

International Journal of Education and Emerging Practices

Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 1-15, August 2025

<https://doi.org/10.63236/injeep.1.2.1>

Received May 02, 2025; Revised Jul 11, 2025; Accepted Aug 17, 2025

Published Aug 31, 2025

From Traditional School to Virtual Classroom: Students' Lived Experiences on Blended Learning Implementation

Weena Mae G. Ampo^{ORCID}, Manuel Santiago M. Rullen^{ORCID}, Elenita O. Deguit^{ORCID},
Ruel V. Perocho^{ORCID} and Pamela Joy B. Romero^{ORCID}

Bohol Island State University-Candijay
Cogtong, Candijay, Bohol, Philippines

Abstract. Blended learning has gained popularity as a teaching model because of recent changes in education. However, the experiences of students in this study's local context have not been thoroughly examined, creating a gap in the research. This study aims to fill that gap by reviewing students' lived experiences, with a focus on the issues and challenges they encountered during blended learning. Using a qualitative approach, the research involved ten college students from a rural higher education institution. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion, offering detailed insights into the topic. Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. The findings showed a strong preference among students for traditional face-to-face learning. They felt it provided better understanding, retention, and direct interaction with instructors. A key theme that emerged was the stress students experienced during independent learning. Without clear instructions, timely feedback, or regular teacher support, students felt overwhelmed and solely responsible for their learning. Additionally, participants faced serious socioeconomic challenges, including unreliable Internet access, high data costs, frequent power outages, and interruptions from weather conditions. They also struggled to find learning support owing to a lack of quiet study areas, household chores, and childcare responsibilities. This created learning gaps and decreased student engagement. These findings underline the many obstacles that rural students encounter in blended learning environments, highlighting the need for immediate support measures. The study emphasizes the necessity for improvements in infrastructure, teacher training, and responsive policies to ensure fair and effective blended learning. It also contributes to the global conversation on UN SDG 4, pushing for inclusive, quality education in areas with limited resources.

Keywords: Blended learning; traditional learning; learning gap; digital inequality

1. Introduction

The use of blended learning has been a widely researched topic in contemporary education, where online and classroom modes of learning are combined to increase flexibility and accessibility (Graham, 2019). However, the approach's

effectiveness is very much context-dependent, while the context is determined by technological resources, students' flexibility, and institutional readiness (Hrastinski, 2019). In the locale of the study, blended learning is not only an educational change but a matter of survival owing to the destruction caused by Typhoon Odette. The destruction of the school building left teachers and students without proper classrooms, forcing the school to hold face-to-face classes in temporary tents. Alternatively, online courses were conducted through Google Classroom, where teachers delivered learning modules. While numerous studies have explored the advantages and challenges of blended learning, little attention has been given to its implementation in disaster-stricken areas where physical and digital infrastructures remain compromised. Boelens et al.'s (2017) study highlighted the importance of structured guidance in blended learning to promote student engagement and knowledge retention. Similarly, Bernard et al. (2014) emphasized that students' perceptions of blended learning depend on the level of their digital competence and the availability of technological facilities. Such studies primarily respond to regular Internet availability and learning environments provided with resources, which may not accurately represent the conditions available to students and teachers in this research setting.

In blended learning, the lack of robust Internet connectivity remains a significant hindrance, particularly in disadvantaged and rural communities. Singh and Thurman (2019) conducted research that indicated that inconsistent access to the Internet breaks the continuity of the online learning process, resulting in lower student engagement and grades. Similarly, Dhawan (2020) demonstrated in a study that the digital divide disproportionately affects low-income students, thereby hindering their full participation in online learning. The gap undermines the success of blended learning and exacerbates existing learning gaps, particularly in areas with limited technological infrastructure. This study explores students' lived experiences of implementing blended learning under these conditions. It contributes to the broader discussion on the viability of blended learning in communities affected by disasters. The results would provide policymakers, educators, and administrators with valuable insights to refine and improve blended learning strategies in similar settings. Through these objectives, the study not only contributes to the existing literature on blended learning but also offers recommendations for local educators and policymakers to enhance the implementation of the platform. Hence, this research aims to explore the following research questions: a) What is students' preferred method in a blended learning platform? How do they handle their learning experience in that method? b) What are the main issues students face in a blended learning environment? c) What typical challenges do students encounter when using blended learning platforms?

2. Literature Review

Blended learning, a pedagogical approach that integrates traditional face-to-face instruction with online and digital components, has become increasingly prevalent in classrooms over the past few years. In the Philippine higher education setting, recent studies have further affirmed the growing relevance and effectiveness of blended learning. Olaguer et al. (2024) examined the experiences of 419 undergraduate teacher education students at Biliran Province State University. They found high levels of teaching presence, student engagement, and

satisfaction in blended learning environments. Their findings emphasize the importance of instructor facilitation in enhancing student experiences. Similarly, Consolacion et al. (2024) explored the implementation of blended learning across Mindanao State University – Iligan and proposed a contextual model grounded in institutional support, faculty development, and student-centered approaches. This study highlights the significance of strategic planning and support systems in effective blended pedagogy. From the perspective of faculty, Talosa et al. (2025) investigated higher education instructors at Cagayan State University. They reported high levels of self-efficacy and knowledge in using blended learning systems, with time management emerging as a key factor for success. Collectively, these Philippine-based studies underscore both student and teacher readiness for blended learning, reinforcing its viability and benefits in local contexts.

The term “blended learning” has been envisioned as a blend of face-to-face and distant learning (Listiana & Jaharadak, 2019; Mahmood & Noor, 2020; Permata & Nanda, 2021; Saboowala et al., 2021). It affords room to blend different pedagogical and learning processes, such as virtual learning platforms, to cater to the needs of learners and facilitate their learning development (Mahmood & Noor, 2020). Blended learning has led to better student performance, satisfaction, and greater access to academic programmes (Listiana & Jaharadak, 2019). According to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), blended learning involves the integration of face-to-face and e-learning study activities to enhance educational performance. It evolved as a response to the growing demand for flexible learning environments that cater to diverse student needs. According to Graham (2019), blended learning has evolved from technology-facilitated classrooms to more comprehensive models that incorporate enhanced face-to-face and virtual interactivity.

Research highlights several advantages of blended learning. First, it offers flexibility, allowing students to learn at their own pace and access materials anytime, anywhere (Means et al., 2013). Second, it promotes active learning by combining the strengths of in-person interactions and digital tools (Boelens et al., 2017). Third, blended learning has been shown to enhance student engagement and performance, as it accommodates diverse learning styles (Bernard et al., 2014). Moreover, literature indicates that blended learning has a direct effect on students' motivation and comprehension (Permata & Nanda, 2021). Blended learning allows for online learning flexibility that suits the varied desires and needs of students while preserving the merits of face-to-face interaction and teamwork (Listiana & Jaharadak, 2019). Educators who have implemented blended learning have reported heightened student engagement and improved learning outcomes, as the combination of traditional and online components engages diverse learning styles and enables more interactive and personalized teaching (Listiana & Jaharadak, 2019).

Despite its benefits, blended learning faces several challenges. The digital divide is a primary issue where unequal access to technology and Internet connectivity hinders participation, particularly in rural or underserved areas (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). Students and instructors may also struggle with the technical skills

required for effective online learning (Dhawan, 2020). Furthermore, maintaining student motivation in a blended environment can be difficult, especially when Internet access is unstable (Khalil et al., 2022). In disaster-affected or resource-constrained settings, blended learning presents unique challenges. Studies have shown that unstable Internet access and limited technological infrastructure can exacerbate educational inequalities (Singh & Thurman, 2019). However, when implemented thoughtfully, blended learning can provide a resilient alternative to traditional education, ensuring continuity during disruptions (Dhawan, 2020).

The UTAUT model has also been extensively applied to investigate faculty members' adoption of blended learning. Venkatesh et al. (2003) have argued that the model recognizes performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions as key predictors of behavioral intention to use technology. These factors in blended learning have been proven to play a significant role in the faculty members' intention to adopt blended learning (Al-Marroof et al., 2021; Alshammari, 2020). Additionally, the scholarship emphasizes the importance of proper training, enabling faculty staff to overcome obstacles such as technological expertise and pedagogical adaptation, which are essential for implementing blended learning effectively (Porter et al., 2014). However, it also reveals that implementing blended learning can be daunting, particularly in ensuring the proper blending of online and offline learning. Blended learning applications must consider concerns such as learning goals, context, and appropriateness of the applied technology (Ramalingam et al., 2021).

This review suggests that blended learning has the potential to be a powerful lever for enhancing student engagement and learning; however, this is contingent upon a comprehensive understanding of the drivers of faculty adoption and the close integration of electronic and face-to-face elements. To maximize the potential of blended learning, policymakers and educators must address infrastructure gaps, provide training for students and teachers, and develop context-specific strategies (Boelens et al., 2017). Additionally, fostering collaboration among stakeholders can help create sustainable blended learning models that are adaptable to diverse contexts (Graham, 2019). Blended learning is an innovative approach to modern education that offers flexibility, engagement, and improved academic performance. Its viability lies in bridging the limitations concerning digital accessibility, technological hindrances, and motivational deficiency. Through hands-on study and research exposure, policymakers and instructors can design blended learning communities that cater to students of varying skill levels.

3. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative research design and takes a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of selected participants regarding blended learning. This mode combines in-person classes held in temporary tents with virtual sessions on Google Classroom. Ten participants were chosen based on these criteria: (a) they were second-year college students, (b) there was representation from each college within the institution, (c) they lived in rural areas far from the campus, and (d) they depended on mobile data for connection. Data saturation during interviews determined the final number of participants, as their

responses captured the range of student experiences in blended learning settings. Before data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method used for gathering data. First, in-depth interviews were conducted, followed by focus group discussions to elicit more reflective responses. Thematic analysis, based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) framework, was used to transcribe, code, analyze, and interpret the data, ultimately identifying key themes that represent students' experiences in tent-based and online classrooms.

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to, ensuring participant confidentiality and voluntary participation. To enhance the study's credibility, transparency was maintained throughout the data collection and analysis process. Additionally, the manuscript underwent checks for plagiarism and grammar to ensure academic integrity.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the participants' answers based on the in-depth interviews conducted. Their answers reflect their experience of the organization's blended learning implementation.

Preference for Traditional Learning over Online Learning

The impact of Typhoon Odette, which destroyed many school facilities, forced numerous schools to adopt blended learning as an alternative to traditional face-to-face classes. This shift sparked significant discussion among students about their attitudes and preferences for the two learning styles. Based on the results, most participants preferred traditional face-to-face classes. They cited the following reasons that explain their choices:

Respondent 2 explained that:

"Mas nice jud ag traditional kay maka interact sa teachers unya iyang ipang storya masud jud sa huna2. Mas nice kon naay personal interaction kay dali ra masud ang lesson sa huna huna. Naa may distractions sa bay". The traditional learning platform is more admirable because we can interact with teachers, and whatever they discuss can be retained in our minds. Personal interaction with teachers can help focus our minds, unlike at home, where many distractions exist.

The statement explains the value of direct, personal interaction between students and teachers in a traditional classroom setting. In face-to-face learning, students can ask questions, seek clarification, and engage in real-time discussions with their teachers. This immediate feedback loop fosters a deeper understanding of the material, enabling teachers to tailor their explanations to students' reactions and comprehension levels. Such interaction is often limited in blended or online learning, where communication may be asynchronous through technology, reducing the spontaneity and effectiveness of teacher-student engagement.

In addition, Respondent 3 added that:

"Mas prefer jud naku ang traditional na paagi sir samot na nga mas makasabot naku ang lesson kung makita ug madungog mismo nahu sa teacher. Kay sa online sir dman ko

maksafocus kay daghan ug diversion labi na naa sa cellphone magtan aw". I prefer the traditional way because I can easily understand the lesson if I can hear the teacher's discussion. Unlike blended learning, especially online, I struggle to focus due to numerous distractions, particularly my cell phone.

Likewise, Respondent 8 preferred traditional learning because they found it easier to understand lessons when they could hear the teacher directly. They struggled with blended learning, especially the online components, owing to distractions, particularly from their cell phones, which hindered their focus.

Lastly, Respondent 8 affirmed that:

"I think sa kanang blended learning when it comes to retention mas dali makalimtan kay naay possibility nga dili magbasa sa module mao nang naa kay learning lag compare sa traditional". When it comes to retention in blended learning, lessons are easily forgotten, especially when most students are not reading compared with traditional setups.

Respondent 8 also raised concerns about retention in blended learning environments, saying that lessons are more easily forgotten. This is mainly because they believe that students are not engaging with the reading materials as much as they would in a traditional classroom setting.

The participants' strong preference for traditional face-to-face learning highlights an important issue. In this context, students still rely heavily on direct interaction with teachers for understanding, engagement, and retention of lessons. Their comfort with in-person learning, where they can ask questions immediately, receive clarification in real time, and watch their teacher explain, suggests that the move to blended learning is occurring in a context where students' independence and self-regulation are not yet well-developed. Although blended learning aims to encourage independence and flexibility, the findings suggest that many students struggle with the challenges of distance learning. They find it difficult to study lessons alone without the presence of a teacher. This reliance on face-to-face interaction points to a gap in students' preparedness for independent learning. It could lead to lower academic performance, disengagement, and more frustration during online sessions. The message is clear that before fully adopting blended learning, institutions need to improve students' digital skills, self-directed learning abilities, and resilience. Additionally, the online component should provide easy access to teacher support, including regular check-ins, quick communication channels, and explicit, organized learning materials.

Research on traditional and blended learning highlights differences in key student experiences and outcomes. According to a study by Means et al. (2013), blended learning can offer flexibility and access to digital resources. However, it often lacks the interpersonal engagement and immediate feedback that traditional classrooms provide. Similarly, Bernard et al. (2014) found that face-to-face instruction yields higher student satisfaction and academic performance levels, mainly due to the structured environment and direct interaction with instructors. Conversely, blended learning has been praised for its ability to integrate technology into education, enabling learners to progress at their own pace

(Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Nevertheless, issues such as home distractions, a lack of self-discipline, and limited exposure to stable Internet and hardware have been well-documented (Dhawan, 2020). Such problems are exacerbated when external circumstances, such as natural disasters, disrupt school operations as usual.

Several studies have explored students' preferences for traditional classrooms over virtual learning environments, especially in the context of the pandemic. Barrot et al. (2021) found that many Filipino university students preferred face-to-face learning owing to the numerous challenges associated with online education, including poor Internet connectivity, a lack of interpersonal interaction, and difficulty accessing necessary equipment. Similarly, Adnan and Anwar (2020) found that students often struggled to focus during online classes and felt that communication with teachers and peers was less effective, which made traditional classrooms more favorable. On a global scale, Palvia et al. (2018) highlighted that students across various countries still leaned toward conventional classroom instruction because of its structured environment, real-time feedback, and perceived higher instructional quality. Supporting these findings, Almahasees et al. (2021) reported that both students and faculty preferred in-person learning owing to its ability to foster better motivation, engagement, and communication. Collectively, these studies underscored a consistent pattern in which students value the tangible and interactive aspects of traditional classrooms over the flexibility offered by virtual learning platforms.

Distress in Independent Learning

The students' responses reflect the emotional and academic challenges faced in independent learning. This is especially true in blended or online learning environments where direct teacher support is often limited or missing. The following statements uncover the main reasons for this distress, such as struggles with understanding, the absence of immediate feedback, and feelings of isolation:

Respondent 4 responded as follows:

"Dili sir kay sa online magsend ra ang teachers ug module magsend ra ug video pero wa kasabot. Kay kon student ra, sila sila ra ang musabot". No, sir, because teachers will just give a module and send a video, even if we cannot understand the lesson.

The response shows a deep-seated frustration with the lack of meaningful teacher-learner engagement. It further emphasizes that merely receiving modules and watching videos does not provide a guarantee of effective learning. During this setup, students are left to learn on their own, which may lead to confusion, disengagement, and decreased motivation. While teachers at this level may become the guide on the side, this calls for a responsive, supportive, and interactive learning experience, especially in this remote learning environment.

This comment also highlights the overreliance on prepackaged materials, such as modules and videos. While these resources can be helpful for self-paced learning, they often lack the interactivity and adaptability of live, face-to-face instruction. Students may feel that teachers are not actively involved in the learning process, as they are reduced to merely distributing materials rather than engaging directly

with students. This can create a sense of detachment and disengagement, as students may perceive that their teachers are not fully invested in their learning.

Likewise, Respondent 7 highlighted that:

“Sa face to face it depends kintahay naa sila’y ehatag pero dili e discuss di jud masabtan dretso ra pa quiz pero if e discuss masabtan jud. Unya sa online djud xa engaging kay dman ta kas sure kung kanang gihatag sa maestra tan awon jud sa student”. In actual classes, depending on whether materials are provided, there are instances where the materials are distributed but never explained. This disadvantages the students' ability to learn the lesson. Apart from this, quizzes are also given, which is an added hindrance. Furthermore, the materials they are given are dull, and there is no assurance that the students will study and read them at home. This creates a learning gap, rendering students unqualified for exams.

Respondent 7 was frustrated and worried about how face-to-face classes are being conducted. The informant noted that, although some teachers provide learning materials, the content is often not explained or discussed in class. It becomes difficult for the students to grasp the lesson since they must learn independently. Despite this, quizzes are still conducted, putting pressure and stress on students as they are being tested on something they do not understand. Additionally, the materials covered are often referred to as dull, which makes students less likely to be motivated to study or listen to them. Respondent 7 also indicated that students may not read or study the materials at home because they are not engaging, the students are not motivated, or for some other reason. All these problems stem from a learning shortfall, as students are not adequately prepared to take quizzes and tests because they have not fully grasped or engaged with the lessons and may not even make an effort to do so. In essence, Respondent 7 complained that the teaching system is ineffective and discouraging, which ultimately leaves students struggling to cope and excel in their examinations.

Respondent 10 expressed the view that:

“Honestly murag 3 ka years laay ang uban module nga e send sa maestra kay ang uban tag as ra unya boring magbasa maong d ra masabtan. Pero usa sa mga material kung naa silay ebutang nga magtan aw ug video mas masabtan. Pero ug pure text unya taas boring jud, di ra ma digest. Mag expect pd si teacher nga maksabot dajon di pod malikayan nga lahi-lahi jud ug pagsabot samot na ug naa mga terms nga mao pa amo pagkakita. Ug mu reach out dugay maka reply”. For three years I have found it boring to read modules which I cannot understand. The teacher will also expect that learners will understand; however, it cannot be denied that we have different understandings of the lesson.

This statement reflects the respondent's frustration with the prolonged use of self-paced modules as the primary learning mode, mainly when the material is difficult to understand. It also highlights the disconnect between teachers' expectations and students' comprehension levels.

The implementation of blended learning has revealed several challenges, particularly regarding students' access to and use of instructional materials. The quality and usability of instructional materials are crucial to the success of

blended learning. Moreover, learners commonly complain about the instructional materials utilized. In studies by Boelens et al. (2017), learners frequently encounter outdated or poorly planned online content that is unrelated to the course's learning outcomes. Additionally, the absence of interactive or multimedia content in instructional materials may render them less effective. As Means et al. (2014) pointed out, well-designed content that incorporates videos, simulations, and interactive practice is more engaging and effective in learning. However, it requires considerable time and effort to develop, which most institutions cannot afford.

Blended learning requires instructional materials that cater to diverse learning styles and needs. Nevertheless, most students notice that the materials they are given are too limited to accommodate their interests (Burgstahler, 2015). Additionally, international students or those with weaker linguistic skills in the medium of instruction may face difficulties with materials that lack translations or cultural relevance (Hodges et al., 2020). These problems suggest the need for inclusive and adaptable instructional materials in blended learning settings.

Furthermore, students also experience difficulty with self-regulation, particularly when instructional materials are poorly structured or disorganized. Broadbent and Poon (2015) elaborate that students with poor self-regulation skills are often unable to read the amount of online content and coordinate learning tasks. The problem is exacerbated when materials are poorly structured regarding set learning objectives or time frames. These challenges must be addressed through a multi-strategy process that involves creating inclusive, high-quality content, enhancing technical infrastructure, and providing student-centered support.

Students often feel distressed in independent learning, especially when they think they are solely responsible for understanding lessons without clear guidance from teachers. This situation reveals a significant gap in support within blended or online learning environments. Feelings of isolation and confusion can lead to lower motivation, poor academic performance, and emotional fatigue. It shows the need for better-structured learning systems, regular teacher involvement, and easy access to instructional materials. These resources can help ensure students do not feel left behind in their learning journey. Schools must realize that even independent learning requires support, clarity, and consistent help to encourage meaningful and lasting learning results.

Socioeconomic and Learning Support Constraints

In a focus group discussion, one emergent theme significantly represents the challenges participants face as part of their experiences with the blended learning setup, namely the socioeconomic and learning support constraints. Students from rural communities faced blended learning, not as a flexible option, but as a formidable challenge influenced by their social and economic situations and limited access to learning support.

P1 stated that:

“Kaning way load tas way internet connection. Usahay sa cellphone mag lag”. No Internet load and no connection in the home area. P1 indicated that they cannot

afford Internet data (no loading) or have access to internet services in their area (no connection). These two issues create a significant barrier to education, particularly in areas with limited Internet connectivity.

P2 explained that:

“Sa major nga lisud sa mga science labi sa thermodynamics kana mag solve2, muchat mi ni sir pero usahay dugay mi ma replyan”. I often struggle with thermodynamics in my science course, particularly when solving problems. While I reach out to my instructors for help, their responses usually take a long time, which makes it challenging to keep up with the material.

P2 expressed difficulty with thermodynamics, specifically in solving problems, a core aspect of the subject. This struggle is compounded by the lack of timely support from their instructor. While they attempted to seek clarification by contacting the instructor, the delayed responses hindered their ability to grasp concepts and keep up with the course material. This creates a cycle of frustration and falling behind, especially on challenging courses that often build on foundational concepts, making timely assistance crucial for understanding.

P4 also added that:

“Sa signal jud sir then load. Ug way internet piso wifi na laman pero hinay gihapon unya layo pajud ang piso wifi pd. Ug maot panahon samot kahinay jud”. If no Internet is available, we can still use the peso WiFi; however, the connection remains slow, especially when weather conditions are unfavourable. The statement of P4 highlighted a common struggle faced by the informant in areas with limited Internet access. The informant relies on affordable public Wi-Fi (also known as "peso Wi-Fi") when regular Internet is unavailable. However, this solution is not ideal because the connection is often slow and worsens during lousy weather. This creates additional challenges for online learning, work, or communication, as the Internet remains unreliable and inconsistent.

P9 highlighted that:

“Maglisud kog handle kay labi na naay buhaton sa bay maglisud ko unja naa pd koy mga manghud bantayan. Si mama pd naa poy trabaho manuroy ug kakanin maong dko ka focus. Naa pakuy igsoon gamay magsamok nahu ug mag online mi”. It's difficult for me to handle online classes, especially if there are many household chores and little siblings to take care of.

The respondent's statement described how students struggle to manage online education along with significant household responsibilities. They struggled to focus on their studies and attend classes owing to being overwhelmed with chores and caring for younger siblings. This issue is typical in families where students, especially older siblings, are expected to help with household tasks. It highlights how domestic duties can hinder effective learning, especially in an online setting where students need a quiet, dedicated space and time to concentrate. The findings highlight the economic need for students to stay home and support their families. Many lived in households with limited financial resources. They often had to take on household tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, or caring for younger siblings. This left them with little time and energy for schoolwork. Even when in-

person classes resumed, they struggled to close the gap between what was taught online and what was covered in class. Without sufficient guidance, consistent feedback, or support from home, their academic progress suffered.

This experience highlights how socioeconomic status and a lack of academic support at home create two significant barriers to blended learning. This finding aligns with the research of Cleofas and Rocha (2021), who argue that students from disadvantaged households bear a heavier burden in blended learning owing to both material limitations and the absence of structured learning environments. Additionally, they found that students from low-income rural households often lack personal laptops or desktops and have limited or unstable Internet access. This situation increases their anxiety and makes it more difficult for them to engage with blended online formats. According to Hunt et al. (2022), students with caregiving responsibilities often face interrupted study time, miss classes, and exhibit lower academic engagement. Similarly, children who are “young caregivers” report higher stress levels and lower educational achievement. Some studies have found that over 50% of these students struggle with attendance and completing schoolwork (Cohen et al., 2006).

The pressure is even greater in online learning, where having a quiet and dedicated space is essential. However, many students, particularly those from low-income or crowded households, do not have such an environment. Research by Pan et al. (2022) highlighted that poor learning spaces, family interruptions, and noise at home were significant barriers to effective online education. For many, home is not a suitable learning environment but a place of competing demands. According to Ingrida (2023), unstable home networks and high data usage were the main reasons students missed online classes, revealing the financial and infrastructure challenges they face.

P10 explained that:

“Sa kanang magklasi uban teachers dili nila e discuss ang naa sa module mao maglisud ug sabot. Naa nay gap kay inag face to face lahi napod”. Some teachers will not discuss the lesson given online during the face-to-face class; that is why we cannot connect with the previous lesson.

P10 indicated that the lack of continuity between online and face-to-face learning. When teachers fail to revisit or reinforce online lessons during in-person classes, students struggle to build on their previous knowledge. This disconnect can lead to confusion, gaps in learning, and a lack of confidence in understanding the material. The premise suggests a need for enhanced integration and feedback of online lessons in classroom environments to ensure continuity in the learning experience. Teachers' lack of engagement with online materials during in-person classes often comes from discomfort or unfamiliarity with using digital tools. This leaves students without a strong learning connection, which makes understanding more challenging (Nguyen et al., 2020; Poon, 2013). These reports suggest that while blended learning can enhance education, it often exacerbates gaps owing to unequal access, insufficient digital skills, and poorly designed teaching methods (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008; Warschauer, 2003). Addressing

these issues needs focused policies, fair access to resources, and flexible teaching plans to ensure all learners can benefit from hybrid models. If these problems go unaddressed, they will worsen educational inequality. Blended learning should create a seamless educational experience; however, it can lead to a learning gap when support systems fail to integrate both teaching methods effectively.

6. Conclusion

This study highlights the different experiences of students in blended learning environments. Some students excel in traditional classrooms because they have immediate, structured interaction with teachers, thereby facilitating memorization and understanding. However, others, especially in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, face significant obstacles to participating effectively in online learning. These challenges stem from a lack of essential resources, including Internet access, devices, and stable learning spaces. Financial struggles, high data costs, and distractions at home exacerbate the situation. The findings reveal ongoing economic and digital disparities that hinder fair participation in blended learning, underscoring broader systemic issues. Without proper support, blended learning may widen the education gap instead of closing it. This study presents clear evidence of the challenges faced by vulnerable learners. It highlights the need for action in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims for inclusive and equitable quality education for all. Blended learning can only be effective and inclusive if we actively tackle these systemic barriers. Otherwise, students from low-income and rural backgrounds will continue to be left behind, jeopardizing long-term goals of educational fairness and social mobility. To promote fair access to quality education, the study suggests improving digital infrastructure in underserved areas, providing financial help for connectivity and learning tools, training teachers to deliver blended instruction effectively, creating inclusive and learner-centered spaces, and developing localized strategies that respond to community needs. Collaboration among governments, schools, NGOs, and local stakeholders is crucial for making these recommendations a reality and ensuring that no learner is left behind in the changing educational landscape.

7. References

- Adedoyin, O. B., & Soykan, E. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic and online learning: The challenges and opportunities. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 28(7), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2020.1813180>
- Adnan, M., & Anwar, K. (2020). Online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic: Students' perspectives. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology*, 2(1), 45–51. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JSPS.2020261309>
- Almahasees, Z., Mohsen, K., & Amin, M. O. (2021). Faculty's and students' perceptions of online learning during COVID-19. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 2, 100072. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedro.2021.100072>
- Al-Marooof, R. S., Alhumaid, K., & Salloum, S. (2021). The continuous intention to use blended learning: Insights from the UTAUT model. *International Journal of Data and Network Science*, 5(3), 245–254. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ijdns.2021.6.006>

- Alshammari, S. H. (2020). Faculty members' acceptance of blended learning in higher education: Application of the UTAUT2 model. *International Journal of Instruction*, 13(4), 737–754. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2020.13445a>
- Bernard, R. M., Borokhovski, E., Schmid, R. F., Tamim, R. M., & Abrami, P. C. (2014). A meta-analysis of blended learning and technology use in higher education: From the general to the applied. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 26(1), 87–122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-013-9077-3>
- Boelens, R., De Wever, B., & Voet, M. (2017). Four key challenges to the design of blended learning: A systematic literature review. *Educational Research Review*, 22, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2017.06.001>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Burgstahler, S. (2015). *Universal design in higher education: From principles to practice*. Harvard Education Press.
- Cleofas, J. V., & Rocha, I. C. N. (2021). Demographic, gadget, and internet profiles as determinants of disease and consequence-related COVID-19 anxiety among Filipino college students. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26, 6771–6786. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10541-w>
- Cohen, D., Greene, J., Toyinbo, P., & Siskowski, C. (2006). *Young caregivers in the U.S.: Findings from a national survey*. National Alliance for Caregiving.
- Consolacion, R., Buan, A., Lucero, L., & Tanduyan, K. (2024). Blended learning pedagogy to support student-centered classrooms. *Asia Research Network Journal of Education*, 4(3), 112–125. <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/arnje/article/view/275983>
- Dhawan, S. (2020). Online learning: A panacea in the time of the COVID-19 crisis. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 49(1), 5–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047239520934018>
- Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines*. Jossey-Bass.
- Graham, C. R. (2019). Current research in blended learning. In M. G. Moore & W. C. Diehl (Eds.), *Handbook of distance education* (4th ed., pp. 173–188). Routledge.
- Graham, C. R. (2019). Blended learning systems: Definition, current trends, and future directions. In C. J. Bonk & C. R. Graham (Eds.), *The handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs* (pp. 3–21). Pfeiffer.
- Hrastinski, S. (2019). What do we mean by blended learning? *TechTrends*, 63, 564–569. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-019-00375-5>
- Ingrida, M., Taufiq, A., & Suparno, S. (2023). Poor network connection and high data consumption rates are common issues in online learning among science students. *Education Sciences*, 13(7), 704. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13070704>
- Listiana, N., & Jaharadak, A. A. (2019). Blended learning as instructional media: Literature review. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, 1167, 012066. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1167/1/012066>
- Mahmood, H. B., & Noor, S. B. M. (2020). Acceptance, effectiveness, and relationship of blended learning implementation among lecturers in Polytechnic Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin. *International Journal of Integrated*

- Education Engineering and Business*, 3(1), 1.
<https://doi.org/10.29138/ijieeb.v3i1.1077>
- Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2013). *Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies*. U.S. Department of Education.
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>
- Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., & Baki, M. (2014). The effectiveness of online and blended learning: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *Teachers College Record*, 116(1), 1–47.
- Nguyen, T., Espiritu, C., & Rodrigues, M. (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>
- Palvia, S., Aeron, P., Gupta, P., Mahapatra, D., Parida, R., Rosner, R., & Sindhi, S. (2018). Online education: Worldwide status, challenges, trends, and implications. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 21(4), 233–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1097198X.2018.1542262>
- Poon, J. (2013). Blended learning: An institutional approach for enhancing students' learning experiences. *Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 9(2), 271–288. https://jolt.merlot.org/vol9no2/poon_0613.htm
- Permata, I. M., & Nanda, B. J. (2021). Blended learning: Impact on student motivation and understanding. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210202.010>
- Porter, W. W., Graham, C. R., Spring, K. A., & Welch, K. R. (2014). Blended learning in higher education: Institutional adoption and implementation. *Computers & Education*, 75, 185–195.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2014.02.011>
- Ramalingam, S., Hashim, H., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). Revised community of inquiry as a theoretical foundation for understanding students' blended learning experiences. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210618.041>
- Saboowala, R., Ilyas, K. S. B. M., & Talukdar, R. K. Y. A. (2021). *Inservice school teachers' perception of adopting online-offline mode of learning during the current crisis*. Research Square (United States). <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-410204/v1>
- Singh, V., & Thurman, A. (2019). How many ways can we define online learning? A systematic literature review of definitions of online learning (1988–2018). *American Journal of Distance Education*, 33(4), 289–306.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08923647.2019.1663082>
- Talosa, A. D., Acidera, R. A., Tamanu, M. J. M., & Sumer, J. J. M. (2025). Knowledge, self-efficacy, and effectiveness in leveraging blended delivery systems: A study of higher education teachers. *International Journal of Instruction*, 18(2), 709–726. <https://e-iji.net/ats/index.php/pub/article/view/758>
- Venkatesh, V., Morris, M. G., Davis, G. B., & Davis, F. D. (2003). User acceptance of information technology: Toward a unified view. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(3), 425–478. <https://doi.org/10.2307/30036540>
- Warschauer, M. (2003). *Technology and social inclusion: Rethinking the digital divide*. MIT Press.

This paper may be cited as:

Ampo, W, M. G., Rullen, M, S. M., Deguit, E, O., Perocho, R, V. & Romero, P. J. B. (2025). From Traditional School to Virtual Classroom: Students' Lived Experiences on Blended Learning Implementation. *International Journal of Education and Emerging Practices*, 1(2), 1-15.
<https://doi.org/10.63236/injeep.1.2.1>