



BLENDED LEARNING

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

Dr Esther Mensah, Executive Business Centre

Dr Anju Maharjan, Executive Business Centre

Dr Adeyemi Aderin, Executive Business Centre

Dr Crystal Tsay, Executive Business Centre

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.

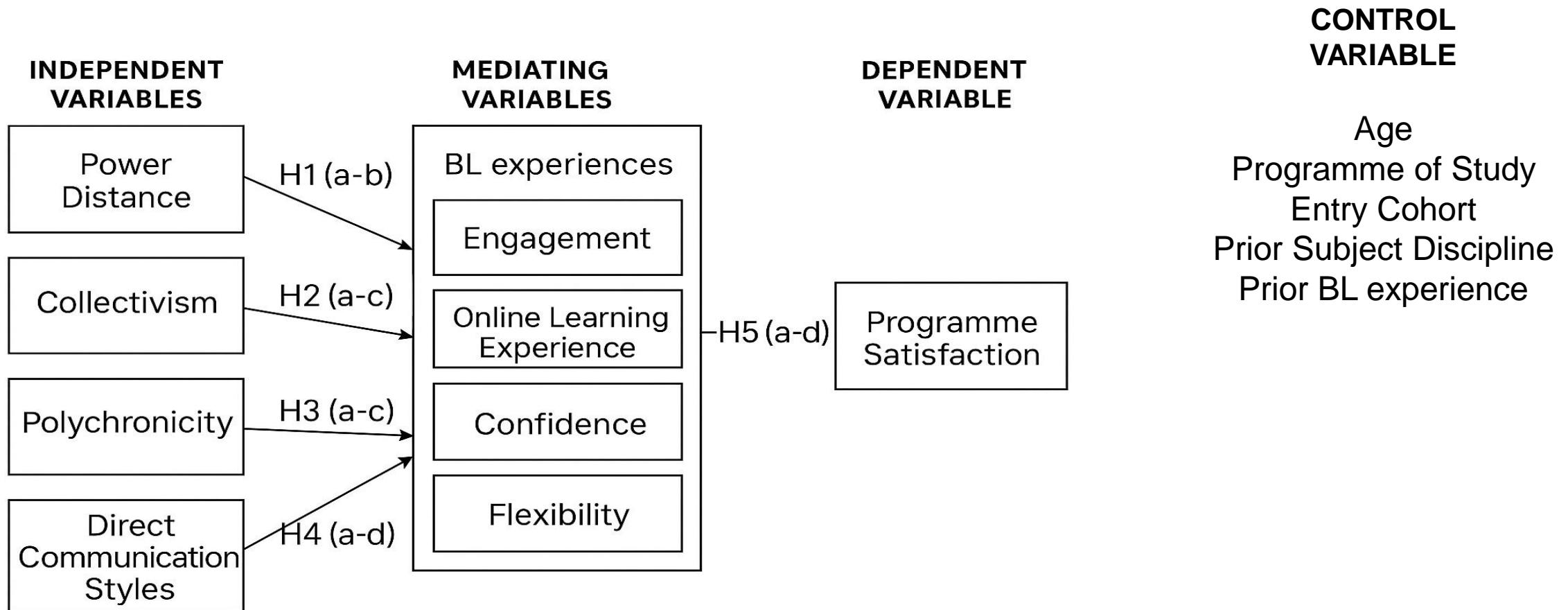
Limited empirical evidence on cultural diversity in BL



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



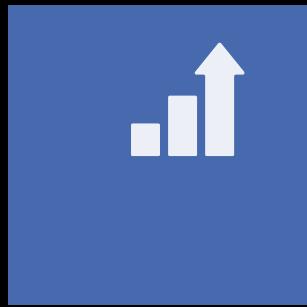
Study Methodology



UNIVERSITY OF
GREENWICH

Research Design, Data Collection & Analyses

Medium blended delivery



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

Survey approach



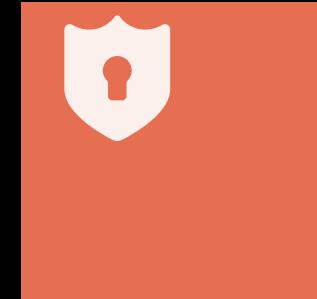
Captured cultural values and student perceptions of BL through a quantitative survey conducted via Qualtrics

Data collection



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

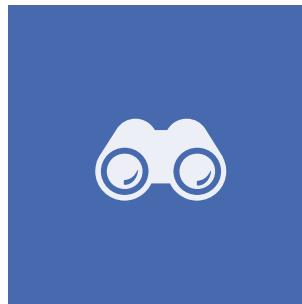
Analytic techniques



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

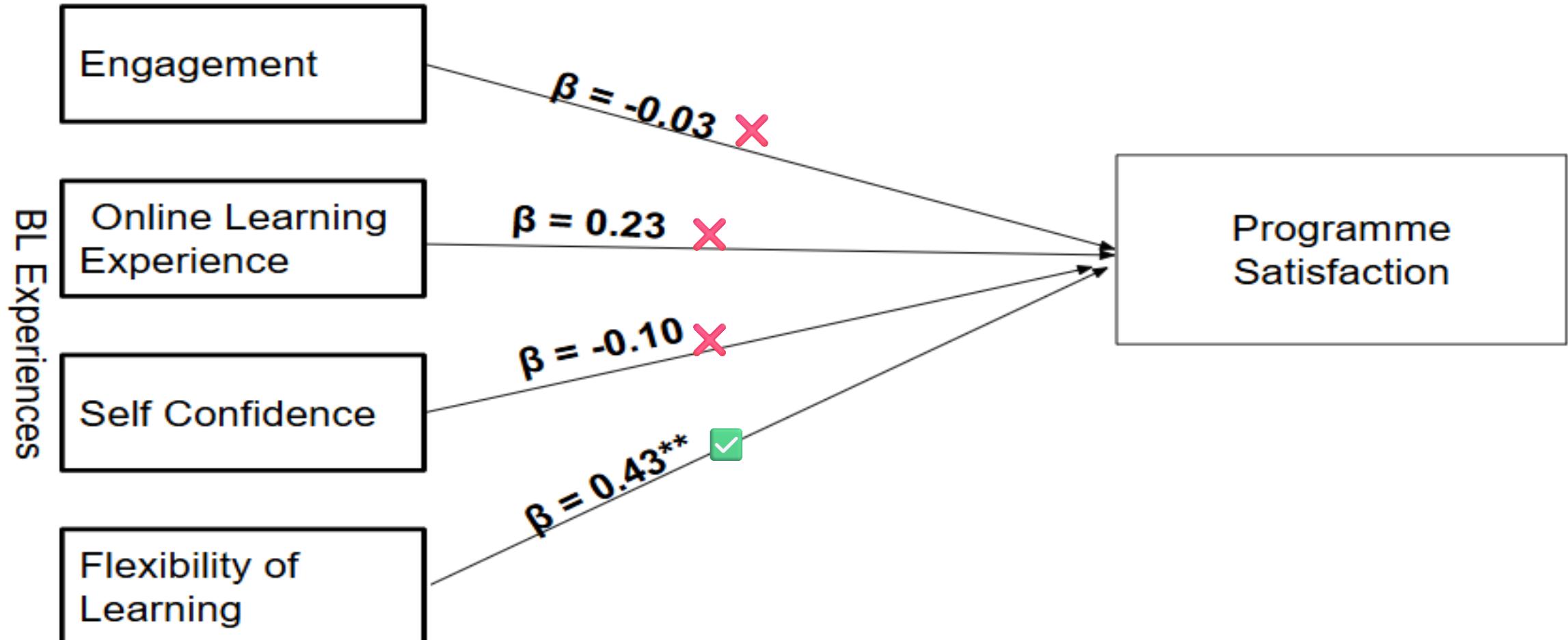
Study Findings



UNIVERSITY OF
GREENWICH

| 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

References

Asarta, C. J., & Schmidt, J. R. (2020). The effects of online and blended experience on outcomes in a blended learning environment. *Internet and Higher Education*, 44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2019.100708>

Balakrishnan, A., Puthean, S., Satheesh, G., Unnikrishnan, M. K., Rashid, M., Nair, S., & Thunga, G. (2021). Effectiveness of blended learning in pharmacy education: A systematic review and metaanalysis. In *PLoS ONE* (Vol. 16, Issue 6 June). Public Library of Science. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252461>

Chan, E. Y. M. (2019). Blended learning dilemma: Teacher education in the confucian heritage culture. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(1), 36–51. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v44n1.3>

Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *Internet and Higher Education*, 7(2), 95–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2004.02.001>

Kember, D., McNaught, C., Chong, F. C. Y., Lam, P., & Cheng, K. F. (2010). Understanding the ways in which design features of educational websites impact upon student learning outcomes in blended learning environments. *Computers and Education*, 55(3), 1183–1192. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.05.015>

Muller, F. A., & Wulf, T. (2022). Blended learning environments and learning outcomes: The mediating role of flow experience. *International Journal of Management Education*, 20(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2022.100694>

Rasheed, R. A., Kamsin, A., & Abdullah, N. A. (2020). Challenges in the online component of blended learning: A systematic review. *Computers & Education*, 144, 103701. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.COMPEDU.2019.103701>

Siripongdee, K., Pimdee, P., & Tuntiwongwanich, S. (2020). A blended learning model with IoT-based technology: Effectively used when the COVID-19 pandemic? *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, 8(2), 905–9. <https://doi.org/10.17478/JEGYS.698869>

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