

BLENDED LEARNING

Navigating cultural diversity in blended learning: Enhancing experience and satisfaction in international business education

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Study Background

Blended learning: advantages & challenges



Blended Learning (BL) refers to the purposeful integration of face-to-face and online modalities in higher education (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Siripongdee et al., 2020).



Advantages

BL has been shown to enhance cognitive learning, increase flexibility and flow experience, and improve academic and exam performance (Asarta & Schmidt, 2020; Muller & Wulf, 2022; Balakrishnan et al., 2021).



Challenges

with the online component of BL remain significant, including difficulties with ***self-regulated learning, limited technological competence, feelings of isolation and disconnectedness, and issues related to the complexity and usability of digital platforms*** (Kember et al., 2010; Rasheed et al., 2020).



BL & international students

Assumptions of Western pedagogy



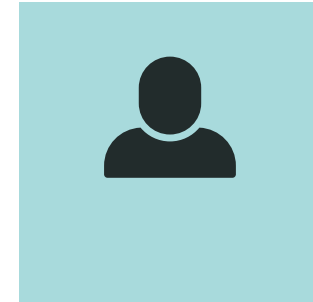
Assumptions on concepts like autonomy, independent engagement, and self-paced learning may not align with diverse cultural backgrounds of international students (Rasheed et al., 2020) .

One-size-fits-all BL models



The clash between Western pedagogical values and international student needs can present challenges in effectively delivering the IB curriculum through BL.

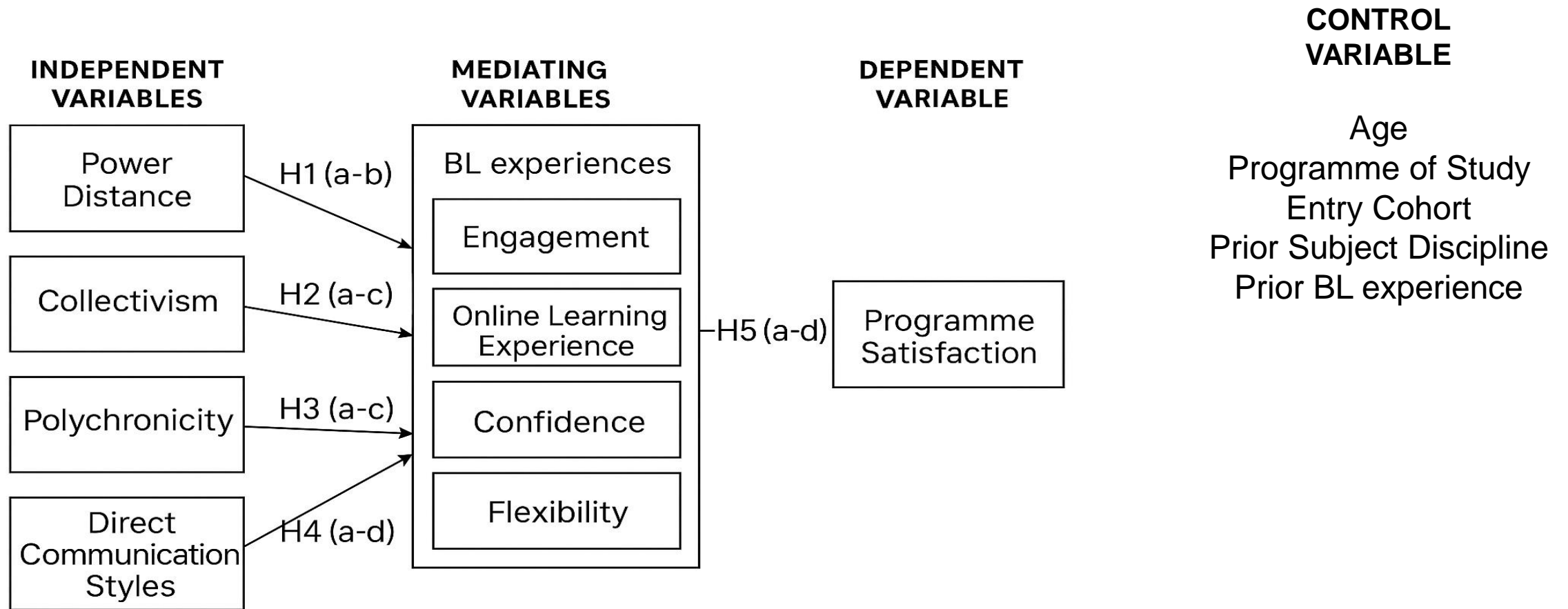
Limited empirical evidence on cultural diversity in BL



Current research lacks data on how diverse cultural backgrounds shape student experiences in blended learning environments

RQ: How do cultural values and student backgrounds impact their perceptions of blended learning and satisfaction with the programme of study?

Research Model



Study Methodology

Research Design, Data Collection & Analyses

Medium blended delivery



Online live lectures
with recordings,
supplementary
learning activities on
VLE
Interactive F2F
seminars

Survey approach



Captured cultural
values and student
perceptions of BL
through a quantitative
survey conducted via
Qualtrics

Data collection



From four cohorts of
MBA and MA
International Business
students between
March and May 2024

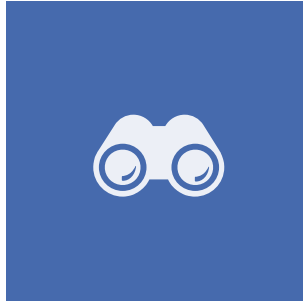
Analytic techniques



Hierarchical
regression (H1–H4)
Multiple regression
(H5a-d)
Control variables
included in all models.

Participant Profile

Response Rate



Purposive sampling yielded
148 complete responses
from 290 attempts (51.0%)

Respondent Demographics



Mainly **international students**
(90%+)
62.2% male
56.1% aged 19-24
87.2% from Asia
Most common prior discipline:
Business
Administration/Management
(46.6%)

Prior BL Experience

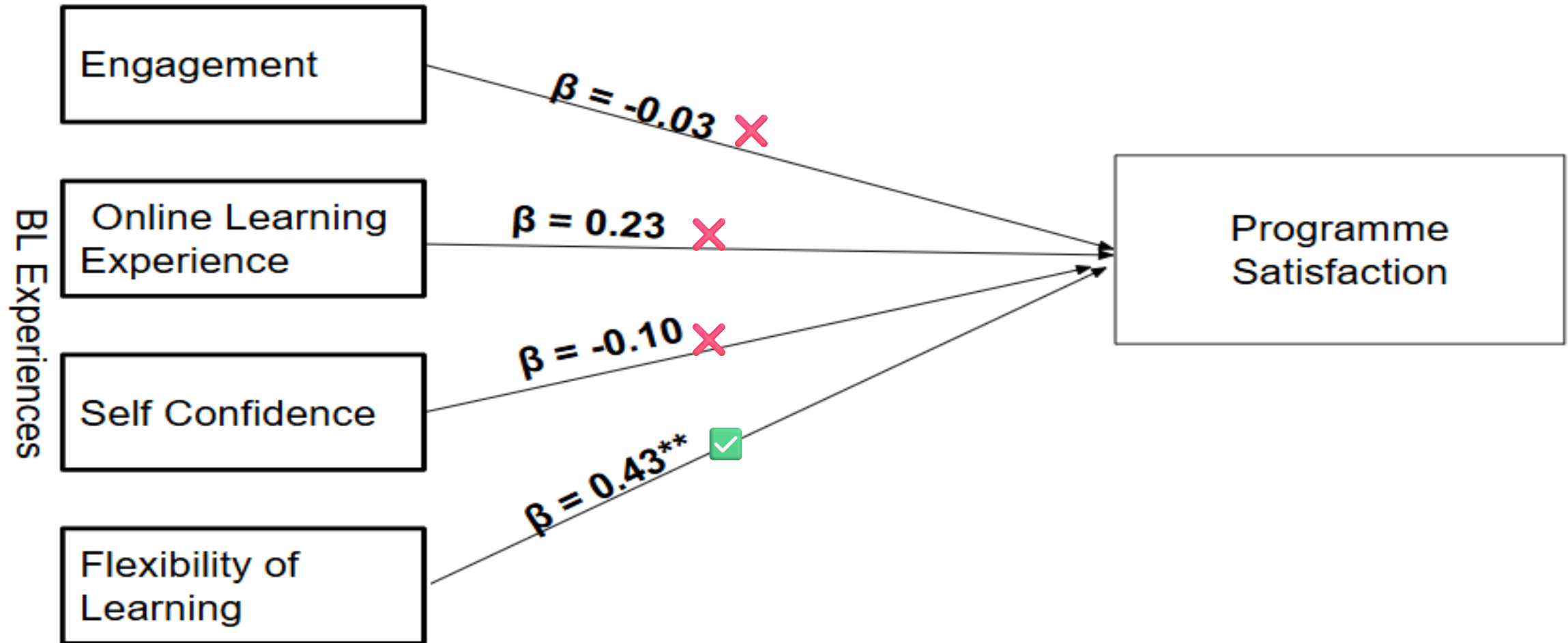


65.5% had some prior BL experience
34.5% had had no prior BL experience

Study Findings

Cultural Values	Blended Learning Experiences	Results	Meaning
Collectivism	Flexibility of Learning	$\beta = 0.42, t = 4.49, p < 0.01$	Helps students feel adaptable
Polychronicity	Flexibility of Learning	$\beta = 0.22, t = 2.10, p = 0.04$	Helps students balance between structure and freedom
Polychronicity	Engagement	$\beta = 0.16, t = 2.10, p = .04$	Helps students engage in meaningful distributed involvement
Direct Communication Style	Engagement	$\beta = 0.63, t = 8.65, p < .00$	Helps students engage in clear, explicit exchanges for meaningful involvement
Direct Communication Style	Online Learning Experience	$\beta = 0.76, t = 10.21, p < 0.00$	Helps students interpret, interact, and self-regulate.

Blended Learning Experiences and Programme Satisfaction



Notes: * $p < 0.05$ and ** $p < 0.00$ (two-tailed tests). The critical t-value was 1.65 (5%, one-sided since the paths were directional).

Study Implications

Theoretical Implication: Rethinking Flexibility in Blended Learning



Collectivism



Polychronicity

- Results challenges Western-centric assumptions (Chan, 2019)
- Traditional BL assumes flexibility = **individual autonomy**
- But...
 - Collectivist students used flexibility for **group coordination**
 - Polychronic learners used it to **multitask** and **manage time fluidly**

Flexibility is not universally individualistic — it reflects cultural ways of learning

Theoretical Implication: Communication Style as an Enabler in BL

- ✓ Direct Communication emerged as the strongest cultural predictor of positive BL experiences
- Significantly enhanced both **Online Learning Experience** and **Engagement**
- Aligns with Hall's (1976) high/low-context communication theory
- Students from low-context cultures thrive in BL due to comfort with explicit, structured, text-based communication
- These learners interpret instructions clearly and engage confidently in digital tasks



Theoretical Implication: Flexibility as a Driver of Programme Satisfaction

- ✓ **Flexibility of Learning** was the only BL dimension that significantly predicted satisfaction (H5d)
 - Highlights the importance of **time management and asynchronous access** in shaping global satisfaction
 - Particularly relevant for **postgraduate international students** balancing studies with work and personal responsibilities
 - Engagement, confidence, and online experience may influence satisfaction indirectly
 - Supports theory that **perceived autonomy and control** in learning contribute directly to positive student experiences
 - Aligns with research advocating for learner-centred, flexible design in blended environments (Diep et al., 2017; Wong et al., 2014)





Implications for Practice: Culturally Responsive Blended Learning

- **Design** with cultural values in mind (e.g., structure for high power distance; collaboration for collectivism)
- **Balance autonomy with support** to meet diverse self-regulation needs
- Use **clear, explicit communication for students** from low-context cultures
- **Incorporate group-based tasks** and relational learning opportunities
- **Scaffold flexibility** with **guidance** to help **polychronic learners** manage multitasking
- **Foster inclusion and engagement** through culturally relevant content and examples

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

- The study was based on self-reported data from one postgraduate cohort in UK-based international business programmes, limiting generalisability to other disciplines or undergraduate contexts.
- Longitudinal studies are needed to track how perceptions evolve over time
- Other influential factors such as language proficiency and digital literacy were not examined but may interact with cultural values.
- Future research should include diverse disciplines and institutions, and adopt mixed-methods approaches to gain deeper insights.
- Further studies could explore how specific BL features (e.g., instructor presence, collaborative tools) interact with cultural traits to influence engagement and satisfaction

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**Thank You
We Are Happy To
Answer Any
Questions**