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The Predictive Value of Blended Learning for Students' Motivation for Academic Writing Skills at Private Universities of Lahore

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effect of blended learning on students' motivation for academic writing skills at private universities in Lahore. This research examined how blended learning could impact students' motivation to develop academic writing skills. The study revealed the interactive effect of multiple variables: students' attitudes towards computers, students' attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning, and students' satisfaction and motivation for academic writing skills. The study employed a quantitative approach and a correlation research design was used. The population comprised post-graduate students from six private universities in Lahore, Pakistan. Data were gathered from students in the M.Phil. Programs (English, and Education), enrolled in four semesters (i.e., 1st, 2nd 3rd, and 4th semester). The sample size was

disproportionate. Overall 300 students were selected from both programs out of 6 private universities. The data was carefully sorted, organized, and saved using SPSS version 21. Advanced statistical techniques (correlation, multiple-linear regression) were employed to address research questions through suitable analysis software. This study showed that there was a significant connection between blended learning and students' academic drive and learning outcomes. The stepwise linear regression indicated that students' attitudes toward computers (SATC) were the most significant predictor of motivation for academic writing skills.

Keywords: Blended learning, Motivation for Academic Writing Skills, students' attitudes towards computers, students' attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning

Introduction

Blended learning particularly applies to academic writing as it permits students to engage in interactive, collaborative, and self-directed learning activities. Blended learning eliminates time and distance limitations by offering synchronous and asynchronous learning settings (McHone, 2020). With the emergence of advanced technology in the twenty-first century, blended learning has revolutionized educational practices. Now, the emphasis has shifted from a traditional to a productive learning atmosphere. Blended learning is a “pedagogical model," that integrates conventional classroom instruction with online learning resources and technology (Cole, 2020). Students' motivation and satisfaction may be some of the most frequently mentioned advantages of blended learning in the pedagogical setting. Motivation is defined as "an internal drive that urges someone to initiate action" (Pham, 2024). It makes effective use of the variety of instructional approaches that encourage student involvement and interaction in the development of their linguistic and writing abilities (Albiladi & Alshareef, 2019). In higher

education, the requirement for academic English proficiency is more crucial than ever. The majority of experts concur that for students to thrive academically, they must acquire academic writing skills (Wahyuningsih, 2018). Academic writing skills are the aptitudes that permit a person to effectively express their thoughts, claims, and conclusions in a structured, orderly, and concise manner. Writing with clarity and conciseness is a sign of sophisticated academic writing ability because it shows that the author is knowledgeable about the topic. Academic writers rely on critical skills like objectivity, accuracy, and analytical skills. As a result, academic writing skills are crucial for students in a variety of disciplines to effectively convey their thoughts and findings, making them an essential component of higher education and the research process (Akhadiah et al., 2017; Mallia, 2017).

Academic writing is a skill that is in high demand among university students. The academic quality of proposals, project reports, and assignments determine their success. As a result, in order to generate efficient academic writing in a productive manner, students must have appropriate knowledge of the linguistics utilized by professionals and academics (Coxhead & Demecheleer, 2018). When students develop their knowledge through understanding, blended learning offers them a flexible and convenient way to learn new things while simultaneously exchanging their perceptions with one another (Aljohani, 2017).

Literature review

Nowadays, evolving and creative digital learning tools are utilized by many learners with varying goals, preferences, study habits, educational backgrounds, abilities, and skills. Different Research from the past has proven that the most effective strategy to improve individuals' academic achievement is to offer them educational settings that are highly

individualized. Adaptive and interactive e-learning platforms are the most crucial settings for promoting customized instruction and enhancing the comprehensive efficacy of online learning activities, programs, and courses. At the same time, learning is a complicated procedure with many constantly interconnected elements. As a result, many interfering aspects, such as the student's academic profile, abilities and attitudes, academic objectives, instructional methods, and resources, must be considered (Dias et al., 2015). There is continuous divergence over the correct definition of blended learning. The term signifies numerous things to different individuals; many scholars believe that the absence of a globally acknowledged definition may be its strength. Benfield et al. (2006) claimed that the absence of precision surrounding blended learning allows educators and instructors to create their definitions of the word within the framework of their respective programs or institutions. Poon (2013) investigated to examine the benefits of blended learning on students' learning experience. The key benefit of blended learning is course flexibility. This adaptability allows students with different learning methods, unconventional course accessibility requirements, and uncommon course pacing preferences to participate. Another benefit of various delivery modalities, including the utilization of simulated work experiences such as field excursions, observations, and case studies, is that they help students improve their practical knowledge. Students can learn a lot in traditional environments when used effectively.

A framework describes an event's known or suspected aspects and lets more research into its underlying properties. Therefore, a blended learning model can be used to guide the evaluation and inclusion of different aspects, leading to a successful teaching and learning environment (Kaur, 2013). For successful learning, a blended learning environment is needed in both traditional and online settings. Mixed-learning environments are seen as positive by students,

who think they are useful for their future education. Using hybrid settings to teach can lead to better student satisfaction, learning, engagement, and motivation (Eryilmaz, 2015).

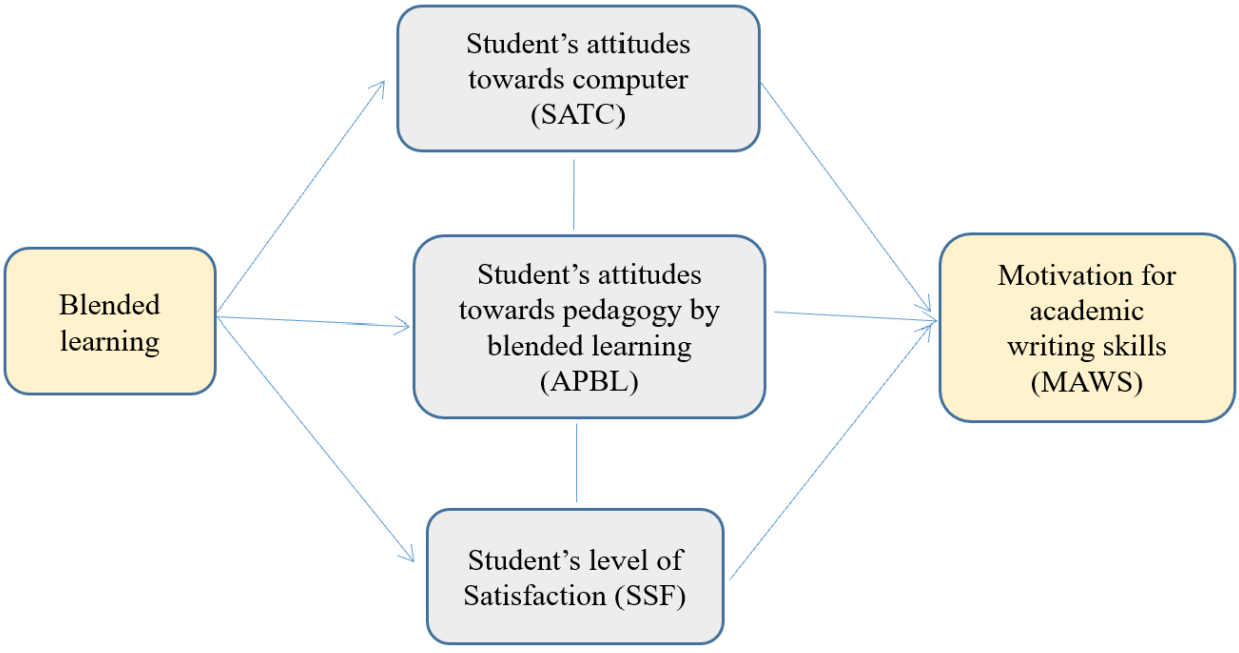
Alammary et al. (2014) delineate three separate design methodologies. A low-impact blend incorporates supplementary tasks into an existing program; a medium-impact blend replaces tasks within an established program; and a high-impact blend creates a new program. They recommended that beginner educators commence their teaching endeavors with low-impact blended learning. Prihatmi (2017) asserts that a university student must proficiently acquire four English skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Nonetheless, productive skills such as writing and speaking are seen as the most challenging to master (Ariyanti, 2016; Megawati, 2016). We possess active/productive abilities, historically deemed the most challenging to master, and conversely, passive/receptive skills such as reading and listening (Aydin & Ozdemir, 2015).

Academic writing is a highly sought-after skill among university students. The scholarly caliber of proposals, project reports, and tasks dictate their success. Consequently, to produce effective academic writing efficiently, students must possess adequate awareness of the linguistic conventions employed by professionals and scholars (Coxhead & Demecheleer, 2018).People are motivated by internal or external factors that push them to take action, develop and pursue goals, and put in a lot of effort to achieve them. It is the impulse or impulses that motivate and direct the behavior. According to Matthews (2014), motivation is "the sensation of desire to accomplish something, particularly those things that require difficult labour and diligent sacrifice" according to the Oxford Dictionary. Starting and sustaining goal-directed behaviours is the process of motivation (Coon & Mitterer, 2012; Artino & Cook, 2016). Intrinsic motivation occurs when we engage in activities for reasons beyond apparent external rewards. It signifies that we genuinely

appreciate something or perceive it as an opportunity to explore, cultivate, and actualize our complete potential" (Coon and Mitterer, 2012). Extrinsic motivation is engaging in an activity to gain external rewards or evade penalties. External factors such as monetary rewards, accolades, or academic grades drive this incentive. Extrinsic motivation is encompassed within self-determination theory (SDT), characterized by varying levels of "autonomy and internalization" (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The following conceptual framework was drawn after exploring the literature review.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



Statement of the Problem

This research aims to explore the problem of how blended learning could impact students' motivation to develop academic writing skills. Despite the widespread use of blended learning, there is a dearth of data on the extent to which it motivates students to enhance their writing abilities. Academic writing is complicated, and mastering it requires a lot of drive and persistence due to the complexity of the subject matter, as well as the importance of instructional methods and the importance of student happiness. To help educational experts and stakeholders rethink educational policies and practices, this study seeks to understand how private university students perceive the impact of blended learning on student motivation for academic writing abilities.

Research Questions

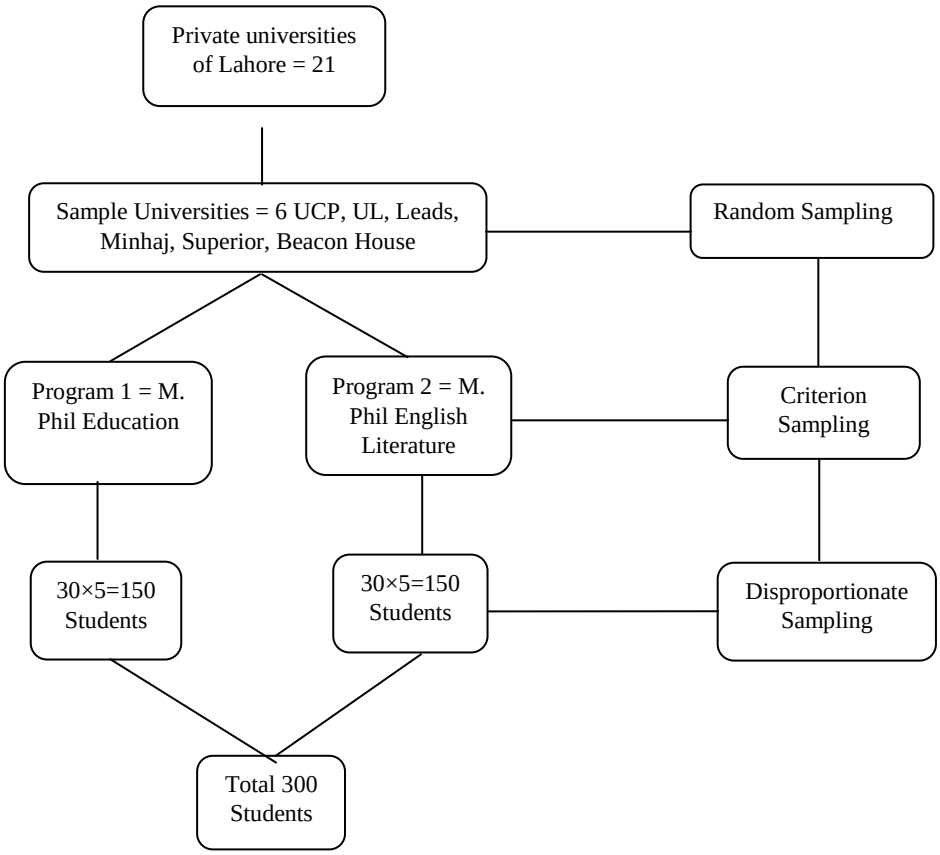
1. What is the interactive effect of students' attitude towards computers, students' attitude towards pedagogy by blended learning, and students' satisfaction for motivation towards blended learning regarding the perceptions of students at private universities?
2. What is the predictive value of blended learning to ensure students' motivation for academic writing skills considering the perceptions of students at private universities?

Methodology

This study largely relied on the positivist paradigm and used a quantitative approach for data gathering and analysis to meet the research objectives. The questionnaire gathered data on four variables: students' attitudes towards computers (SATC), students' attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning (APBL), students' satisfaction (SSF), and motivation for academic writing skills (MAWS).

The population comprised post-graduate students from six private universities in Lahore. Data were gathered from students in the M.Phil. Programs (English, and Education), enrolled in four semesters (i.e., 1st, 2nd 3rd, and 4th semester). The sample size was disproportionate. Overall 300 students were selected from both programs out of 6 private universities.

Figure 2
Sampling framework



A survey questionnaire was used to quantify the participants' perceptions (Rahi, 2017). An adapted questionnaire consisting of closed-ended statements was used to gather respondents' opinions for this research. There were five sections in the questionnaire. Section-I collected demographic data, section-II collected information about students' attitudes toward computers

(SATC), section-III gathered information about students' attitudes toward pedagogy by blended learning (APBL), and section-IV obtained information about students' satisfaction (SSF), and Section-V obtained information about students' motivation for academic writing skills (MAWS).

Data from six private universities in Lahore were collected personally by the researcher. The data was carefully sorted, organized, and saved using SPSS version 21. In the initial stage descriptive analyses were performed, which included the calculation of means, percentages, and standard deviations. The second level involved inferential analysis comprising advanced statistical tests such as correlations, and regression analysis to address research questions through suitable analysis software. Data was preserved carefully in both digital and physical forms to ensure consistency of data and prevent errors.

Data Analysis and Findings

Q1. "What is the interactive effect of students' attitude towards computers, students' attitude towards pedagogy by blended learning, and students' satisfaction for motivation towards blended learning regarding the perceptions of students at private universities?

To answer research question 1, Pearson-product moment correlation was applied. The study's findings unveil several noteworthy correlations among the examined variables. Pearson product-moment correlation was applied to determine the relationship among all the variables. The conceptual framework identified four main variables, out of which three were independent variables (student attitudes toward computers, attitudes toward blended learning pedagogy, and student satisfaction), and one was a dependent variable (motivation for academic writing skills). A total of eleven factors and sub-factors— computer usefulness (CACU), computer liking (CACL), computer confidence (CACC), computer anxiety (CACX), attitudes towards pedagogy

by blended learning (APBL), student satisfaction (SSF), motivation for the necessity of blended learning (MNBL), motivation for Facebook utility (MFU), motivation for WhatsApp app utility (MWU), motivation for blended learning (MBLM), and motivation for blended learning and academic writing (MBLAW)—were incorporated into the model to further manipulate the outcomes. The majority of the variables under analysis were positively and significantly correlated. The details are below:

The findings highlighted a highly strong correlation between computer liking (CACL), (r =.819**; p<.000) and computer confidence (CACC), (r =.849**; p<.000). However, there was no correlation between computer usefulness (CACU), and computer anxiety (CACX), (r=.076; p<.192). A strong correlation was found between computer usefulness (CACU), and attitudes toward blended learning (APBL), (r =.703**; p<.000) and also between computer usefulness (CACU), and student satisfaction (SSF), (r =.688**; p<.000). Computer usefulness (CACU), was strongly correlated with motivation for blended learning (MBLM), and motivation for blended learning and academic writing (MBLAW), (r=.771**; p<.000; r=.667**; p<.000).

Computer liking (CACL), had a strong correlation with computer confidence (CACC), (r=.827**; p<.000. Computer liking (CACL), was strongly correlated with attitudes towards blended learning (APBL), and student satisfaction (SSF), (r=.694**; p<.000; r=.682**; p<.000), respectively. Computer liking (CACL) strongly correlated with factors, motivation for Facebook utility (MFU), motivation for WhatsApp utility (MWU), motivation for blended learning (MBLM), and motivation for blended learning and academic writing (r=.683**; p<.000; r=.604**; p<.000; r=.787**; p<.000; r=.716**; p<.000), respectively.

Additionally, Moreover, computer confidence (CACC) had a significantly strong correlation with motivation for blended learning and motivation for blended learning and academic writing (MBLAW), (r=.771**; p<.000; r=.667**; p<.000), respectively.

Attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning (APBL), correlated strongly with student satisfaction (SSF), (r =.842**; p<.000). However, there was a weak correlation between attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning (APBL) and motivation for the necessity of blended learning (MNBL), (r =.262**; p<.000). Attitudes toward pedagogy by blended learning (APBL), had a strong correlation with motivation for blended learning (MBML), (r =.713**; p<.000) and motivation for blended learning and academic writing (MBLAW), (r =.724**; p<.000).

There was a strong correlation between student satisfaction (SSF), the motivation for the necessity of blended learning (MNBL) and student satisfaction (SSF), and motivation for blended learning and academic writing (MBLAW), (r =.690**; p<.000; r =.704**; p<.000).

Motivation for Facebook utility (MFU), had a strong correlation with motivation for WhatsApp app utility (MWU), (r =.800**; p<.000). Motivation for blended learning (MBLM), had a strong correlation with motivation for blended learning and academic writing (MBLAW), (r =.730**; p<.000).

Table 1

Correlation matrix of factors motivation for academic writing skills

	CACU	CACL	CACC	CACX	APBL	SSF	MNBL	MFU	MWU	MBLM	MBLAW
CACU	1	.819**	.849**	.076	.703**	.688**	.313**	.569**	.574**	.769**	.691**.

CACL	1	.827**	.120*	.694**	.682**	.357**	.683**	.604**	.787**	.716**
CACC		1	.96	.690**	.684 **	.351**	.557**	.586**	.771**	.667**
CACX			1	.386**	.90	.003	.047	.018	.085	.088
APBL				1	.842**	.262**	.502**	.490**	.713**	.724**
SSF					1	.221**	.492**	.511**	.690**	.704**
MNBL						1	.302**	.328**	.397**	.228**
MFU							1	.800**	.584**	.544**
MWU								1	.643**	.534**
MBLM									1	.730**
MBLAW										1

Q2. "What is the predictive value of blended learning to ensure students' motivation for academic writing skills considering the perceptions of students at private universities?"

To answer research question 2, step-wise regression was employed to identify the strongest predictors of motivation for academic writing skills. . All three independent variables— student attitudes toward computers (SATC), attitudes toward blended learning pedagogy (APBL), and student satisfaction (SSF)— along with one dependent variable— motivation for academic writing skills (MAWS)— were entered to generate the models. Overall, three models were generated to ensure the predictive values for motivation for academic writing skills.

Table 2 ***Multiple Linear Regression using Step-wise Methods (Motivation for academic writing skills as Dependent Variable)***

	Model	B	t-value	p-value
1	(Constant)		7.866	.000
	SATC	.813	24.133	.000
2	(Constant)		6.428	.000

	SATC	.586	14.031	.000
	APBL	.334	7.990	.000
3	(Constant)		6.107	.000
	SATC	.539	12.255	.000
	APBL	.232	4.370	.000
	SSF	.166	3.043	.003

Model 1 illustrated that students' attitudes towards computers were singularly responsible for 53% of the variance in motivation for academic writing skills (r=.813; P =.000). Model 2 explicated that student's attitudes towards computer and student attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning collectively influenced 76% of the variance in motivation for academic writing skills (student's attitudes towards computer: r=.586, P=.000; student attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning: r=.334, P=.000). Model 3 explained that student's attitudes towards computer, student attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning, and student's satisfaction were collectively responsible for 92% variation in motivation for academic writing skills (student's attitudes towards computer: r=.539, P=.000; student attitudes towards pedagogy by blended learning: r=.232, P=.000; student's satisfaction: r=.166, P=.003).

Discussion and Conclusions

This study concluded that students' attitudes toward computers (SATC) had a strong positive correlation with computer usefulness (CACU), computer liking (CACL), and computer confidence (CACC). The study found a strong relationship between students' attitudes about blended learning and their degree of satisfaction. This means that students who use blended learning approaches, which include traditional and digital methods, are more satisfied with their educational experiences.

The study highlights the importance of perceived utility, favorable attitudes toward technology, successful instructional approaches, and motivation in shaping students' learning experiences. Motivation for academic writing skills is also significant, with students finding traditional learning styles outdated.

This study discovered that students consented strongly to the factors that influence blended learning, such as a lack of adequate infrastructure for technology, futile instructional approaches, an absence of teacher education for implementing blended learning programs, a lack of learner willingness and technical expertise, and a lack of university management, technical, and monetary resources.

Students' attitudes toward computers, attitudes toward blended learning pedagogy, and student satisfaction all contributed to a 92% variation in motivation for academic writing skills. The research found that students' attitudes toward computers (SATC) are the most significant predictor of motivation for academic writing skills (MAWS). This highlights the multidimensional nature of motivation in academic writing, suggesting that educators can create successful blended learning settings to increase motivation and engagement.

Implications

The findings of the research revealed some significant implications:

Scholars can immerse themselves in an assortment of academic environments by hosting immersive virtual writing workshops, including venerable libraries and scholarly conferences. Students will be able to transcend the restrictions of geographical distance by collaborating with peers throughout the globe, which can be made accessible by advanced VR platforms. This revolutionary methodology not only promotes cross-cultural exchanges but also cultivates an intricate understanding of various writing norms.

As a result, students will be well-positioned to improve their academic writing skills, increasing their intellectual acumen under the privileged boundaries of private higher education institutions (Ahmad et al., 2022). Integrating artificial intelligence-based writing assistants into educational institutions is a critical step toward increasing instructional efficacy. These advanced assistants can detect and evaluate learners' unique writing tendencies, complexities, and competencies, resulting in personalized recommendations and guidance. Furthermore, the insights gained from the research highlight the numerous benefits provided by generative AI-powered aid, notably in terms of increasing productivity and boosting people's confidence in their writing abilities (Li et al., 2024). It is critical to emphasize the revolutionary possibilities for personalized content development enabled by AI in the context of educational discourse. This paradigm shift towards a rewriting ethos has consequences for blended learning modalities, especially in terms of developing students' willingness to develop their academic writing proficiencies, particularly within the domains of private colleges.

Create a crowd-sourcing peer review platform where students can submit manuscripts and receive comments from a wide community of classmates, alumni, and industry experts. By using crowd insight, students receive many viewpoints and constructive feedback on their essays, promoting introspection and refinement while cultivating a sense of identity within a wider academic community (Allen et al., 2022).

Encourage learners to discover multimodal writing, including podcast scripts, video essays, and immersive info-graphics, alongside standard writings and academic articles. By adopting numerous ways of interaction, learners can experiment with many platforms to effectively communicate their thoughts while learning the digital skills required for advancement in the twenty-first century (Howell et al., 2015).

Use blockchain technology to create digital certificates and awards for writing accomplishments such as publication in peer-reviewed journals, winning competitions, or finishing writing-intensive courses. Blockchain credentialing motivates students and encourages continued progress in academic writing skills by offering acknowledgment and confirmation of their writing achievements.

The assimilation of these implications within the educational ecosystem of underprivileged private universities harbors the promise of catalyzing a transformative trajectory in students' writing competencies. By leveraging AI-driven writing aids, these institutions can ameliorate the writing acumen of their students through a multifaceted approach. Such an approach encompasses not only the cultivation of compositional skills but also the cultivation of critical thinking faculties essential for navigating the complexities of academic discourse.

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