Solutions

Three of the interviewees shared various measures to overcome the challenges of blended teaching and learning. Different interviewees highlighted different measures. But a common measure was to be broad-minded about the aspect of online learning. As they mentioned earlier, one of the biggest challenges of blended learning is to overcome the notion that online learning is ineffective or unsuitable for our students. Therefore, one difficult and most needed task is to preach the importance and effectiveness of blended learning. In this regard, proper advertisement and encouragement must be conducted. Along with that, they also opined that teachers must

adopt technological skills and become more active, enthusiastic, and available for embracing a new method of teaching. Two of the interviewees put light upon the fact that the remuneration of the teachers must be increased as they will be doing hard work for teaching both online and offline. Besides, the availability of technology for all the students and ensuring its proper usage by them is also highlighted by them.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion:

Blended teaching and learning is a relatively new concept in the sector of the education system and in this era of modernization the world is thinking of adding the online learning system to be blended with the traditional classroom system. Though online learning is still not wholeheartedly approved and accepted by the students, it can be strongly hoped that with the right kind of implementation blended learning will successfully achieve the ultimate goal of learning. Thus, while designing blended teaching the HPL model must be kept in mind. Teachers and the concerned parties must follow the tactics of designing a blended curriculum, present it in the most convenient way, and engage the students in this system appropriately. There is a huge opportunity for blended teaching to flourish in our country as the students are eager to welcome the combination of both online and offline studying. However, there are also some challenges regarding technological issues, teacher training issues, etc but with proper planning and measures, these can surely be overcome. Lastly, it can be concluded that for the tertiary level students of Bangladesh, blended teaching has a great scope to prosper.

5.2 Recommendation:

- Blended teaching and learning if to be implemented, must be designed properly
- Teacher's training and advancement in terms of using technology to teach online is necessary
- Technology must be preached easily, conveniently, and properly by the teachers to the students to avoid any kind of hassle

- Students negligent attitude towards online learning should be wiped out through effective teaching
- The benefits of online teaching and learning or perhaps benefits of blended teaching and learning must be preached and sincerely taken into account.

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Appendix

Student Survey Questionnaire

Student's General Perspective About Online Classes

1. Do you feel motivated to attend online classes?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Rarely

2. Do you feel online-based tasks/activities to be boring, non-effective, and irrelevant?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Rarely

3. What is more effective for you, online learning or offline learning?

- Online
- Offline
- Both

4. Why do you prefer online learning?

- Because it gives me a sense of freedom and self-dependence
- Because it allows me to learn according to my time convenience
- Because it allows me to learn from home
- Because it has less pressure than offline
- I don't prefer online learning

Student's Perception of Online Teachers

1. Do you think all the teachers are efficient enough to take online classes

- Yes

- No
- Maybe

2. Do you agree that sometimes teachers provide unclear or improper instructions about online activities /tasks (such as exams, assignments, projects) and that makes the students suffer?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

3. Do you feel a lack of enthusiasm for taking part in online academic activities that do not contain marks or teacher's supervision?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes
- Rarely

Students Opinion on Technology

1. Do you think that the technology used for academic purposes can be difficult, confusing, and problematic?

- Yes
- No

- Sometimes
- Rarely

2. Do you think the online education system makes us more efficient, smart, and advanced in using technology?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Student's Acceptance to Blended Learning

1. Would you prefer a blended learning technique to be implemented? (Blended learning means having a combination of both online and offline classes, activities and tasks)

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Teachers Interview Questionnaire

Question 1- At present, we are engaging ourselves in using technology for educational purposes.

So what do you feel are the pros and cons of such use?

Question 2- What do you personally consider to be the best advantages of using Blended teaching?

Question 3- What do you consider to be the biggest challenges of applying such a teaching method that has both online and offline methods?

Question 4- As a teacher, do you feel that the blended teaching technique increases the workload? Or the teacher needs specialized training?

Question 5- What type of skills do you think are necessary for a teacher to have while teaching online?

Question 6- While designing online-based tasks for students, what factors do you keep in mind?

Question 7- Do you feel that the blended teaching method must be applied for a certain group of students in terms of their age and social class?

Question 8- How do you manage to avoid the possible hazards of online teaching?

Question 9- How do you deal with those students who are technologically challenged and find online activities to be extremely difficult to cope with?

Question 10- To overcome the challenges of blended teaching, what measures should be taken into account?

