Factors Affecting Student Motivation to Learn English in Blended Learning

Tran Minh Chau

Faculty of Foreign Languages, National Economics University, 207 Giai Phong Street, Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi, Vietnam

*Corresponding author: tran.chau.neu@gmail.com

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Abstract Blended learning is helping to improve teaching and learning, providing learners with a diverse learning environment, making information accessible regardless of time and place, and stimulating creativity in teaching methodology. Motivation is an essential factor that largely decides learners’ success in learning a language in general and English in particular. This study was conducted to (1) determine factors that affect students’ motivation to learn English in blended learning, identify student’s awareness about these factors as well as (2) identify barriers to students’ motivation to learn English when blended learning is applied so that (3) give recommendations to students, teachers, and institutions to maximize the potential of blended learning. For data collection, a survey questionnaire was sent to students of 6 different programs in National Economics University and quantitative results were analyzed with the use of Google Forms and Excel. Meanwhile, qualitative results were analyzed with reference to blended learning and motivation. Findings of the research can be divided into three main parts namely student factors, teacher factors, and institution factors. The study also points out barriers that students face when applying blended learning and gives meaningful recommendations to students, teachers, and institutions.

Keywords: blended learning, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, learning styles, technology


1. Introduction

The 4.0 technology revolution has been taking place strongly, having a profound impact on all areas of social life, and higher education is no exception to this trend. “Education 4.0 has a significant change in training goals and methods, shifting from imparting knowledge to the masses to unleashing potential, and empowering individuals to create” [1]. The widespread availability of information and communication technologies has also transformed higher education institutions into multi-choice learning environments that support classroom learning experience and improve learning based on individual preference, which is independent of time and place [2]. In addition, the teaching methodology has been changed from teacher-centred to learner-centred and thanks to information and communication technology integration, teachers are supported to achieve their desired educational outcomes. This can be accomplished by using different modalities to deliver the appropriate content in the appropriate form [3].

In this development trend, while traditional classroom can no longer meet the demand of the increasing students due to its fixed time and space and total online learning environment has been criticized for its lack of human interaction, the blended learning training model is considered a modern training method as it is a combination of traditional learning methods with the integration of information technology application in training to improve the quality of education by assisting students in actively acquiring knowledge, saving educational costs, as well as shortening the space and geographical distance between lecturers and students. Blended learning is an effective approach to the passive knowledge engagement of a massive number of students, which also increases learning outside the traditional face-to-face learning environment [3]. Blended learning has positive impact on student motivation and performance because it helps teachers engage students in active learning that promotes skills such as communication, information literacy, creativity and collaboration that transform into the ability to use digital technologies for different purposes. In Vietnam in particular, blended learning is also getting more popular because of the benefits it has brought to learners, teachers, and education institutions. According to Pham Thi Thu Huyen, blended learning enables learners to be flexible in learning time, space, and content, teachers to reduce the amount of face-to-face teaching in traditional classroom, and education institutions to reduce pressure on classroom system or fees on electricity, water, or human resources, etc. due to the fact that learners do not directly study at school [4].

Although blended learning is considered to have more advantages than full e-learning or full traditional (face-to-
Blended learning is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face learning methods, the proactive implementation of blended learning has not been focused. However, the Covid 19 pandemic has made drastic changes, not only affecting socio-economic aspects but also causing great changes to the education and training industry in general and higher education in particular. During the peak period of the pandemic, universities were closed, students temporarily didn’t attend classes, and all teaching activities are suspended to ensure everyone’s safety, online teaching is implemented immediately as an alternative to face-to-face (offline) method. Schools conducted training on effective online teaching and guided students to learn online effectively, while lecturers make efforts to teach online effectively. However, many difficulties in the implementation process also arise, affecting students’ learning motivation including interaction between lecturers and students, interaction among students, learning content, quality of technical infrastructure, and access to technology, etc. [5].

Learning English is influenced by many factors including motivation. Motivation is an essential factor that largely decides learners’ success in learning a language in general and English in particular. Learners will feel unmotivated and find it difficult to learn English unless they find interest and motivation to do it. Therefore, understanding the relationship between motivation and its impacts on learning English will help teachers teach the language effectively. However, defining and applying the structure of motivation in teaching and learning is one of the most complex issues in teaching [6]. There have also been some studies on creating motivation for learners. However, most of the studies are about motivation for learners in the traditional face-to-face (offline) form of learning. Research on motivational factors for English learners in blended learning is still very limited. As an English lecturer at the National Economics University, I realize the urgency and significance of this research. It will clarify the factors affecting students’ motivation to learn English when applying blended learning. I believe this research will be useful for lectures, syllabus designers, and policy makers, etc. At the same time, the results of the study will also help students identify the factors affecting their motivation to learn English in blended learning so that they can achieve the best learning results.

2. Content

2.1. Literature Review

2.1.1. Blended Learning

2.1.1.1. Definitions of Blended Learning

“Blended learning is a mixing of different learning environments, giving learners and teachers a potential environment to learn and teach more effectively. Blended learning combines face-to-face classroom methods with online activities to form an integrated instructional approach [7].

“Blended learning systems combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction” [7].

“Blended learning is the thoughtful fusion of face-to-face and online learning experiences. The basic principle

is that face-to-face oral communication and online written communication are optimally integrated such that the strengths of each are blended into a unique learning experience congruent with the context and intended educational purpose” [7].

“Blended learning is the most logical and natural evolution of our learning agenda. It suggests an elegant solution to the challenges of tailoring learning and development to the needs of individuals. It represents an opportunity to integrate the innovative and technological advances offered by online learning with the interaction and participation offered in the best of traditional learning. It can be supported and enhanced by using the wisdom and one-to-one contact of personal coaches [7].

Blended learning, also referred to as hybrid learning, combines the best features of traditional schooling with the advantages of online learning to deliver personalized, differentiated instruction across a group of learners. Students in formal blended learning educational programs learn online part of the time, yet have the benefit of face-to-face instruction and supervision to maximize their learning and to best fit their own needs [8].

Trapp defines blended learning as the combination of multiple approaches to pedagogy or teaching, e.g. self-paced, collaborative, tutor-supported learning or traditional classroom teaching [9]. Blended learning often refers specifically to the provision or use of resources which combine e-learning with other educational resources. Some authors talk about ‘hybrid learning’, ‘mixed learning’, or ‘multi-method learning’. However, all of these concepts broadly refer to the integration (the ‘blending’) of e-learning tools and techniques with traditional methods. Computer-based learning is no longer regarded as an alternative to traditional forms of learning/teaching. It is integrated into a learning arrangement which combines those methods that have been selected for a specific learning purpose or environment.

From those definitions, we can identify key components they have in common [7]:

- Blended learning includes both face-to-face and computer-mediated elements.
- The face-to-face and computer-mediated components of blended learning each bring unique and purposeful contributions to the learning experience.
- Instructional strategies are positioned in the online or face-to-face portions of the course to maximize their impact on student learning.
- The flexibility of the environment allows learning components to more closely align with the student learning outcomes.
- The ultimate outcome of blended learning is that it offers the ‘best of both worlds’ in an effort to improve the quality of student learning.

2.1.1.2. Characteristics of Blended Learning

Graham suggests that we can describe the elements of blended, online, and face-to-face learning in four key dimensions: time, fidelity, space, and humanness [10].

Time. In blended learning, the time allocation for face-to-face interaction and online learning should be organized well. Both features should be balanced in order to keep the students accomplishing their goals. An
example of this is using 1:1 ratio, 1 is for face-to-face interaction and 1 is for online learning.

Fidelity or consistency is important in blended learning. Graham suggests a continuum ranging from ‘High’ (i.e. instructional experiences that engage all of the senses) to ‘Low’ (i.e. learning experiences that are entirely text-based). Every learning whether it is face-to-face or online should be high in fidelity.

Space. It is the continuum that extends from full face-to-face (i.e. ‘Live’), a mixed reality of face-to-face/online, and totally online (i.e. ‘Totally Virtual’).

Humaneness. It is the continuum that distinguish between learning experiences that are delivered by a human (i.e. the teacher) from those that are delivered by a machine (i.e. computer).

According to Trapp, the activities of blended learning can be divided into three levels: (1) Theoretical level: the combination of different learning theories such as behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and adult learning; (2) Methodical level: the combination of “self-directed with instructor-led learning, individual with cooperative learning, receptive with explorative learning”, and so on; (3) Media level: the combination of traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning, using different media such as books, e-books, and so on.

2.1.1.3. Models of Blended Learning

Blended learning models bring great benefits such as creating the flexibility for both teachers and learners, enabling introvert learners to be more confident in learning process and allowing teachers to easily connect with learners regardless of geographical distance and learning time can be relatively flexible [10].

According to Nguyen Hoang Trang, there are three levels of blended learning, depending on needs, facilities, training programs, computer literacy, and computer use of teachers and students [11].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Application possibility</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face driver</td>
<td>The teacher instructs students’ learning process in the physical classroom with support of technological equipment.</td>
<td>This model is suitable for a variety of classes and where students vary in terms of ability and knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation</td>
<td>Students rotate between stations on a fixed schedule – either working online or spending face-to-face time with the teacher.</td>
<td>This model is more widely used in elementary schools or junior high school. The teacher can give more support based on students’ needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flex</td>
<td>Students mainly learn online and materials are primarily delivered online. Although the teacher is in the room to provide on-site support as needed, learning is primarily self-guided.</td>
<td>This model maximizes students’ independence, teamwork, and interaction, and is quite common in colleges around the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online lab</td>
<td>Students learn entirely online but travel to a dedicated computer lab to complete their coursework. The whole learning process are supervised by staff, not trained teachers.</td>
<td>This model allows schools to offer courses for which they have no teacher or not enough teachers, and/or requirements regarding facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-blended</td>
<td>This model gives students the opportunity to take classes beyond what is already offered at their school. In other words, it allows students to supplement their learning by participating in online courses offered remotely based on their individual needs.</td>
<td>This model is suitable at higher education, and students have varied learning needs such as improving their professional knowledge or skills. In order for this method to be successful, students must be highly self-motivated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online driver</td>
<td>Students learn remotely and materials are primarily delivered via an online platform. Interaction between teachers and students are also done online. Although face-to-face check-ins are optional, students can usually chat with teachers online if they have questions.</td>
<td>This model is suitable for students who need flexibility and independence in their daily schedules, and is more common among tertiary or higher education.</td>
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Level 1: The teacher mainly uses traditional face-to-face teaching method and provides students with materials to guide them to learn online. Students use technology tools and the Internet to search for subject-related materials to carry out learning tasks.

Level 2: The teacher designs online lectures and uses both online and traditional face-to-face teaching. Students do online learning tasks given by the teacher. Communication and discussions about the lesson are done through email, forum, etc. or directly in the physical classroom.

Level 3: Apart from teaching both online and face-to-face, the teacher has to have a scheme for class assessment, evaluation, and class management for the whole course. Students do learning tasks and tests or assessment activities online. Communication and discussions are done through email, forum, etc. or directly in the physical classroom.

Research results from some education advocates show that in blended learning, the current ‘golden’ ratio between face-to-face and online teaching is 30:70, which means that online teaching plays an important role and the learning process is highly individualized. This makes a change in awareness about the roles of the teacher and students. The teacher is the facilitator who guides students through their learning, and students actively search for and share information as well as complete their own knowledge acquisition.

Blended learning models can be classified into six different types based on the class’ characteristics and the students’ and the teacher’s roles, including face-to-face driver, rotation, flex, online lab, self-blend, and online driver and summarized as follows [11] (see Table 1).
As can be seen from the table, these six models of blended learning shared some common features. Firstly, there is a mixture between online and face-to-face teaching at different levels. Secondly, these models offer a variety of interaction modes. Students can interact with many materials in varied forms such as images, videos, maps, or texts. and with different people including classmates, schoolmates, or teachers and peers from outside their school, etc. Lastly, these models create a virtual learning environment that is borderless in terms of space, which provides students with flexibility. Students can learn anywhere at any time depending on their interest, needs, and conditions. In reality, the choice of blended learning model rely on many other factors including facilities, the school’s financial budget, the nature of the course and program, and students’ ability, needs, and conditions.

2.1.4. Benefits of Blended Learning

Numerous studies have been done to find out about the advantages of blended learning. Poon points out that blended learning benefits students and institutions. It facilitates improved learning outcomes, access flexibility, a sense of community, the effective use of resources, and student satisfaction [12].

As mentioned by Poon twenty out of the thirty institutions which participated in research funded by the Pew Foundation in the United States reported having improved learning outcomes, and eighteen of the participating institutions demonstrated a decrease in student drop-failure-withdrawal rates. Also, course redesign has resulted in students achieving higher grades, greater knowledge, and greater understanding of course concepts [12]. A research study on students’ performance in a Spanish university had similar outcomes. Their study shows that the use of blended learning has a positive effect in reducing dropout rates and improving examination marks [13].

Another major benefit of blended learning is the increased flexibility of access to learning, which results in student’s autonomy, and facilitates the review and control of learning [14]. As blended learning is a combination between face-to-face and online components, it enables students who live far away can enroll in a course. Also, blended learning offers flexibility in terms of place and time of studying provided that students can access to the Internet. Students do not have to leave their home to go to campus and they can be in a comfortable environment to study. Moreover, blended learning also enhances students’ ability to control their own pace of learning. Through blended learning, students are able to catch up on a course if and when they can.

Garrison and Kanuka explored some of the benefits of using blended learning model in higher education institutions [15]. They describe how blended learning has transformative potential, offering institutions the opportunity to embrace technology, encourage a community of inquiry, and support active and meaningful learning. Owston et al looked at professional development in schools of education and describes how blended learning has the ability to foster a professional learning community and yet still allow for the development of social cohesion due to the inclusion of a face-to-face component [16].

Graham shows that cost and resource effectiveness is a further plus point of blended learning [10]. Costs for running the physical classrooms including electricity, water, sanitary conditions, human resources, etc. This is because developed materials can be placed online and reused for an extended period of time.

Blended learning also promotes student satisfaction as it allowed students to become more motivated and more involved in the learning process, thereby enhancing their commitment and perseverance.

2.1.5. Challenges of Blended Learning

Apart from undeniable benefits, blended learning also poses challenges to students, teachers and institutions. Poon summarizes weaknesses of blended learning as follows “unrealistic expectations and feelings of isolation are challenges for students, while universities are challenged by time and support issues” [12].

Vaughan cites studies suggesting that students enrolled in blended courses can sometimes have unrealistic expectations [17]. The students in those studies assumed that fewer classes meant less work, had inadequate time management skills, and experienced problems with accepting responsibility for personal learning. Students in such courses have also reported feeling isolated due to the reduced opportunities for social interaction in a face-to-face classroom environment.

Another challenge for implementing blended learning is having difficulty with more sophisticated technologies. Because online learning cannot happen without Internet connection, poor Internet connectivity has been reported to inhibit students’ ability to engage in online discussion and creates considerable frustration, which can negatively impact learning.

Gedik et al.’s researches on barriers of blended learning suggests that students complained that their workload in the two environments made the overall course load heavier than for a usual course. It also means more time commitment for both students and teachers [18]. In addition, planning and developing a blended learning course usually takes two or three times the amount of time required to develop a similar course in a traditional format [12].

Also mentioned as a barrier to blended learning is the lack of support for course design. [12] In order to ensure a successful blended learning experience for students, there must be university support for course redesign, which may involve deciding what course objectives can best be achieved through online learning activities, what can be accomplished in the classroom, and how to integrate these two learning environments.

Watson also refers to challenges that teachers and students face when implementing blended learning, “both teachers and students alike need to learn how to develop new habits of mind, a growth mindset, and to understand what it takes to be successful in a student-centered, personalized learning environment in which their roles are evolving” [8].

2.1.2. Motivation

2.1.2.1. Definitions of Key Terms

Multiple intelligences: There has been a traditional conception of intelligence measured by IQ tests, and
studied by Piaget and other cognitive psychologists. Psychologist Howard Gardner developed the theory of multiple intelligences which explains that people have eight or more intelligences. It is known that different intelligences are developed when we use the blended learning approach.

**Different learning styles:** Learning styles are defined using the VARK model, namely Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic. It is concluded that if the employed teaching methods can reflect different learning styles, the result is that students are motivated to engage with learning. Therefore, teaching practices that enable learners to use different skills to match their different learning styles are encouraged [19].

**Motivation:** Motivation is “an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action” [6]. Motivation is also defined as “some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something” [20].

### 2.1.2.2. Types of Motivation

Brown divides motivation into three different types depending on different perspectives. From a behavioristic perspective, motivation is the anticipation of reward which is driven to achieve positive reinforcement and driven by previous experiences of reward for behavior. From a cognitive perspective, motivation seeks to explain human behavior as a product of the careful study and active processing and interpretation of information received. From a constructivist perspective, motivation is derived as much from a person’s interaction with others for it is from one’s self-determination. [6]

Motivation is divided into four main aspects in his development of a model for motivation, known as ACRS (Attention, Confidence, Relevance, and Satisfaction) [21].

**Attention** refers to students’ tendency to apply taught concept or ideas. Attracting students’ attention is an important element because it triggers motivation. When students are attracted to the taught topic, they are ready to provide time and give attention, etc. Relevance refers to goal orientation, motive matching, and habit. In other words, relevance associates what is taught with past experience and students’ daily lifestyle. Confidence refers to positive impression in achieving success among students. Students’ level of confidence is often associated with motivation and the amount of effort done in order to achieve the objectives of specific achievement. Satisfaction refers to attainment as a reward after undergoing learning. Feedback and reinforcement are important aspects when students appreciate results so that they are more motivated to learn. In short, attention promotes and maintains students’ curiosity; relevance means students find a link to their personal intentions; confidence means students appreciate results so that they are more motivated to achieve the objectives of specific achievement. Satisfaction means students are attracted to the taught topic, they are ready to learn something and develop a particular skill. They will join class activities because they find pleasure in it as well as know that they will learn something and develop a particular skill. They are willing and eager to learn new material and their learning experience is more meaningful.

Gardner (1985) and Krashen (1988) sub-divided intrinsic motivation into two main types: integrative motivation and instrumental motivation [22]. Integrative motivation is employed when learner wish to integrate themselves within the culture of the second language group, to identify themselves and become a part of society. Therefore, they are more likely to have positive attitudes towards their learning and show more persistence, especially when they encounter challenges or difficult tasks. This is because they have internalized their motive of learning into their self-value system. They, as a result, put more effort into their learning and usually achieve greater achievements in their language acquisition. Also, Gardner (2010) in refers instrumental motivation to motivation to learn for some pragmatic gains instead of social implication with the target language community [22]. These instrumental goals might increase the social status or self image, better careers and business opportunities, to further study or meet the requirements of school, reading technical materials, etc. In this meaning, learners perform mainly for the attainment of external rewards, such as appraisal, personal fulfillment, status or power.

An article in Healthline identifies factors that promote intrinsic motivation, which include curiosity, challenge, control, recognition, cooperation, competition, and fantasy. Curiosity pushes us to explore and learn for the sole pleasure of learning and mastering. Being challenged helps us work at a continuously optimal level toward meaningful goals. Control comes from our basic desire to control what happens and make decisions that affect the outcome. Recognition is when we have an innate need to be appreciated and satisfaction when our efforts are recognized and appreciated by others. Cooperating with others satisfies our need for belonging. We also feel personal satisfaction when we help others and work together to achieve a shared goal. Competition poses a challenge and increases the important we place on doing well. Fantasy involves using mental or virtual images to stimulate your behavior. An example is a virtual game that requires you to answer a question or solve a problem to more to the next level.

It is stated that intrinsic motivation can be found such as in students’ interest, need, hobby, and goal in learning [23]. Students with an interest in a subject are likely to pay attention to it. They feel that it makes sense to them. The learning process will run well if students have interests. Need is “a condition of tension in an organism resulting from deprivation of something required for survival wellbeing, or personal fulfillment a substance, state or any other things”. It means that need is a circumstance in
which something is necessary. Need is divided into three
types by its characteristics [23]. The first type is need for
achievement, which involves a strong desire to succeed in
achieving goals, not only realistic ones but also
challenging ones. The second type is need for affiliation,
in which people seek to be liked by others and to be held
in high regard by those around them. The third type is
need for power, which is not about reaching a goal but
about having control over other people. People high in this
need would want to have influence over others and make
an impact on them. Hobby refers to an activity that is done
for pleasure or relaxation in one free time. Lastly,
motivation is closely bound with a person’s desire to
achieve a goal. The students who are aware of the goals
of learning, or of specific learning activities, are likely t o
direct their efforts towards achieving them.

b) Extrinsic motivation

Extrinsic motivation is the result of any number of
outside factors. It derives from the influence of some kind
of external incentive, such as the desire of students to
please parents or get a reward [20].

A self-determination theory was developed which
proposes a continuum of extrinsic motivation that ranges
in terms of the level of internalization – that is, the degree
to which behavior is self-determined. In this continuum,
the most external form – external regulation – refers to
behavior that is controlled mainly through external factors
such as deadlines, rewards, directives, etc. [24].
Introjected regulation refers to behavior wherein external
pressures have been partially deflected inward, but not
truly adopted or internalized. Identified regulation is a
more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation and refers
to behavior that becomes internally governed and self-
endorsed. Integrated regulation is the most autonomous
type of extrinsic motivation refers to behavior that is fully
internalized.

Extrinsic motivation can come from teachers, parents,
and the environment [23]. A major factor in the
continuous motivation of a student is the teacher as they
have an important role in the classroom. Apart from
giving knowledge to students, the teacher is also a
motivator that can support or encourage students in their
learning quest. Parents or other family members close to
the students can also influence them in trying new things
and making efforts to achieve good performance.
Environment, including inside and outside the classroom,
refers to everything which exists around people and has
influences on them such as attitudes to language learning
and the English language in particular.

There are some sources that affect students’ extrinsic
motivation in learning English, including the society we
live in, significant others, the teacher, and the method [23].
The society we live in is like the environment mentioned
by Gage and Berliner. All the views from the society such
as learning a language for low or high status will affect the
student’s attitude to the language being studied, and the
nature and strength of this attitude will have a great impact
on the degree of motivation the students bring to class.
‘Significant others’ is like ‘parents’ mentioned by Gage
and Berliner with regard to the influence of people who
are close to the students like parents or older siblings. The
teacher’s attitude to the language and the tasks of learning
is also important to create a positive classroom
atmosphere and will motivate students to learn. Finally, it
is crucial that both the teacher and students have some
confidence in the way of teaching and learning. When
either loses this confidence, motivation can be disastrously
affected. But when both are comfortable with the method
being used, success is much more likely to happen.

2.2. Methodology

2.2.1. The Purposes of the Study

This study focuses on factors affecting students’
motivation to learn English when applying blended
learning, which include:

- Finding out factors affecting students’ motivation to
learn English when applying blended learning.
- Defining challenges that negatively affect students’
motivation to learn English when applying blended
learning.
- Helping students find solutions to improve their
motivation to learn English when applying blended
learning.
- Helping teachers who use blended learning to create
and enhance students’ motivation to learn English.
- Helping department, faculty, and educational
managers, etc. have an overview of factors affecting
students’ motivation to learn English in blended learning
in order to build an effective blended learning model.

2.2.2. Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

1) What factors affect students’ motivation to learn
   English when applying blended learning?

2) What are the barriers to students’ motivation to
   learn English when applying blended learning?

3) What should be done to enhance students’ motivation
   to learn English when applying blended learning?

2.2.3. Participants

The research involves students in different programs
and departments of National Economics University,
divided into three groups. The first group includes
students of Department of English and their major is
English. The second group of participants is students of
programs where English is used as a medium of
instruction. They have to study English intensively in their
first year so that they can study their professional subjects
in English with ease. The outcome standard for these
students are basically lower than the first group but higher
than the third group. The third group is students from
mainstream programs and they study in Vietnamese.
English is just one subject they study for three semesters
but not intensively.

2.2.4. Research Instruments

The research development was conducted in two phases.
The first phase involved a literature review that explored
the two key concepts of this study, blended learning and
motivation, their characteristics, and benefits as well as
challenges. Factors identified were used to shape the
questionnaire during the second phase of the study.

In the second phase, to collect data about factors that
affect student motivation in blended learning, an online
2.2.5. Data Analysis

2.2.5.1. Quantitative Results

Once responses to the questionnaires had been collected, the researchers started analyzing for quantitative results with the support of Google Drive and Excel. After being collected, the data were carefully analyzed. All responses were compiled by the “form responses management function” in Google Form. The summary of responses was used to have a broad overview of how respondents answered each question; then the responses in a spreadsheet helped present a fine-grained perspective on all the data collected.

2.2.5.2. Qualitative Results

Results from the open-ended question #16 were analyzed on taking into account the students, the teachers, and institutions that apply blended learning. Themes relevant to the research questions were labeled, graphed and presented in chapter 4 and discussed with the relevant literature in chapter 5. Findings of the research will suggest valuable recommendations for Vietnamese students, teachers, departments/faculties, and institutions so that motivation to learn English is improved in blended learning, an increasingly popular form of learning.

2.3. Results and Discussions

2.3.1. Student Factors

2.3.1.1. Students’ Learning Styles

Among the four learning styles in the VARK model (Keller, 2010) [21], learning by doing, or Kinesthetic ranked highest at 3.5 out of 4. Very close to the mean of Kinesthetic is that of Visual, at 3.25. The other two learning styles are considered not as motivating as the two above-mentioned styles, being 1.38 for Auditory and 1.88 for Reading/Writing. From this we can come to the conclusion that students may prefer one learning style over another, and limiting the choice of learning style may lead to the depletion of their motivation to engage with course material. Teachers should therefore establish the characteristics of their lecture delivery to fit with the preferred learning styles of their students. Also, it is advisable that teachers offer a multi-modal delivery to match different learning styles of different students. This can range from videos, audios, written texts, and quizzes. Relating to activities that match these learning styles, students find quizzes, a manifestation of Kinesthetic learning style, most engaging, then videos, an example of Visual learning style, comes second, followed by audio, representing Auditory learning style, and written text materials that belong to Reading/Writing learning styles.

2.3.1.2. Students’ Awareness and Attitude about Motivation

The results show that extrinsic factors have relatively the same mean scores as intrinsic ones in stimulating student motivation to engage with learning. Ranking top of the list is an intrinsic factor relating to students’ realization of their own effort to learn having an impact on their level of performance, while other intrinsic factors were lower in the order. Two extrinsic factors were ranked quite high are “I will engage with course content if I believe there will be a related exam question” and “I will engage with course content if I believe I will learn something worthwhile”. This is about exam-oriented engagement was ranked the second, which is relevant to the survey on learning style factor of quizzes. This is perhaps due to the mindset of Vietnamese students that attaches great importance to doing well in exams. The two factors at the bottom of the order are about memorizing data and self-confidence, showing that learning by heart does not motivate them to learn and that their self-confidence is more likely to be achieved after the learning process, so it does not affect much the participation of the student in activities in pursuing learning objectives.

2.3.1.3. Students’ Awareness and Attitude about Blended Learning

In general, students are quite positive about blended learning with many “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” answers. More than 60% of the students strongly agree with the statement “I can access online content anytime and anywhere”. Obviously, students prefer convenience in terms of time and space that blended learning brings them. Also, students enjoy a variety of tasks given in language classes so that they are exposed to different contexts where the language is used, and therefore, blended learning enables them to have interactive and valuable experiences as well as access a variety of online resources. The use of technology in blended learning accounts for 60% for ‘Agree’ and ‘Disagree’ and this can be proved to be true in both online and face-to-face teaching and learning. Students are motivated when teachers can demonstrate some high-technology related activities. Blended learning provides a variety of activities and materials online, so students usually communicate better and more confidently, as well as cooperate better with others.

2.3.2. Teacher Factors

The general feature for students’ opinions about teaching quality in blended learning is more of ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’. This can be clearly seen in the first criterion “Blended learning helps students access updated and accurate knowledge” and the fifth criterion “Blended learning supports interaction between teachers and students”, and the last criterion “Blended learning supports the management and organization of student
activities during class hours”. For criterion 2 “Blended learning supports varied teaching methods and attract students”, which is directly about teaching methods and motivation for students, the highest percentage is in the ‘Undecided’ category (67%), with a slightly higher proportion for ‘Agree’ (17%) than ‘Disagree’ (16%), so it is hard to conclude that the statement is true to the existing context. The explanation is probably the same as the previous part; it is due to a lack of preparation for blended learning in the context of Covid 19 pandemic.

2.3.3. Institution Factors

Institutions factors include technical support and technical infrastructure. The mean score for each element of User-friendliness, Design, Technical Configuration, and Navigation was valued around ‘4’, which represents ‘Agree’. This means that students agree that effective set-up of technology has a role in motivating students to participate in blended learning. Design had the highest mean at 4.74 and online resources the least mean at 3.38.

The learning interface is supporting blended learning due to the advantages that it brings to students. Almost all students (89%) agree and strongly agree that blended learning enables them to access learning content regardless of time and place. This is an undeniable benefit that blended learning offers students. The fourth reason “prefer technology use in class” also gain quite many supportive opinions with 61% ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’. This is also true for reason #5 “I can easily do my homework” with exactly the same figure, 61%, for ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ answers. However, opinions are quite differed in questions #2 and #3 with the highest percentages are ‘undecided’.

2.3.4. Barriers Preventing Engagement with Blended Learning

In general, students participating in the questionnaire experienced barriers that prevent them from engaging with blended learning at a low level, with a total mean score of 2.48 out of 5. Barriers related to social interaction seem to be a major problem for the participants, with a mean score of 3.11. Among the three factors in this category, lack of interaction among students gets the highest mean score, 3.41 which is also the highest mean score in the table, followed by feeling of isolation and prefer to study in a face-to-face environment at 3.15 and 2.78 respectively. Therefore, it can be inferred that students tend to enjoy interacting with their friends and teachers during lessons. This is true to the fact that face-to-face learning has advantages over online learning.

The group with the lowest mean score is about course design, 2.06. Among the three factors in this group, unavailability has the highest mean score, 2.38. Too challenging or too easy materials also motivates or demotivates students. In this group, it can be inferred that choosing materials for blended learning is more important than the general content of the course to motivate students.

The other three groups do not greatly differ in their mean scores. Technical skills group is 2.18, the teacher 2.24, and other factors 2.52. However, there are differences in individual factors. In the first group about technical skills, lack of / poor Internet access has the highest mean score, 3.22, the second highest mean score in the table. Limited technology experience and technical problems with computer do not seem to be a hinderance to student motivation, with a mean score of 1.78 and 1.47 respectively. This could be explained that students at National Economics University have basic technology knowledge so they do not have to worry that it prevents them from enjoying blended learning method in studying. On the contrary, lack of skills for using the delivery system like LMS or Teams may hinder their motivation probably because many students found blended learning still a novice concept or do not have practice on their own.

2.4. Recommendations

2.4.1. Recommendations to Students

2.4.1.1. Develop Skills for Independent Learning

“Face-to-face learning experience is more teacher-oriented, whereas the online learning experience is more cognitive or internally focused” [15]. Also, it is emphasized that blended learning changes the structure of teaching towards personalizing the students more [11]. Therefore, in order to be successful in blended learning, it is essential that students learn to self-study. Apart from class hours, self-studying via online will decide each student’s quality of studying. They need to not only accumulate information by remembering but also know how to analyze, synthesize, and process information effectively. However, once being used to traditional lecture-based teaching, students may find it hard to be self-disciplined and, in some cases, feel embarrassed in blended learning.

2.4.1.2. Technology Skills

The second factor relating to students is their technology skills to deal with computer and Internet-based problems such as requirement for additional softwares, or trouble with assignment submission systems. Also, being familiar with the learning management system is essential to smooth students’ learning experience. A quick training or clear instruction and a user-friendly interface will be useful for those who need to get familiar with the system. By doing this, students can avoid irritating encounter while studying in blended learning mode.

2.4.2. Recommendations to Teachers

2.4.2.1. Design Activities that Match Different Learning Styles

The findings of this research have suggested that students may prefer one learning style over another, and therefore, teachers need to take this into consideration when giving an online lesson. Specifically, the students in this study prefer visual and kinesthetic over auditory and reading/writing, and as a result, they prefer learning resources that include videos and quizzes. Videos are very helpful at different stages of the lesson to grab students’ attention, stimulate a focused discussion, introduce experts about the subject to students, etc. In addition, quizzes stimulate thoughts and engage the learning process because it creates a challenge for students and helps students have better understanding of the lesson. The qualitative comments from question #16 of the questionnaire also support the use of videos and quizzes as
a way to improve students’ motivation to learn English: “organizing discussions or lessons through movies or videos about inspiring people”, “watch talk show videos”, “learning through group competition or doing online quizzes or mini test”. The mean score for audio and written text was lower than video and quizzes, but it does not mean teacher should skip them in the lesson.

2.4.2.2. Design Activities that Enhance Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

According to the theory of intrinsic motivation, one feels instinctively happy when learning something new or successful in a challenging task. This creates a feeling of self-confidence and mastery so that learners will be more inclined to engage in future learning activities. Intrinsic motivation is generally considered to be more effective in promoting learning and achievement. Intrinsic motivation can be enhanced in the classroom by providing a challenge, curiosity, fantasy, and control. The level of challenge presented may vary in the form of the tasks of the learners to the learners according to their abilities, but this difference can be compensated by allowing them to work at their own pace some of the time. Extrinsic motivation can be increased by some factors such as teachers’ use of technology, rewards and incentives, etc.

2.4.3. Recommendations to Institutions

2.4.3.1. Provide Technology Training and Support

Institutions play the essential role of in creating the necessary policy, planning, resources and support systems to enable successful implementation of a blended learning program. The questionnaire also shows that a lack of skills for using the delivery system and students’ limited technology experience create barriers to students. In the situation where both teachers and students possess inadequate knowledge and skills to adapt to blended learning course, extensive training and substantial support is a must to ensure the success and effectiveness of blended learning. This support can involve support for course design with materials online or support for acquiring new teaching skills to encourage students’ online interaction and manage their online learning challenges [32].

2.4.3.2. Provide Technical Infrastructure

Because blended learning integrates online components with the employment of computer and web-based technology, low-quality or inadequate facilities will directly affect students’ learning efficiency [1]. As shown in the questionnaire, students consider lack of or poor Internet connection a barrier to their engagement with blended learning. It is essential that schools provide facilities and technology softwares to meet the demands of teaching and learning. Specifically, classrooms need to be equipped with computers connected to the Internet, projector, etc. Also, to applying online teaching and learning, a learning management system should be installed.

3. Conclusion

In brief, this study is a small-scale research conducted to (1) determine factors that affect students’ motivation to learn English in blended learning, identify student’s awareness about these factors as well as (2) identify barriers to students’ motivation to learn English when blended learning is applied so that (3) give recommendations to enable students to actively create their motivation or enhance their motivation to learn English in blended learning. First, in student factors, it has been found that factors like learning styles, students’ awareness and attitude about motivation including intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, students’ awareness and attitude about blended learning affect student motivation to learn English in blended learning. The second factor, teacher factor, is divided into teaching methods and teaching quality. The third factor, institution factor, includes technology training and support in general and technical infrastructure in particular.

Based on the findings, meaningful recommendations have been given which can be classified into three main categories which are recommendations for students, for teachers, and for institutions. For students, it is important to develop skills for indepent learning and technology skills. For teachers, it is recommended that they design activities that match different learning styles. They should also make sure that these activities can enhance intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Finally, institutions should provide teachers and students with technology training and support as well as technical infrastructure for blended learning.

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References


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