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METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR PEDAGOGICAL DESIGN OF CYBERSOCIALIZATION OF STUDENTS BASED ON BLENDED EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, with the rapid development of science and technology, approaches to pedagogy have changed significantly. New teaching methods such as distance learning (DL), online learning (OL) and blended learning (BL) have come into focus. In recent years, blended learning (BM) has become increasingly popular as a new pedagogical approach, including in Uzbekistan, where its application is gradually increasing in universities. This study analyzes students' perceptions of blended learning, its benefits and challenges in the context of higher education in Uzbekistan. The results, based on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, showed that students have a positive attitude towards BM, especially those who combine studies with family and work responsibilities. The main challenge remains access to the Internet, however, students were able to successfully utilize the benefits of both face-to-face (F2F) and online learning. The study also highlights the need for further study on the application of blended learning in the higher education system of Uzbekistan for its successful implementation and understanding.

KEYWORDS

Blended learning (BL), higher education, online learning (OL), face-to-face learning (F2F), Uzbekistan, students' perceptions, pedagogical approaches, educational technologies.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, with the rapid development of science and technology and innovation, the approaches to pedagogy in the field of education have changed significantly. Such learning and teaching

methods as distance learning (DL), online learning (OL) and blended learning (BL) are becoming more and more popular. The blended learning (BM) method has been rapidly spreading as a new pedagogical approach

in recent years. In Uzbekistan, the use of BM in higher education institutions is also gradually increasing. In this study, we tried to explore students' perceptions towards the blended learning method.

We examined the advantages and challenges of blended learning as a teaching approach in the context of higher education in Uzbekistan. Based on questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the study showed that students have a positive attitude towards BM, and it is more prevalent among those who have to combine studies with family and work responsibilities. Although internet access remains one of the main challenges, students were able to take advantage of both F2F (face-to-face learning) and OL via BM. Blended learning refers to the combination of classroom learning with technology-mediated learning. It is a teaching method in which students learn both in a traditional classroom and using the Internet. According to Keengwe and Kang (2013), blended learning combines Internet-based technologies to combine face-to-face and online learning. Bluic, Goodyear, and Ellis (2007) describe, “Blended learning describes learning activities that involve a systematic combination of collaborative interactions between students, instructors, and learning resources with technology-mediated interactions” [2].

Similarly, Dziuban, Hartman, Juge, Moskal, and Sorg (2006) describe blended learning as a blend of pedagogical approaches that combines the benefits of social interaction in the classroom with the technical capabilities of online learning [3]. Kanuka, Brooks, and Saranchuk (2009) see the blended approach as a teaching method that overcomes time, space, and situational barriers and enhances quality interactions between teachers and students [4].

Literally, “blending” means combining different elements or varieties. Graham (2005, p.5) defines blended learning as “a combination of two historically distinct models of education: the traditional face-to-face (F2F) system and distributed learning systems where distributed learning involves the use of computer technology outside the classroom.” It combines F2F learning and computer-mediated instruction (CMI) in teaching and learning practices [5].

Integrating technology and F2F is the most common characteristic of blended learning, although there are many different forms of blended learning. Driscoll and Carliner (2005) discuss four types of blended learning: a) a combination of web-based technologies; b) a mixture of different pedagogical approaches; c) a combination of any form of educational technology with F2F learning; d) the integration of educational technology with real-world work tasks to create an effective combination of learning and work [8]. Regardless of the form, varying levels of interaction between instructors and students and rapid provision of feedback are the main teaching strategies that attract students to blended courses [7]. F2F and OL pedagogical approaches existed before the introduction of BL. Previously, F2F and OL remained separate and were designed to meet the different needs of students. F2F has been used for a long time and supports interaction in a teacher-driven environment. F2F learning provides students with face-to-face communication, social interaction, clarity and confidence, and the opportunity for spontaneous discovery, but its disadvantages include space and time constraints. On the other hand, technology-integrated OL is a new approach that emphasises interaction between the student and the material with a low degree of real-time interaction [5]. The main

advantages of OL include greater flexibility and deep reflection, but OL can suffer from a lack of human interaction and slow responses.

Thus, F2F and OL have both advantages and disadvantages. BL was introduced as an approach that allows students to leverage the strengths of both F2F and OL while addressing their shortcomings. Blended learning has spread significantly over the past decade in both academic and professional fields, especially in countries such as Canada, Australia, Germany, Russia, China, and the UK [10]. Research has shown that BM provides students with numerous opportunities to improve learning outcomes in educational spaces. However, there has been less research on this topic in developing countries. In Uzbekistan, where BM has recently been introduced into the higher education system, more research is needed to create an understanding of this approach among stakeholders. Empirical research on applying the blended approach in educational contexts in our country remains in the background, highlighting the need for further study.

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