

**HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS' (HEIS) AWARENESS TOWARDS  
BLENDED LEARNING IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN: A QUALITATIVE  
STUDY**

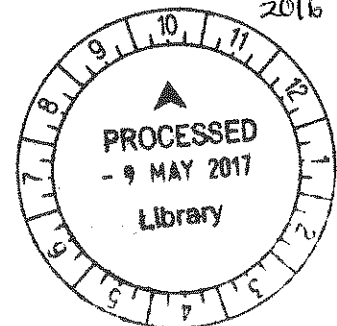
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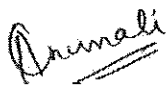
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## DECLARATION

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*Anum Ali,*

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## ABSTRACT

Although Blended Learning has already developed several years and became a successful method to improve the learning system of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The evolution of the information technology helps to improve the infrastructure of the HEIs and helps to connect with updated and new technologies around the world. Without any doubt, many educational institutions are adopting and implementing the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in their educational structure as they believe that it will add a value in their performance. Many universities are adopting blended learning but still some of the countries do not consider blended learning as an effective tool which means that blended learning has not been accepted fully by the educational institutions around the world. In the context of Pakistan, HEIs are still following the traditional way of the education system and they are not fully aware of the Blended Learning. The research gap between the researcher and the HEIs is really big

In order to explore the level of awareness as well as the perceived challenges of blended learning, the researcher chose to approach the qualitative case study to record different group interviews as an input. Then, recorded interview will help to analysis and process feedback from the participants and get effective output of blended learning.

Finally, conclusion and recommendation will be provided after findings of this study. Similarly, the study will also enrich the huge gap of the studies on Awareness of Blended Learning and provide the platform for further studies that will relate when the researchers will examine the Blended learning in Pakistan.

**Keywords:**

Blended Learning; Higher Education Institutions; Disruptive Technology.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 Chapter Overview .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Background of the Study .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.2 Problem Statement .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 Research Objectives .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 Research Questions .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.5 Significance of the Research .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1.5.1 Significance to Academe .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.5.2 Significance to Industry .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.5.3 Significance to Government .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1.6 Scope of the Research .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.7 Operational Definitions .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.7.1 Blended Learning .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.7.2 Disruptive Technology .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.7.3 Learning Management System (LMS) .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1.7.4 Blackboard .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.7.5 Student Learning Process .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.7.6 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.7.7 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>1.8 Organization of Chapters .....</b>	<b>9</b>

1.9 Chapter Conclusion .....	11
<b>Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.0 Chapter Overview .....	12
2.1 Blended Learning .....	12
2.1.1 Blended Learning Direction .....	13
2.1.2 Pakistan's Blended Ambition .....	15
2.2 Blended Learning Adoption Framework .....	16
2.2.1 Strategy .....	16
2.2.2 Structure .....	17
2.2.3 Support .....	19
2.3 Grounded Theory: Technological Accpetance Model (TAM) .....	20
2.4 Gaps in the Literature .....	24
2.5 Conceptual Framework .....	24
2.6 Propositions .....	25
2.7 Conclusion .....	26
<b>Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.0 Chapter Overview .....	27
3.1 Research Design .....	27
3.1.1 Purpose of the Study .....	27
3.1.2 Unit of Analysis .....	28
3.1.3 Single Case or Multiple Case .....	28
3.1.4 Case Profile .....	29
3.2 Research Appoarch .....	29
3.3 Data Collection Process .....	30
3.4 Interviewees .....	32
3.5 Interviewees' process .....	33
3.5.1 Proposed Interview Questions .....	34
3.6 Statistical Treatment and Analyses .....	37
3.7 Ethical Consideration .....	37
3.8 Conclusion .....	38
<b>Chapter 4: Research Finding .....</b>	<b>39</b>
4.0 Chapter Overview .....	39

4.1 Overview of Data Collection .....	39
4.2 Demographics of Interviewees .....	42
4.2.1 Profile of the Selected Organizations .....	42
4.2.2 Profile of the interviewees .....	43
4.2.3 Initial Impression of Interview .....	46
4.3 Results of Preliminary Data Analysis .....	48
4.4 Proposition Testing .....	51
4.5 Comparative Analysis .....	57
4.5.1 Comparative analysis of HEIs which implemented Blended learning with the HEIs who have not implemented BL .....	57
4.6 Key Findings and Discussion .....	60
4.6.1 Findings and Discussion on the propositions .....	60
4.6.2 Findings and Discussion on comparative analysis: .....	63
4.7 Conclusion .....	64
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>65</b>
5.0 Chapter overview .....	65
5.1 Discussion and Conclusion of Findings .....	65
5.1.1 Discussion and Conclusion of Proposition Testing .....	65
5.1.2 Discussion and Conclusion of Key Findings .....	67
5.1.3 Discussion and Conclusion Comparative Analysis .....	68
5.2 Contributions .....	69
5.2.1 Contribution to the Literature .....	69
5.2.2 Contribution to the Industry .....	70
5.3 Recommendations .....	71
5.4 Limitations of the study .....	72
5.5 Future research suggestions .....	73
5.6 Personal Reflection .....	73
5.7 Chapter Conclusion .....	74
<b>References .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: INITIAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: UH ETHICS CONFIRMATION AND NOTIFICATION .....</b>	<b>125</b>



<b>APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER.....</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: KEY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS .....</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: BRIEF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS .....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>APPENDIX G: MASTER PROPOSAL DEFENSE .....</b>	<b>209</b>
<b>APPENDIX H: TURNITIN RESULTS .....</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>APPENDIX I: MBA PROJECT LOG .....</b>	<b>213</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 1: Blended Learning Framework .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Table 2: Profile of Organizations .....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Table 3: Profile of Interviewees .....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Table 4: Initial Impression of Interview .....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Table 5: The Preliminary Analysis Result of ZU and IBA HEIs.....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Table 6: The Preliminary Analysis Result of AKU .....</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Table 7: Result of Proposition Testing .....</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Table 8: Summary of Proposition Findings (Conducted Interview transcripts). ....</i>	<i>61</i>

## LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1: Flowchart of the Study .....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Figure 2: The relative position of Blended Online Learning.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Figure 3: Theoretical framework of Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Figure 4: A theoretical extension of the Technological Acceptance Model. ....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Figure 5: Technological Acceptance Model 3.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Figure 6: Conceptual Framework .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Figure 7: Flowchart of Data Collection Process. ....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 8: Overview of Data Collection Process .....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Figure 9: The Overlapping Stages in the Analysis of Qualitative Data .....</i>	<i>41</i>

## ABBREVIATIONS

**AKU:** Aga Khan University.

**BL:** Blended Learning.

**CMS:** Course Management System.

**CWAM:** Course Website Acceptance Model.

**HEIs:** Higher Education Institutions.

**HOPs:** Head of Programs.

**IBA:** Institution of Business Administration.

**ICT:** Information and Communication Technology.

**IT:** Information Technology.

**LMS:** Learning Management System.

**R&D:** Research and Development Department.

**TAM:** Technological Acceptance Model.

**ZU:** Ziauddin University.

## **Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays a vital role and it has also provided the opportunities to educators around the world to harness and adopt these technologies to enhance the higher education industry. This research will focus on Blended Learning of education industry in Pakistan. In Pakistan, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are following the traditional learning system and majority of teachers just walk into the class, holding the yellow notebook that has been preceding by the previous teachers and following the traditional way of learning and the lecturer are guided by the readymade recipe book of scientific teaching concept (Oosman, 2014). The purpose of this study is to explore the level of awareness as well as the perceived challenges of blended learning in the Higher Education Institution (HEIs) in Pakistan and also compare the effectiveness of one university that has been just implemented blended learning with the other universities that are not following the new learning system of education. The qualitative case study will be used as the methodology in order to explore the level of awareness of blended learning. Moreover, the interview under this method of research should be conducted as a formal interview. Based on the findings, this study will add a value in the education industry of Pakistan to get aware the new learning system that should be embraced by the Higher Education Institution (HEIs) in order to help the administrators and academic of the institutions of the Pakistan.

### **1.0 Chapter Overview**

Chapter one highlights the overall insight of the research. It mainly focuses on the fundamental and statistics that is particularly related to the research topic. This chapter also includes the Problem Statement which is determined by the Researcher and will follow the Research Objectives and Research Questions that relate to the Research Problem. Moreover, this chapter includes the Significance of the Research, Scope of the study and Limitations of the study.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

From the last two eras, technologies have a dominant impact on all aspects of the individual's life and society (Gisbert and Johnson, 2015). It helped to construct the new business projects, environments, especially in the educational, media and health industry (Martin, Diaz, Sancristobal, Gil, Castro and Peire, 2011). Technology enthusiasts have a long signal to the power of technology, from printing the press, to the chalkboard and now to the laptops that all help to transform the education system (Smith and Winthrop, 2012). According to the Flavin (2012), the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is getting more popular in enhancing the teaching and learning skills in the education industry. Rubagiza, Were and Sutherland (2011) confirmed that the disruptive technology could provide the benefits for education system like time saving, flexibility in the study, saving the cost of physical accessories and the development in the student's autonomy. Nowadays many universities are taking advantages of the disruptive technologies and one of the technologies that have been commonly used in the universities is the digital technology whereby the digital technology has brought the numerous opportunities to diversify the teaching and learning style such as online collaboration, web conferencing, discussion boards and social networks (Lichy, Khvatova and Pon, 2014). Disruptive technology in the form of online learning or blended learning is also facilitated into the high-quality education and can deliver high-quality teaching and learning materials regardless of where students are living (Horn, 2014). Conversely, blended learning is also the method of resolving the educational institution's cost and quality difficulties (Lee, Yoon and Lee, 2009).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Transformation and innovation are always being a part of human experience, that comes from the world of technology and as the rapid growth of the technologies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such as personal computers replace the typewriters and now hand devices (Tablets and smartphones) are putting an end to the traditional technologies

to reconstruct the human's lives (Pineteh, 2011). These disruptive innovations are unexpectedly shredding the old markets (Flynn, 2013). Higher Education Institution (HEIs) have also invested extensively in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for learning, teaching and delivering the skills. ICT has been adopted by several universities and established a productive program that conferred to ICT and makes a valuable position in the education industry (Fu, 2013). As the frequent change of the technologies and the style or method of the education system, universities must have to adopt updated technologies to get the better result in the learning process (Pape, 2016). Conversely, there is only one university that have been implemented blended learning in Pakistan and actually, there are only a few journals slightly touched Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Blended learning in the context of Pakistan.

The purpose of this study is thus to explore the level of awareness as well as the perceived challenges of blended learning for the administrators and academic of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan which will focus on the comparative analysis of the university which has just been implemented blended learning with the universities that are not following the new trends of the technologies in the Pakistani education industry. Furthermore, this research will also aim to find out the key reasons why Blended Learning is not common in Pakistani HEIs. It's valuable to explore the level of awareness which will help the (HEIs) of Pakistan to go further and help the HEIs system to increase the performance and get the benefit form the Blended Learning.

The education system in Pakistan is at all time the weakest in the world but now it has reached the critical stage (Janjua, 2011). In 2015 the literacy rate recorded in the Pakistan is 58%, despite all the facts and lack of immediate procedures on the government of the Pakistan the main and huge factor to drive the education on the national and international level is the use of updated technologies (Sultana, 2012). Pineteh (2011) mentioned that by adopting Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the education field helps the learners in a more effective way



but on the other hand rapidly enhancement in the ICT has also become a challenge for the learners and the instructors as well. Implementation of ICT gives a new way of learning and make the learning process more flexible and time saver (Flynn, 2013). However, Toyama (2010), argued with the implementation of the ICT in the education industry, as he mentioned that ICT might be a better way to learn good quality education but for some of the courses it's not an effective and efficient way to use this technology like mathematics, statistics and mechanical.

The prime purpose of this study is to explore the level of awareness as well as the perceived challenges of Blended learning from the perspective of the administrators and academic of HEIs of Pakistan, as Pakistan is not much aware of the use of Blended learning and its main tools. Pakistan is still following the traditional way of learning. This study also highlights the use and importance of Blackboard in the universities and help to understand the value of disruptive technologies and simultaneously help to increase the literacy rate in Pakistan. However, it's important to understand the tools and techniques of the Blended learning.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

A good study should have clear and focused research objectives that should convey the explicit understanding of the study. In other words, it is mainly focused on the reasons why this study has been done (Farrugia, Bhandari, Petrisor and Farrokhyar, 2010). This study has also research objectives which are as follows:

- Exploring the level of awareness as well as perceived challenges of Blended Learning for the administrators and academics of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Karachi, Pakistan.
- Explore the HEIs needs in developing awareness of Blended Learning and overcoming the perceived challenges
- Explore the challenges for the administrators while implementing the Blended Learning in HEIs in Pakistan.

## 1.4 Research Questions

Research Question helps the research to structure the study and give a clear direction that from where the data can be collected and analyzed to achieve the research objectives. It should be aligned and inter-related with the research objectives and should be formulated after the research objectives (Farrugia et al., 2010). Following are the research question for this study:

- What are the key reasons that are restricting Pakistani's Higher Education Institutions in implementing the Blended Learning system?
- What are the HEIs needs in developing awareness of Blended Learning and overcoming the perceived challenges.
- What would be the HEI needs in developing awareness of Blended learning to implementation process, strategy, structure and support that would allow administrators?
- What will be the challenges for the administrators while implementing Blended learning in HEI in Pakistan?

## 1.5 Significance of the Research

In today's technological world, detail understanding of the technologies has become very important as for the government's enterprises and the individuals (Gluck, 2012). Technologies structure the unforeseen future and help to make it more compatible with nature (Buddin and Zamarro, 2009). Technology is not only limited to one or two fields, it helps a lot of areas, actually, technology covers the whole world like in the medical industry, hospitality industry, education industry, media, marketing and so on (Gisbert and Johnson, 2015). Several scholars have been done their research in this area to determine the influence of technology in the student learning process such as (Boles, 2011; Kilfoye, 2013; Marshall and Taylor, 2013; Sasikumar, 2015). This research would add a value to three aspects which are as follows