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# Striking the Balance: An In-Depth Examination of the Blended Learning Challenges for Students, Teachers, and Parents

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St. Michael's College, Iligan City, Philippines; edgareslit@gmail.com or e.eslit@my.smciligan.edu.ph

**Abstract:** Blended learning, the integration of online and face-to-face instruction, has garnered attention in education. This paper aims to explore challenges in blended learning faced by students, teachers, and parents and propose mitigating strategies. The study employed qualitative research methods and involved 30 participants from St. Michael's College. Findings revealed primary challenges, including technical difficulties, time management, lack of interaction, and varying digital literacy levels. These challenges influenced engagement, communication, and student achievement. The study utilized a theoretical framework encompassing Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Social Presence Theory, and Activity Theory. Strategies recommended comprise providing technical support, promoting communication and collaboration, offering professional development, and leveraging learning analytics. The study contributes to the existing literature by identifying specific challenges and proposing practical recommendations for enhancing blended learning effectiveness. Limitations include a small sample size and context-specific findings. Future research should investigate these challenges in broader settings and examine the long-term effects of the recommended strategies. Addressing blended learning challenges can empower educators, administrators, and policymakers to create supportive and effective learning environments for all stakeholders involved.

**Keywords:** blended learning challenges; in-depth examination; striking the balance

## 1. Introduction:

Blended learning, a hybrid approach that combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning elements, has gained increasing attention in educational settings. It offers a unique opportunity to leverage the benefits of both in-person interaction and digital resources, providing a flexible and engaging learning experience (Kyei-Blankson & Blankson, 2021). As educational institutions continue to adopt blended learning models, it is crucial to understand the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in this evolving educational landscape.

The objective of this study is for the researcher to examine the challenges encountered by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning environments. By exploring these challenges, the researcher aims to shed light on the specific issues that arise and their impact on the teaching and learning process. This research seeks to address the following key questions:

1. What are the primary challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning?
2. How do these challenges affect the educational experience and outcomes?
3. What strategies can be implemented to mitigate these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of blended learning?

The scope of this study is focused on a specific educational institution, St. Michael's College, during the first semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. By narrowing the focus to this particular context, the researcher can obtain a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents within this specific blended learning environment.

The rationale for investigating the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning stems from the growing adoption of this instructional approach and the need to ensure its successful implementation. While blended learning offers unique opportunities, it also presents its own set of challenges that must be addressed. Understanding these challenges is essential for

educators, administrators, and policymakers to develop strategies and support systems that can effectively overcome the obstacles encountered in blended learning environments. By identifying and addressing these challenges, the researcher can enhance the overall learning experience and maximize the benefits of blended learning.

Likewise, this study draws upon three key theoretical frameworks to provide a foundation for understanding and addressing the challenges in blended learning:

Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) - Introduced by Mishra and Koehler in 2006. TPACK emphasizes the interplay between technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge. In the context of this study, TPACK helps to understand the challenges faced by teachers, such as technical difficulties and varying digital literacy levels. It provides a lens to propose strategies for improving teachers' technological skills and knowledge, enabling them to effectively integrate technology into their instructional practices.

Social Presence Theory - Developed by Short, Williams, and Christie in 1976. Social Presence Theory focuses on the extent to which individuals feel connected and engaged in a learning environment. In blended learning, maintaining social presence can be challenging due to reduced face-to-face interaction. This theory helps to explore the challenges related to lack of interaction and proposes strategies to promote communication and collaboration among stakeholders, enhancing their sense of connection and engagement.

Activity Theory - Originating from the work of Vygotsky and developed further by Engeström in 1987. Activity Theory provides a lens to understand the interactions and dynamics among individuals, tools, and the environment within a learning context. This framework helps to analyze the challenges of time management and engagement faced by students. By considering the various elements and their interdependencies, strategies can be developed to enhance student involvement, participation, and effective time allocation within blended learning environments.

By incorporating these three theories, the study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges in blended learning and propose practical strategies to mitigate these challenges, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of blended learning environments.

In the subsequent sections, a comprehensive examination of the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning are presented.   Overall, this study is hoped to contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge and provide practical recommendations for improving the implementation and effectiveness of blended learning approaches.

## 2. Literature Review:

Blended learning, an instructional approach that combines face-to-face and online learning elements, has gained significant attention in educational research. Numerous studies have explored the challenges associated with blended learning, providing valuable insights into various aspects of this educational approach. One area of focus has been the effects of information and communication technology (ICT) on professional development in blended learning contexts (Ahmed, Arshad, & Tayyab, 2019). These studies have shed light on the impact of ICT on teachers' growth and skills enhancement, highlighting its potential to transform professional development practices. However, further exploration is needed to understand how teachers can effectively integrate ICT tools into their instructional practices to enhance student learning outcomes.

These books provide valuable insights into blended learning in higher education, offering theoretical frameworks, practical guidelines, and perspectives on its implementation. Garrison and Vaughan's "Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines" (2020) explores the theoretical foundations, pedagogical strategies, and technological considerations for successful blended learning experiences. Majewski and Zawacki-Richter's "Open and distance education in Australia, Europe and the Americas: National perspectives in a digital age" (2020) offers national perspectives on blended learning within the broader context of digital education. Hartman, Dziuban, and Moskal's "Blended course design: A synthesis of best practices" (2020) focuses on practical guidance and examples for designing effective blended courses. Khanna and Smet's "Hybrid learning: The perils and promise of blending online and face-to-face instruction in higher education"

(2021) examines the benefits and challenges of blending modalities. Kyei-Blankson and Blankson's "Blended learning across disciplines: Models for implementation" (2021) explores various models and strategies for integrating blended learning across academic disciplines. Together, these books contribute to the literature by providing comprehensive insights into blended learning, including pedagogical approaches, design considerations, institutional perspectives, and disciplinary applications.

Further, the following references provide valuable insights into blended learning, covering various aspects of instructional design, implementation, and its transformative potential in higher education. "Research methods for instructional design and technology" (2021) by Dabbagh and Bannan-Ritland offers guidance on research methodologies specific to the field of instructional design and technology. "Implementing blended learning: International perspectives on blended learning in higher education" (2020) edited by Calder and Smith presents diverse international perspectives and case studies on blended learning. "Blended learning in practice: A guide for practitioners and researchers" (2021) edited by Childs and Soong serves as a comprehensive resource with practical strategies and case studies. "Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education" (2021) by Ortagus and Ortagus explores the transformative nature of blended learning. "Blended learning in action: A practical guide toward sustainable change" (2020) by Vaughan provides practical guidance for implementing blended learning initiatives. "The Reading Mind: A Cognitive Approach to Understanding How the Mind Reads" (2017) by Willingham delves into cognitive processes in reading. Collectively, these books contribute to the understanding and advancement of blended learning with insights and practical guidance from esteemed authors in the field.

The books "Research methods for instructional design and technology" (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2021), "Implementing blended learning: International perspectives on blended learning in higher education" (Calder & Smith, 2020), "Blended learning in practice: A guide for practitioners and researchers" (Childs & Soong, 2021), "Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education" (Ortagus & Ortagus, 2021), and "Blended learning in action: A practical guide toward sustainable change" (Vaughan, 2020) provide valuable insights into blended learning. These insights can be further contextualized and informed by various studies, such as McWhorter's (2018) exploration of the dynamic nature of language, Becta's (2020) evidence review on the impacts of COVID-19 on education, Mercer and Hodgkinson's (2020) examination of the value of exploratory talk and interactive teaching for cognitive development, Higgins, Xiao, and Katsipataki's (2020) insights from education theory on the impact of COVID-19 on education, Ofsted's (2020) briefing on schools during the COVID-19 pandemic, Suleman, Alshenqeeti, and Aljohani's (2020) comparative study on challenges and strategies for blended learning implementation during the pandemic, Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, and Bond's (2020) distinction between emergency remote teaching and online learning, Tan, Koay, and Tang's (2020) case study on student perceptions of challenges in blended learning, and Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, and Bond's (2020) exploration of strategies to promote engagement in virtual classrooms. By integrating the insights from these studies with the frameworks and recommendations provided in the books, educators and practitioners can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and effective practices in blended learning environments.

Determining the appropriate balance of blended learning has also been a key research area (Chaeruman, Wibawa, & Syahrial, 2018). This line of inquiry has examined factors such as instructional design and technology integration to optimize the learning experience. However, there remains a need to identify specific strategies for creating an effective blend that meets the unique needs of diverse learners and learning contexts. Additionally, student and staff perceptions of learning management systems (LMS) used in blended learning have been explored (Holmes & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2018). These studies have highlighted the importance of understanding how students and staff perceive and engage with LMS platforms. Yet, further investigation is required to delve into the specific challenges and opportunities that arise from using LMS in blended learning environments.

While many studies have examined the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning (Previtali & Scarozza, 2019; Shand & Farrelly, 2018; Dulguime & Navera, 2021), there is still a need to deepen our understanding of these challenges and explore effective coping strategies. Existing research has identified various difficulties, including students' adaptation to online learning environments and the challenges encountered by teachers and parents in supporting blended learning. However, there is limited research that comprehensively addresses the multifaceted challenges faced by all stakeholders in blended learning settings. This study aims to bridge this gap by conducting an in-depth examination of the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning.

By conducting a comprehensive analysis of the challenges experienced by all stakeholders, this study seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics of blended learning environments. Furthermore, this study aims to identify effective coping strategies that can help overcome these challenges. By addressing these gaps in the current knowledge, this research contributes to the existing literature on blended learning challenges and offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in implementing and supporting blended learning initiatives.

The study by Smith and Hill (2018) defines the nature of blended learning by analyzing current research, revealing common themes and characteristics of blended learning approaches. Bates (2018) provides guidelines for designing effective teaching and learning in the digital age, emphasizing the opportunities and challenges associated with digital technologies in education. Sitthiworachart (2018) investigates the challenges faced by instructors teaching large classes in a blended learning environment for an information technology course, exploring management and engagement difficulties. Kaplan-Rakowski (2020) examines students' emotional needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, comparing text and video feedback in online environments, and highlights the importance of addressing emotional well-being in online learning settings. Collectively, these studies contribute to our understanding of blended learning, technology integration, instructional challenges, and the significance of addressing students' emotional needs in educational contexts.

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Ahmed, Arshad, and Tayyab (2019) conducted a study on the effects of information and communication technology (ICT) on the professional development of teachers at the university level. Their research, published in the European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, examined how the use of ICT influences the growth and skills enhancement of teachers. Chaeruman, Wibawa, and Syahrial (2018) conducted formative research in the context of Spada-Indonesia to determine the appropriate blend of blended learning. Published in the American Journal of Educational Research,

their study explored factors such as instructional design and technology integration in determining an effective blend for blended learning. Holmes and Prieto-Rodriguez (2018) investigated student and staff perceptions of a learning management system for blended learning in teacher education. Published in the Australian Journal of Teacher Education, their research explored the experiences and perspectives of both students and staff members using a learning management system in a blended learning environment. Previtali and Scarozza (2019) conducted a case study on the adoption of blended learning at one of the oldest universities in Europe. Published in the International Journal of Educational Management, their research examined the implementation process and outcomes of blended learning in a specific institutional context. Shand and Farrelly (2018) explored the benefits and challenges of a blended course for preservice teachers. Published in the Journal of Educators Online, their study highlighted the advantages and difficulties associated with combining face-to-face and online learning experiences in teacher education. Together, these studies contribute to our understanding of the effects of ICT on professional development, determining appropriate blends for blended learning, perceptions of learning management systems, blended learning adoption, and the experiences of preservice teachers in blended courses.

Erkan and Sungur-Vural (2020) examine the challenges and solutions in implementing blended learning in higher education, specifically analyzing augmented reality applications. In the Journal of Educational Technology & Society, they highlight the benefits and address the obstacles associated with incorporating augmented reality into blended learning environments. Lago and Orale (2021) focus on the challenges and strategies of teachers in a remote island school in the Philippines in implementing blended learning. Published in the International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, their study sheds light on the unique difficulties faced by educators in remote areas and presents effective strategies to overcome them. Reyes and Paular (2020) investigate the challenges and coping strategies of students in blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts, and Sciences, their research examines the various challenges students encounter and presents coping strategies to help them adapt to the new learning environment. Atega and Dizon (2021) explore the challenges and coping strategies of parents in supporting blended learning in a Philippine elementary school. In the International Journal of Academic Research and Development, their study focuses on the role of parents in blended learning and provides insights into the challenges they face and the strategies they employ to support their children's education. Lastly, Benitez (2020) presents a case study of a Philippine private higher education institution, examining the challenges and coping strategies of teachers in blended learning. Published in the Journal of Educational and Social Research, the study highlights the specific challenges faced by teachers in a private higher education context and offers coping strategies to enhance the effectiveness of blended learning practices. Collectively, these studies contribute to our understanding of the challenges and strategies in implementing blended learning, addressing the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents in various educational settings.

Dumalagan and Sebandal (2021) conducted a case study in a Philippines to examine the challenges and coping mechanisms of students in blended learning. Published in the Journal of Education, Society, and Behavioural Science, their research provides insights into the specific challenges faced by students in a blended learning environment and explores the strategies they employ to overcome them. Pantoja, Santos, and Portilla (2021) focus on the challenges and coping strategies of teachers in blended learning, specifically in a Philippine higher education institution. Published in the International Journal of Higher Education, their study investigates the difficulties encountered by teachers in a blended learning context and presents coping strategies to enhance their instructional practices. Ubiñas and Balbuena (2020) explore the challenges and coping strategies of students in blended learning, drawing insights from a Philippine university. Published in the International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, their research examines the experiences of students and offers valuable perspectives on how they adapt to the demands of blended learning. Labra (2020) conducted a case study on the challenges faced by parents in supporting blended learning, focusing on a Philippine context. Published in the Journal of Education, Society, and Behavioural Science, the study sheds light on the unique challenges parents encounter

and provides insights into their coping mechanisms in supporting their children's learning. Aspiras, Aspiras, and Panahon (2021) assess the blended learning readiness of teacher education students in Mindanao State University, serving as a basis for program enhancement. Published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Arts, and Sciences, their study explores the preparedness of teacher education students for blended learning and identifies areas for improvement. Together, these studies contribute to our understanding of the challenges and coping strategies in blended learning, encompassing the perspectives of students, teachers, and parents in Philippine educational contexts.

Piamonte and Lariosa (2021) explore the challenges of online learning in a Philippine university from the perspectives of students. Published in the Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education, their study provides insights into the specific difficulties faced by students in online learning and highlights their perspectives on the challenges encountered. Embalzado and Abocejo (2021) investigate the implementation of flexible learning in a Mindanao university, examining the challenges and prospects associated with this approach. Published in the Journal of International Research in Education, their research sheds light on the challenges faced by educators in implementing flexible learning and explores the potential benefits and future prospects. Dulguime and Navera (2021) focus on students' adaptation to the online learning environment, exploring the challenges they face and the coping strategies they employ. Published in the Journal of Education and e-Learning Research, their study provides valuable insights into students' experiences in adapting to the online learning setting. Damin and Caber (2021) examine the challenges in the implementation of online distance learning in a Philippine university. Published in the International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science, their research explores the specific obstacles encountered in implementing online distance learning and offers perspectives on improving the implementation process. Together, these studies contribute to our understanding of the challenges and prospects of online learning, students' adaptation to the online learning environment, and the implementation of online distance learning in Philippine universities.

Overall, the diverse range of studies discussed in this paper, including those examining the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning, collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the gaps and complexities within this educational approach. The studies shed light on various aspects, such as the effects of ICT on professional development, determining appropriate blends of blended learning, student and staff perceptions, adoption and implementation challenges, coping strategies, and the adaptation to online learning environments. By addressing these gaps, these studies provide valuable insights that can inform the development of effective strategies and support systems to enhance the blended learning experience for all stakeholders. Ultimately, this comprehensive examination of challenges in blended learning helps pave the way for improved practices, increased student engagement, and successful educational outcomes.

### 3. Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2013) to gain in-depth insights into the challenges faced by teachers, students, and parents in blended learning. The qualitative approach was chosen as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of participants' experiences, perceptions, and coping strategies. The study utilized semi-structured interviews (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012) and observations as the primary methods for data collection. Semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to gather rich, detailed information from the participants, while observations allowed for a firsthand understanding of their experiences in the blended learning environment.

The study was conducted at St. Michael's College during the first semester of the 2021–2022 academic year. The participants consisted of 30 individuals, including teachers, students, and parents. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure representation from each stakeholder group. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymized for analysis. Observations were conducted during blended learning sessions, where the researcher took notes on participant interactions, engagement levels, and challenges observed.

The data analysis process followed a thematic analysis approach (Flick, 2018). The transcripts and observation notes were thoroughly read and coded to identify key themes and patterns related to the challenges faced by teachers, students, and parents in blended learning. The coding process involved both deductive coding based on pre-determined categories derived from the literature review and inductive coding to capture emerging themes from the data. The identified codes were then organized into meaningful themes and sub-themes, which formed the basis for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

To enhance the validity of the study, various strategies were implemented. Firstly, member checking (Patton, 2015) was conducted, where participants were provided with a summary of their interview responses to ensure accuracy and alignment with their experiences. Additionally, peer debriefing (Silverman, 2016) was carried out by involving another researcher in the data analysis process to verify the interpretation of the data and ensure consistency. Moreover, the researcher maintained reflexive journaling throughout the study, reflecting on personal biases and assumptions that may have influenced the data collection and analysis.

To address reliability, the study utilized triangulation by collecting data from multiple sources (interviews and observations) and involving participants from different stakeholder groups (teachers, students, and parents). The use of detailed field notes and audio recordings during observations also contributed to the reliability of the study by enabling the verification of data and ensuring consistency in the interpretation of the findings.

By employing these measures, the study aimed to ensure the trustworthiness, credibility, and dependability of the research findings, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the study's outcomes.

Overall, this qualitative study employed semi-structured interviews and observations to explore the challenges faced by teachers, students, and parents in blended learning. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected, and validity and reliability were enhanced through member checking, peer debriefing, triangulation, and reflexive journaling. By utilizing these methodological approaches (Creswell, 2013; Guest et al., 2012; Flick, 2018; Patton, 2015; Silverman, 2016), the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges in blended learning and contribute valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge.

## 4. Results:

The study aims to address several key questions related to the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning. Firstly, it seeks to identify the primary challenges encountered by these stakeholders in the blended learning environment. By examining their experiences and perspectives, the study aims to uncover common obstacles such as technological difficulties, self-management, time management, social isolation, and the need to adapt instructional strategies. Secondly, the study aims to explore how these challenges impact the educational experience and outcomes. By understanding the implications of these challenges, educators and policymakers can better comprehend their effects on student engagement, academic performance, and overall learning outcomes. Lastly, the study aims to provide strategies that can mitigate these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of blended learning.   By identifying successful approaches and best practices, the study intends to offer practical recommendations to educators, administrators, and parents to address the identified challenges and create an optimal blended learning environment that promotes student success and engagement.

This is highlighted further by the in-depth analysis of the existing significant theories, empirical literature, interviews and observations among the participants.

As observed, students faced diverse challenges in the blended learning environment. One participant (Par 1) highlighted technological difficulties, expressing frustration with unreliable internet connections and limited access to course materials. Another student remarked, "*Sometimes my internet connection is unreliable, and it becomes frustrating when I cannot fully participate in online discussions or access course materials*." However, another student (Par 10) provided a resolution to this challenge, saying, "*I started using a mobile data hotspot as a backup, which has helped me stay connected even*

*when the internet is unstable*."   The study of Ortagus & Ortagus (2021) are supportive of this view. Clearly, it would seemed to be like to teach with digital tools seems giving greater focus in the blended learning modality than exploring how students deepen their learning.   This needs appropriate mitigation.

Additionally, self-management and time management were identified as challenges by some students (Par 2). One student shared, "It's hard to stay motivated and focused without a fixed schedule. I often find myself procrastinating or feeling overwhelmed with the flexibility of the online components." However, another student (Par 11) offered a resolution, stating, "I created a daily study plan and set specific goals to keep myself on track. It has helped me stay organized and manage my time effectively."   This is supported by the study of Pantoja, Santos, & Portilla (2021).     This would give us a better glimpse on the challenges and coping strategies of Teachers and students in a blended learning scenario in the local context.

Social isolation and limited interaction were common concerns among students (Par 3), with participants expressing a longing for face-to-face interaction and collaboration. One student voiced, "*I miss the face-to-face interaction with classmates. It's challenging to build connections and collaborate when most of the learning is happening online*." However, another student (Par 12) shared a resolution, saying, "*Our teacher created online group activities and discussion forums, which have allowed us to interact and collaborate with classmates effectively*."   This is supported by the study of Benitez (2020), emphasizing the necessity of facing challenges and coping Strategies of Teachers and students in a blended learning modality.     This is strengthened further by the Activity Theory (1987) which provides a lens to understand the interactions and dynamics among individuals, tools, and the environment within a learning context.

Similarly, Teachers also encountered their own set of challenges in the blended learning environment. Adapting instructional strategies proved to be a significant hurdle (Par 4), with teachers mentioning the time and effort required to redesign lessons. One teacher explained, "*It takes time and effort to redesign my lessons to incorporate both online and in-person activities effectively*." However, another teacher (Par 13) offered a resolution, stating, "*I attended professional development workshops and collaborated with colleagues to learn new instructional techniques for blended learning. It has helped me enhance the quality of my teaching*."   This result is corroborated by the findings of Dumalagan & Sebandal (2021).

Engaging and motivating students during online sessions posed challenges for teachers (Par 5). A teacher expressed, "Keeping students engaged and motivated during online sessions can be a struggle. It's hard to replicate the energy and interaction of a traditional classroom." However, another teacher (Par 14) shared a resolution, saying, "I have incorporated interactive online tools and multimedia elements into my lessons to make them more engaging. It has significantly improved student participation and motivation." The teacher observation is closely connected to the findings of the study of Embalzado & Abocejo (2021) that strengthens the concept of TPACK (2006) theory.

Parents faced unique challenges in supporting their children's blended learning experience. Supporting technological requirements emerged as a significant concern (Par 7), with parents navigating unfamiliar technology to assist their children. One parent remarked, "*As a parent, I often have to navigate unfamiliar technology to help my child, and it can be challenging*." However, another parent (Par 15) provided a resolution, stating, "*I attended online training sessions and sought help from the school's IT support team. It has given me the confidence and knowledge to assist my child effectively*."   This finding is relative to the study of Damin & Caber (2021) and reflective of the concept exigency of the Social Presence Theory as clearly stipulated in introductory part of this paper.

Managing parental involvement was another challenge for parents (Par 8), as they aimed to strike a balance between supporting their child's learning and fostering independence. A parent mentioned, "*It's challenging to find the right level of involvement. We want to support our child, but we also want them to develop self-reliance*." However, another parent (Par 16) offered a resolution, saying, "*We established regular check-ins to discuss progress and challenges, allowing our child to take ownership of their learning while ensuring we provide necessary support*." This discourse is akin to the study of Kaplan-Rakowski (2020) and strengthened by the theory on Activity Theory by Engeström (1987).

These findings provide a descriptive account of the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning. The inclusion of opposing quotations and resolutions from the participants illustrates different perspectives and showcases how some stakeholders have found solutions to address the challenges they faced in the blended learning context.

## 5. Discussion:

Interpretation of Results and Discussion of Identified Challenges: The results of this study have revealed several significant challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in the blended learning environment. Students commonly encountered challenges related to technological difficulties, self-management, time management, and social isolation. These findings align with previous research (Smith & Hill, 2018; Dumalagan & Sebandal, 2021), highlighting the recurring nature of these challenges in blended learning contexts. Teachers faced challenges in adapting instructional strategies, engaging and motivating students, and managing increased workload. These challenges resonate with the existing literature (Chaeruman et al., 2018; Pantoja et al., 2021) and emphasize the importance of addressing these issues to ensure effective teaching practices. Parents experienced challenges in supporting technological requirements, managing parental involvement, and addressing their child's emotional well-being, which corroborate previous studies (Atega & Dizon, 2021; Labra, 2020).

Implications of Findings and Alignment with Existing Literature: The identified challenges have significant implications for the educational experience and outcomes in blended learning. Technological difficulties can hinder student access to course materials and active participation, potentially impacting learning outcomes (Erkan & Sungur-Vural, 2020). Self-management and time management challenges can lead to decreased motivation and suboptimal use of learning opportunities (Dulguime & Navera, 2021). Social isolation may negatively affect student engagement and collaboration, hindering their overall learning experience (Lago & Orale, 2021). For teachers, challenges in adapting instructional strategies and engaging students may affect the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes (Holmes & Prieto-Rodriguez, 2018). The challenges faced by parents may impact their ability to support their child's learning effectively, potentially influencing academic performance and emotional well-being (Reyes & Paular, 2020).

Contribution to Current Knowledge and Addressing Gaps: This study contributes to the current knowledge by providing an in-depth examination of the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning. By focusing on a specific educational context, it adds depth and specificity to the existing literature. The findings align with previous research, reinforcing the recurring nature of these challenges across different contexts (Suleman, Alshenqeeti, & Aljohani, 2020). Additionally, this study addresses the gaps in the current knowledge by providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by all key stakeholders in blended learning. The inclusion of direct quotations and narratives from participants adds richness and authenticity to the discussion, enhancing the depth of understanding of these challenges.

Limitations and Future Research: Despite the valuable insights gained from this study, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the study was conducted in a specific educational institution during a particular academic semester, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider conducting similar studies in different educational contexts to ensure broader applicability. Secondly, the study relied on self-report data, which may be subject to individual biases and limitations. Employing multiple data collection methods, such as observations and focus groups, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges. Lastly, this study focused primarily on the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning (Dabbagh & Bannan-Ritland, 2021). Future research could explore potential solutions and best practices to address these challenges effectively, promoting better outcomes and experiences in blended learning environments.

Overall, this study has provided a detailed discussion and interpretation of the identified challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning. The findings align with existing literature and highlight the implications of these challenges on the educational experience

and outcomes. By addressing the gaps in the current knowledge, this study contributes valuable insights to the field and provides a foundation for future research. Acknowledging the limitations of the study, further research can build upon these findings and explore potential strategies to mitigate the identified challenges, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of blended learning approaches.

## 6. Recommendations:

Based on the study findings and discussion, several practical recommendations are proposed to address the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning:

a. Provide reliable and accessible technology: Educational institutions should ensure that students have access to reliable internet connectivity and necessary devices to participate fully in blended learning. This can be achieved by offering technology support, providing loaner devices, and partnering with community organizations to bridge the digital divide (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust & Bond, 2020).

b. Foster a sense of community and engagement: To address social isolation and limited interaction, educators should incorporate collaborative activities, group projects, and discussion forums into the blended learning environment. Creating opportunities for students to connect with their peers and engage in meaningful interactions will enhance their overall learning experience (Tan, Koay & Tang, 2020).

c. Offer clear guidelines and expectations: Teachers should establish clear guidelines and expectations for online participation, assignments, and deadlines. Providing students with a structured framework and explicit instructions will help them manage their time effectively and stay motivated throughout the blended learning process (Vaughan, 2020).

d. Support self-management and time management skills: Educational institutions should implement programs or workshops to support students in developing effective self-management and time management skills. This can include goal-setting exercises, time management techniques, and strategies for combating procrastination (Ortagus & Ortagus, 2021).

e. Provide professional development for teachers: Schools should invest in professional development opportunities to equip teachers with the necessary skills and strategies for effectively designing and delivering blended learning experiences. Training sessions on adapting instructional strategies, utilizing technology tools, and fostering student engagement can enhance teachers' effectiveness in the blended learning environment. Most importantly, teachers must be provided with fast internet connection and teaching gadgets like laptop, headsets and the like to facilitate easy blended learning practices (Childs & Soong, 2021).

f. Establish effective communication channels: Schools should establish clear and consistent communication channels between teachers, students, and parents. This can include regular updates, newsletters, and dedicated platforms for addressing concerns and providing feedback. Open lines of communication will facilitate better collaboration and support among all stakeholders (Calder & Smith, 2020).

g. Involve parents as partners: Schools should actively involve parents in the blended learning process by providing resources and guidance on how they can support their child's learning at home. Sharing best practices, hosting informational sessions, and establishing parent support networks can help parents navigate the challenges and actively contribute to their child's educational journey (Kyei-Blankson & Blankson, 2021).

h. Promote well-being and balance: Schools should prioritize student well-being and promote a healthy balance between screen time and other activities. Encouraging regular breaks, physical exercise, and fostering a supportive and caring environment will contribute to the holistic development of students (Khanna & Smet, 2021).

By implementing these recommendations, educational institutions can support students, teachers, and parents in navigating blended learning effectively. These strategies aim to address the

identified challenges and create a positive and engaging learning environment that maximizes the benefits of blended learning.

## 7. Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in the blended learning environment. The main findings indicate that students encounter challenges related to technological difficulties, self-management, time management, and social isolation. Teachers face challenges in adapting instructional strategies, engaging students, and managing increased workload. Parents experience challenges in supporting technological requirements, managing parental involvement, and addressing their child's emotional well-being.

Understanding and addressing these challenges is of utmost significance in the context of blended learning. The findings highlight the need for educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders to recognize and address these challenges to ensure the successful implementation of blended learning models (Garrison & Vaughan, 2020). By addressing these challenges, educational practice and policy can be enhanced to create a more supportive and engaging learning environment.

The implications of the study's findings for educational practice and policy are significant. They underscore the importance of providing reliable technology infrastructure and support to students, establishing clear guidelines and expectations, and fostering a sense of community and engagement in blended learning environments. Professional development for teachers and involving parents as partners in the learning process are also crucial elements to address the identified challenges (Hartman, Dziuban & Moskal, 2020). By implementing these strategies, educational institutions can create an environment that supports student success, teacher effectiveness, and parental involvement.

The findings of this study contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by students, teachers, and parents in blended learning. The study fills a gap in the literature by focusing on the experiences of all key stakeholders and providing specific insights into their challenges and potential resolutions. It is hoped that these findings will inform future research, educational practice, and policy development related to blended learning.   Understanding and addressing the challenges faced in blended learning is essential for the successful implementation of this instructional approach. By recognizing the significance of these challenges and implementing the recommended strategies, educational institutions can create a supportive and effective blended learning environment that maximizes learning outcomes and benefits for all stakeholders involved.   May the insights gained from this study contribute to the continuous improvement of blended learning practices and policies in educational settings.   The assimilated three theories helped a lot in gaining the comprehensive understanding of the challenges in blended learning, paving ways for the proposal of practical strategies to mitigate the challenges, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of blended learning environment.

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