

## **Exploring Students' Engagement in Blended Learning: Insights from ELT Classroom at an Islamic University**

**Muhammad Azwar Paramma**

*Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris Samarinda, Indonesia*

*azwarparamma@gmail.com*

**Pradicta Nurhuda**

*Badan Riset dan Inovasi Nasional, Indonesia*

*prad009@brin.go.id*

**Indrawati Amrullah Tajrin**

*Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia*

*tajrindra@gmail.com*

### **Abstract:**

This study explores students' engagement in a blended learning environment within an English Language Teaching (ELT) course at the English Language Education Study Program, Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris State Islamic University of Samarinda, Indonesia. Utilizing a descriptive survey design, the research combined quantitative data from Learning Management System (LMS) analytics with qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire responses to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' engagement patterns and perceptions. The findings revealed that while students generally demonstrated high levels of engagement, particularly in collaborative and discussion-based tasks, several challenges were also identified, including technical barriers, difficulties with digital literacy, and a desire for more synchronous interaction. Students expressed positive perceptions of the flexibility and accessibility offered by blended

learning, although they also recommended improvements in LMS navigation and task instructions. Cultural factors, such as communal learning values, appeared to influence students' engagement behaviours. The study highlights the importance of designing interactive, supportive, and culturally responsive blended learning environments to optimize student engagement and learning outcomes in higher education.

**Keywords:** blended learning, student engagement, learning management system, English language teaching, Islamic university

## A. Introduction

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the widespread adoption of Learning Management Systems (LMS) have significantly reshaped traditional approaches to English language instruction<sup>1</sup>. In response to the growing demand for more flexible and accessible education, blended learning models, integrating face-to-face classroom practices with online instruction, have become increasingly prevalent across higher education institutions worldwide<sup>2</sup>. This approach offers the advantages of personalized interaction alongside the autonomy and resource-rich environment of online learning. However, maintaining meaningful student engagement across both physical and virtual platforms remains a persistent challenge<sup>3</sup>. Factors such as digital literacy, course design quality, and student motivation greatly influence the effectiveness of blended learning environments.

In Indonesia, the adoption of blended learning in higher education has been significantly influenced by national education policies and the pressing need for digital transformation, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Education and Culture has actively promoted the integration of online and face-to-face learning modalities to enhance educational quality and

---

<sup>1</sup> Siyabonga Mhlongo et al., "Challenges, Opportunities, and Prospects of Adopting and Using Smart Digital Technologies in Learning Environments: An Iterative Review," *Heliyon* 9, no. 6 (June 2023): e16348, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16348>.

<sup>2</sup> Simone Nomie Sato et al., "Navigating the New Normal: Adapting Online and Distance Learning in the Post-Pandemic Era," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 1 (December 24, 2023): 19, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14010019>.

<sup>3</sup> Panos Photopoulos et al., "Remote and In-Person Learning: Utility Versus Social Experience," *SN Computer Science* 4, no. 2 (December 21, 2022): 116, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-022-01539-6>.

accessibility. This initiative is supported by Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 3 of 2020, which grants universities the autonomy to design and implement their own blended learning strategies to meet national higher education standards<sup>4</sup>. The pandemic further accelerated this shift, with Circular Letter No. 4 of 2020 urging higher education institutions to adopt online learning methods to ensure the continuity of education during emergency situations<sup>5</sup>. Consequently, many universities have embraced blended learning models, combining traditional classroom instruction with online platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) to facilitate effective teaching and learning processes. This policy-driven approach aims to foster a more flexible, inclusive, and resilient higher education system in Indonesia<sup>6</sup>.

Student engagement plays a pivotal role in determining the effectiveness of blended learning environments. Engagement encompasses behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions that influence how students interact with course content, instructors, peers, and technology<sup>7</sup>. In blended learning, maintaining high levels of engagement is essential because students must navigate both face-to-face and online components, often requiring greater autonomy and self-regulation<sup>8</sup>. Research suggests that students who are more engaged tend to achieve higher academic outcomes, demonstrate better critical

---

<sup>4</sup> Putri Gayatri et al., “Sustainable EFL Blended Education in Indonesia: Practical Recommendations,” *Sustainability* 15, no. 3 (January 25, 2023): 2254, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15032254>.

<sup>5</sup> Afandi Sitamala and Danial Danial, “Boosting International Humanitarian Law Active Class Participation; Lesson Learned from Blended Learning Policy (Kemendikbud Circular No.4 2020),” *Nurani Hukum* 5, no. 1 (July 12, 2022): 84, <https://doi.org/10.51825/nhk.v5i1.15924>.

<sup>6</sup> Shafa Shafa et al., “Exploring Digital Learning Support to Foster EFL Student Interests in Indonesian Higher Education,” *Indonesian TESOL Journal* 5, no. 2 (November 15, 2023): 235–54, <https://doi.org/10.24256/itj.v5i2.4198>.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer A Fredricks, Phyllis C Blumenfeld, and Alison H Paris, “School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence,” *Review of Educational Research* 74, no. 1 (March 1, 2004): 59–109, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>.

<sup>8</sup> Lisa R. Halverson and Charles R. Graham, “Learner Engagement in Blended Learning Environments: A Conceptual Framework,” *Online Learning* 23, no. 2 (June 1, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v23i2.1481>.

thinking skills, and exhibit increased satisfaction with their learning experiences<sup>9</sup>. However, ensuring sustained engagement can be challenging, particularly when students face barriers such as limited technological proficiency, lack of motivation, or feelings of isolation in online settings<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence engagement is crucial for designing effective blended learning environments that not only support academic achievement but also foster meaningful participation and learner autonomy.

While the benefits of blended learning and the importance of student engagement are widely acknowledged, there remains a significant research gap regarding how engagement specifically unfolds within English Language Teaching (ELT) courses at Islamic universities, particularly in the Indonesian context. Most existing studies on blended learning have focused on general education or STEM fields, with limited attention to language learning environments that combine with technological dimensions<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, although various investigations have explored students' perceptions of blended learning, fewer studies have examined actual patterns of engagement through LMS analytics alongside students' self-reported experiences<sup>12</sup>. In Indonesian higher education, especially within Islamic institutions, cultural factors such as communal learning values and religious practices may uniquely influence how students engage with blended learning platforms. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by combining survey and LMS activity data to provide a richer, more nuanced understanding of student engagement in a blended ELT classroom within an Islamic university setting.

---

<sup>9</sup> Halverson and Graham.

<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Basri and Muhammad Azwar Paramma, "EFL Students' Perspective on the Usefulness of ICT Based Learning in Indonesian Higher Education," *ELT Worldwide: Journal of English Language Teaching* 6, no. 2 (October 31, 2019): 105, <https://doi.org/10.26858/eltww.v6i2.10515>.

<sup>11</sup> Anita Firdaus and Yuli Astutik, "Implementation of Blended Learning in Teaching English at Senior High School in Sidoarjo," *New Language Dimensions* 2, no. 2 (December 21, 2021): 70–78, <https://doi.org/10.26740/nld.v2n2.p70-78>; Wan-Jeng Chang, "Blended Learning in the Context of EFL: Curriculum Design and Implementation," *Indonesian Journal of English Language Studies (IJELS)* 9, no. 1 (May 17, 2023): 73–85, <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijels.v9i1.5193>.

<sup>12</sup> Mohammed Saqr and Sonsoles López-Pernas, "The Longitudinal Trajectories of Online Engagement over a Full Program," *Computers & Education* 175 (December 2021): 104325, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104325>.

## B. Literature Review

### 1. Blended Learning in Higher Education

Blended learning has emerged as a transformative approach in higher education, offering a flexible combination of face-to-face instruction and online learning components. According to Graham<sup>13</sup>, blended learning is characterized by the thoughtful integration of traditional classroom methods with online educational technologies, allowing for greater personalization and flexibility in students' learning experiences. Several models of blended learning have been identified, including the rotation model, flex model, and enriched virtual model<sup>14</sup>.

In the rotation model, students alternate between online learning and traditional classroom activities; in the flex model, online instruction is the backbone, supplemented by face-to-face support as needed; and in the enriched virtual model, students complete most coursework online with occasional in-person sessions.

In the Indonesian context, the government has actively encouraged the implementation of blended learning through national policies, notably Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020, which emphasizes independent and flexible learning under the “Merdeka Belajar” initiative. Within Islamic universities, the adoption of blended learning has been increasingly visible, aligning technological innovation with the institutions' traditional educational values. Although blended learning offers significant benefits—such as accommodating diverse learning styles, promoting learner autonomy, and improving access to educational resources—it also presents challenges. These include disparities in technological access, the need for both students and teachers to develop digital literacy skills, and the requirement for institutions to invest in infrastructure and professional training. Thus, while blended learning presents exciting opportunities for higher education, its successful implementation demands careful planning and contextual sensitivity.

---

<sup>13</sup> Charles R. Graham, “Emerging Practice and Research in Blended Learning,” in *Handbook of Distance Education*, 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2013), 333–50, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203803738.ch21>.

<sup>14</sup> Heather Staker and Michael B. Horn, “Classifying K-12 Blended Learning,” *Innosight Institute* (San Mateo: Innosight Institute, May 2012).

## 2. Student Engagement in Blended Learning Environments

Student engagement, encompassing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, plays a critical role in the success of blended learning environments. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris<sup>15</sup> conceptualize engagement as a multidimensional construct: behavioral engagement refers to participation in academic and social activities; emotional engagement includes students' affective reactions such as interest, boredom, or anxiety; and cognitive engagement reflects the investment in learning and self-regulation strategies.

In blended learning settings, maintaining high levels of engagement is especially crucial, as students must navigate both online and face-to-face components independently. Martin and Bolliger<sup>16</sup> emphasize that factors such as instructor presence, peer interaction, and timely feedback significantly influence student engagement in blended courses. Furthermore, Dixson<sup>17</sup> found that students who actively engage with course materials, peers, and instructors tend to report higher satisfaction and better academic performance. However, fostering engagement in blended environments presents unique challenges.

Bond et al.<sup>18</sup> highlight issues such as feelings of isolation, reduced motivation, and difficulties in sustaining attention during online activities. These challenges are particularly relevant in contexts where students may not have strong self-regulation skills or where institutional support systems are still developing. Therefore, understanding how engagement operates in blended learning, particularly within specific educational and cultural

---

<sup>15</sup> Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence."

<sup>16</sup> Florence Martin and Doris U Bolliger, "Engagement Matters: Student Perceptions on the Importance of Engagement Strategies in the Online Learning Environment," *Online Learning* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092>.

<sup>17</sup> Marcia D Dixson, "Measuring Student Engagement in the Online Course: The Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE)," *Online Learning* 19, no. 4 (July 30, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v19i4.561>.

<sup>18</sup> Melissa Bond et al., "Emergency Remote Teaching in Higher Education: Mapping the First Global Online Semester," *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 18, no. 1 (December 30, 2021): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00282-x>.

settings like Islamic universities, is essential for designing effective and supportive learning environments.

### 3. Learning Management System Use in ELT Classrooms

The integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and Learning Management Systems (LMS) has increasingly shaped the landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT) in higher education. ICT tools such as videos, interactive quizzes, online discussion forums, and digital storytelling have been shown to enhance students' motivation and improve their language skills across listening, speaking, reading, and writing domains<sup>19</sup>.

In particular, the use of LMS platforms like Moodle, Google Classroom, and Edmodo provides structured environments where students can access course materials, submit assignments, collaborate with peers, and receive feedback from instructors<sup>20</sup>. These platforms not only support content delivery but also foster interaction and engagement by offering features such as discussion boards, real-time quizzes, and multimedia integration.

In the context of ELT, LMS tools are particularly valuable for supporting autonomous language practice outside the classroom, allowing learners to revisit instructional materials, practice exercises, and engage in reflective activities. However, the effectiveness of ICT and LMS integration largely depends on students' digital literacy skills and teachers' ability to design meaningful, interactive learning experiences<sup>21</sup>.

Moreover, challenges such as inconsistent internet access, lack of training, and limited institutional support can hinder the full potential of LMS in language classrooms, especially in regions where technological

---

<sup>19</sup> Anna Sun and Xiufang Chen, "Online Education and Its Effective Practice: A Research Review," *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research* 15 (2016): 157–90, <https://doi.org/10.28945/3502>.

<sup>20</sup> Waheeb S. Albiladi and Khlood K. Alshareef, "Blended Learning in English Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Current Literature," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 10, no. 2 (March 1, 2019): 232, <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1002.03>.

<sup>21</sup> Vaughn Malcolm Bradley, "Learning Management System (LMS) Use with Online Instruction," *International Journal of Technology in Education* 4, no. 1 (December 20, 2020): 68–92, <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijte.36>.

infrastructure is still developing. Therefore, while ICT and LMS offer promising avenues for enhancing ELT practices, their successful implementation requires careful attention to pedagogical design and contextual realities.

### C. Research Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey design to explore students' engagement in a blended learning environment within an English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom at an Islamic university in Indonesia. A descriptive approach was considered appropriate as it allows for an in-depth investigation of participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviors without manipulating the learning environment<sup>22</sup>. The study aimed to capture both subjective and objective aspects of engagement by combining students' self-reported perceptions through open-ended questionnaires with behavioral data derived from Learning Management System (LMS) analytics. By integrating these two types of data, the research provides a comprehensive overview of how students interact within a blended learning setting, particularly in the culturally specific context of an Islamic higher education institution.

This study was conducted at the English Language Education Study Program, Sultan Aji Muhammad Idris State Islamic University of Samarinda, Indonesia, within an English Language Teaching (ELT) course that implemented a blended learning model. A total of 55 undergraduate students from two English Language Teaching (ELT) classes participated in the study. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their active involvement in the LMS-supported course activities. All participants were English education majors with relatively similar academic backgrounds. Participation was voluntary, and ethical considerations such as confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained. Data were collected from students' LMS activity records and their responses to open-ended questionnaires.

The LMS course structure was carefully designed to encourage continuous student engagement. Tasks were organized around key topics related to communication, each requiring different types of student responses such as essays, opinions, questions, and discussions. The task list is presented in the table below:

---

<sup>22</sup> John Ward Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, Ebook, Global Edition, Pearson Education, Limited, 2021.*



Table: 1 Task provided in the Learning Management System

No	Item
1	Task 1: Short Essay
2	Task 2: Short Essay
3	Task 3: Short Essay
4	Task 4: Short Essay
5	Mid Task
6	Task 5: Opinion
7	Task 6: Question
8	Task 7: Discussion
9	Task 8: Discussion
10	Final Assignment

These structured tasks were aimed at fostering cognitive engagement, collaboration, and reflective thinking throughout the semester. The focus on blended learning environments aligns with the growing importance of technology-enhanced language learning, where understanding student engagement patterns is crucial for the successful implementation of digital pedagogies<sup>23</sup>.

#### **D. Findings**

Data for this study were collected through two primary sources: Learning Management System (LMS) analytics and open-ended questionnaire responses. LMS data provided objective records of students' engagement, including task submission rates, timeliness, and patterns of participation across various activities integrated into the blended English Language Teaching (ELT) course. The open-ended questionnaire captured students' subjective perceptions, allowing deeper exploration of their experiences, challenges, and suggestions related to the blended learning environment.

##### **1. Students' Engagement Patterns in the LMS**

Completion of the tasks in the Learning Management System brings views of the students' willingness to use Blended Learning or Learning Management System in their learning experience. Blended Learning usage

---

<sup>23</sup> D R Garrison and N D Vaughan, *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines*, Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series (Wiley, 2011).

in Interpersonal Communication Learning Management System can be shown in Table 2.

Table: 2 Students' Submission in the Learning Management System

No	Item	Submission Status						Total
		Submit	%	Late Submit	%	Unsubmit	%	
1	Task 1: Short Essay	51	91.1%	1	1.8%	4	7.1%	56
2	Task 2: Short Essay	46	82.1%	3	5.4%	7	12.5%	56
3	Task 3: Short Essay	40	71.4%	4	7.1%	12	21.4%	56
4	Task 4: Short Essay	46	82.1%	5	8.9%	5	8.9%	56
5	Mid Task: Group Work	18	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18
6	Task 5: Opinion	45	80.4%	3	5.4%	8	14.3%	56
7	Task 6: Question	45	80.4%	3	5.4%	8	14.3%	56
8	Task 7: Discussion	45	80.4%	3	5.4%	8	14.3%	56
9	Task 8: Discussion	45	80.4%	3	5.4%	8	14.3%	56
10	Final Task: Reflection	46	82.1%	2	3.6%	8	14.3%	56

The result in the table depicts the overall frequency of students' submission activity in completing the tasks, which infers that participants of this study are quite active in using the Learning Management System of Interpersonal Communication course.

Based on the overall task provided in the Learning Management System, a little number of students still do not follow the learning process and ignoring the given task. From nine individual tasks, including the final task and eight weekly tasks, none of the tasks assigned was collected entirely. In contrast to individual tasks, Mid Semester Task working in-group provided positive data that showed the overall group handed out in class could run wholly and smoothly collected the tasks.

Further, when compared to other tasks provided in the Learning Management System, Task 1: Short Essay has the highest submission completion with 91.1%. Data table for Task 1 shows that out of fifty-five students, fifty of them could complete tasks on time while five submitted late assignments, and two people did not submit assignments. Meanwhile, Task 3: Short Essay occupies the lowest submission completion among the other task with 71.4%. Based on the table, Task 3 shows that out of fifty-five students, only forty of them submitted their task on time while four submitted late assignments, and twelve people did not submit their assignments.

## 2. Students' Perceptions of ICT and Blended Learning

While the LMS analytics provided valuable insights into students' behavioral engagement patterns, it was equally important to explore students' personal experiences and perceptions regarding the use of ICT in the blended learning environment. The following section presents qualitative findings drawn from open-ended questionnaire responses.

Students' perceptions of blended learning and the use of ICT tools within the ELT classroom were gathered through open-ended questionnaire responses. The analysis of the qualitative data revealed a range of experiences, highlighting both the opportunities and challenges associated with the blended learning model.

### a. Positive Perceptions of Blended Learning and LMS Use

Many students expressed positive perceptions of the blended learning approach and the use of the Learning Management System (LMS) to support their English language learning. Flexibility emerged as a major advantage, with students appreciating the ability to access materials anytime and anywhere, which allowed them to manage their learning more independently. Several students also noted that the LMS provided a clear structure for their coursework, helping them stay organized and better track their progress throughout the semester.

In their open-ended responses, students highlighted that blended learning made it easier for them to review lessons at their own pace, particularly when they missed face-to-face sessions. For example, one student commented,

*"It is easier for me to access learning materials anytime and anywhere through LMS,"* (Student 12)

while another stated,

*"Blended learning helped me review lessons repeatedly, especially when I missed class."* (Student 27)

These positive experiences reflect students' recognition of the LMS as not merely a content delivery tool, but as a meaningful support system for their academic engagement and language development.

Overall, the integration of blended learning and LMS technology contributed to greater learner autonomy, increased flexibility, and enhanced

accessibility, which are essential factors for supporting student engagement in modern language education environments.

#### **b. Challenges in Using LMS and ICT**

Despite the overall positive perceptions of blended learning, several students reported challenges related to the use of the LMS and ICT tools. Technical issues, particularly unstable internet connectivity, were frequently mentioned as barriers that hindered timely access to learning materials and submission of assignments. Some students also experienced initial difficulties navigating the LMS, citing a lack of familiarity with the platform and confusion regarding assignment instructions.

For instance, one student noted,

*"Sometimes the LMS was hard to access because of bad internet connection,"* (Student 8)

while another commented,

*"I found it difficult to submit assignments correctly at the beginning."* (Student 34)

These responses highlight that technical readiness and digital literacy are critical factors influencing the success of blended learning environments.

Furthermore, the lack of immediate technical support sometimes exacerbated students' frustrations, affecting their motivation and consistency in completing online tasks. These findings suggest that while LMS platforms can enhance flexibility, they must be accompanied by sufficient training and reliable technical infrastructure to fully support student engagement.

#### **c. Engagement and Motivation Factors**

The analysis also revealed that students' engagement and motivation were strongly influenced by the design and interactivity of the blended learning tasks. Students reported feeling more motivated and involved when activities encouraged active participation, such as discussion forums and group assignments. These interactive elements provided opportunities for collaboration, critical thinking, and peer learning, which many students found enriching compared to individual, text-based tasks.

One student remarked,

*"I liked discussion forums because I could see my friends' opinions and learn more,"* (Student 19)

emphasizing the value of social interaction in sustaining engagement. Another student stated,

*"When the teacher responded to my submissions, I felt encouraged to participate more,"* (Student 41)

highlighting the importance of timely feedback in maintaining motivation.

Overall, these findings suggest that the nature of the learning activities—particularly opportunities for interaction and instructor feedback—plays a crucial role in enhancing student engagement in blended learning environments. Designing tasks that foster collaboration and provide immediate, meaningful responses can significantly contribute to sustained learner motivation and participation.

#### **d. Suggestions for Improvement**

Alongside their positive feedback, students also provided constructive suggestions for improving the blended learning experience. Several students emphasized the need for clearer instructions and more detailed guidance for online assignments to reduce confusion and enhance task completion. They also expressed a desire for more synchronous learning sessions, such as live discussions or real-time explanations, to complement the asynchronous LMS activities.

One student suggested,

*"I hope in the future, there can be more live sessions to explain assignments directly,"* (Student 5)

while another recommended,

*"It would be better if the LMS interface was simpler and easier to navigate."* (Student 22)

These suggestions underline the importance of balancing flexibility with structure in blended course design, ensuring that students have both the autonomy to learn independently and the support necessary to stay engaged.

In addition, enhancing the usability of the LMS platform and providing more opportunities for direct interaction with instructors could help address some of the challenges students faced, ultimately leading to a more effective and engaging learning experience.

## E. Discussion

This study explored students' engagement in a blended learning environment within an English Language Teaching (ELT) course at an Islamic university, combining LMS activity data with students' qualitative perceptions. The findings revealed that while most students actively engaged with the LMS-based tasks, there were noticeable variations in participation rates across different types of assignments. Students generally perceived blended learning positively, appreciating the flexibility, accessibility, and organizational support provided by the LMS platform. However, technical difficulties, limited digital literacy, and the desire for more interactive sessions were noted as common challenges.

The findings of this study indicate that student engagement in the blended ELT course was generally high, particularly in tasks that encouraged discussion and collaboration. This supports previous research by Garrison and Vaughan<sup>24</sup>, who argued that blended learning environments foster greater opportunities for active engagement through both online and face-to-face interactions. The LMS data showed strong participation rates for discussion-based activities, suggesting that students were more motivated to engage when tasks required exchanging ideas and interacting with peers.

However, the submission rates for individual short essay tasks were somewhat lower, aligning with observations by Henrie, Halverson, and Graham<sup>25</sup> that students may feel less intrinsically motivated to complete isolated, text-heavy assignments without interactive components. The findings also reflect Dixson's emphasis on the importance of task design in maintaining engagement in blended environments. Tasks perceived as meaningful, collaborative, and directly connected to students' learning goals tended to generate higher participation<sup>26</sup>.

In the context of this study, cultural factors may have further influenced engagement patterns. Islamic educational values often emphasize communal learning and cooperation, which could explain why group work and discussion tasks achieved notably higher completion rates compared to individual

---

<sup>24</sup> Garrison and Vaughan.

<sup>25</sup> Curtis R. Henrie, Lisa R. Halverson, and Charles R. Graham, "Measuring Student Engagement in Technology-Mediated Learning: A Review," *Computers & Education* 90 (December 2015): 36–53, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.09.005>.

<sup>26</sup> Dixson, "Measuring Student Engagement in the Online Course: The Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE)."

assignments. Thus, the results highlight the need for blended course designs that strategically integrate collaborative elements to sustain engagement, particularly within culturally distinct learning environments like Islamic universities.

The use of the Learning Management System (LMS) played a central role in supporting students' language learning and engagement throughout the blended ELT course. The LMS provided structured access to learning materials, assignments, discussion forums, and feedback, which many students identified as crucial for organizing their study schedules and managing their learning independently. This finding aligns with Sun and Chen<sup>27</sup>, who noted that effective LMS integration can promote learner autonomy and facilitate better access to instructional resources in blended learning environments.

Students' positive perceptions of the LMS, particularly its accessibility and organization, reflect prior research by Albiladi and Alshareef<sup>28</sup>, who found that LMS platforms help students revisit learning materials at their own pace and encourage reflective learning practices. The open-ended responses revealed that students valued being able to review course content repeatedly, which is especially beneficial for developing language skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and writing proficiency.

However, the effectiveness of the LMS was also moderated by external factors such as internet connectivity and students' digital literacy skills. Consistent with Bradley<sup>29</sup>, some students in this study reported difficulties navigating the LMS or facing technical barriers that occasionally disrupted their learning experience. These challenges highlight the need for universities to provide ongoing digital skills training and technical support to maximize the benefits of LMS use in ELT contexts.

While blended learning offered many benefits, students also faced several challenges, particularly related to technology and self-regulation. Issues such as unstable internet connectivity and difficulties navigating the LMS occasionally

---

<sup>27</sup> Sun and Chen, "Online Education and Its Effective Practice: A Research Review."

<sup>28</sup> Albiladi and Alshareef, "Blended Learning in English Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Current Literature."

<sup>29</sup> Bradley, "Learning Management System (LMS) Use with Online Instruction."

disrupted their participation, consistent with findings by Bond et al.<sup>30</sup>. Time management and maintaining motivation were also reported as struggles, reflecting Bernard et al.'s<sup>31</sup> observation that blended environments demand higher learner autonomy compared to traditional classrooms. Furthermore, some students expressed a preference for more real-time interaction with instructors, supporting Dixson's<sup>32</sup> view on the importance of instructor immediacy in online learning. These challenges suggest that blended ELT courses must be carefully designed with strong technological support and strategies to foster self-directed learning, particularly within cultural contexts like Islamic universities where communal engagement is highly valued.

Overall, the LMS served not just as a content delivery platform but also as a tool that supported learner autonomy, encouraged continuous engagement, and facilitated language practice. Its strategic use can enhance the effectiveness of blended language courses, provided that technical and digital literacy challenges are addressed proactively.

## **F. Conclusion**

This study investigated students' engagement in a blended English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom at an Islamic university in Indonesia. It aimed to explore how students interacted with blended learning activities delivered through a Learning Management System (LMS) and to understand their perceptions of ICT integration in their language learning experience. A descriptive survey design was employed, combining quantitative data from LMS analytics with qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire responses.

The analysis revealed that students generally showed a high level of engagement, particularly in discussion-based and collaborative tasks. The LMS played a critical role in supporting learning by providing accessible resources and opportunities for autonomous study. Students expressed positive attitudes toward the flexibility and convenience of blended learning, although they also reported challenges such as internet connectivity issues, time management difficulties, and

---

<sup>30</sup> Bond et al., "Emergency Remote Teaching in Higher Education: Mapping the First Global Online Semester."

<sup>31</sup> Robert M. Bernard et al., "A Meta-Analysis of Three Types of Interaction Treatments in Distance Education," *Review of Educational Research* 79, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 1243–89, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654309333844>.

<sup>32</sup> Dixson, "Measuring Student Engagement in the Online Course: The Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE)."



a need for more synchronous interaction with instructors. Additionally, the cultural context of the Islamic university appeared to influence engagement patterns, with students responding more actively to collaborative and communal learning tasks.

Overall, the findings highlighted both the potential and the challenges of implementing blended learning effectively in ELT settings, particularly in institutions with specific cultural and educational characteristics.

Given the findings and limitations of this study, there are several avenues for future research that could deepen the understanding of student engagement in blended learning environments, particularly within English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts at Islamic universities. Future studies could build upon the present work by expanding the participant base, adopting longitudinal approaches, and exploring the role of cultural influences more comprehensively. The following recommendations are proposed to guide future investigations in this field.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research on blended learning by providing insights into student engagement within an ELT course at an Islamic university. The findings highlight the potential of LMS-supported blended learning to enhance student participation, while also drawing attention to the technological and motivational challenges that must be addressed. As blended learning continues to expand within higher education, particularly in culturally specific contexts, it is essential for educators, administrators, and researchers to design learning environments that are flexible, inclusive, and responsive to students' needs. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations from this study will inform future practices and inspire further research aimed at optimizing blended learning experiences for diverse student populations.

## References

- Albiladi, Waheeb S., and Khlood K. Alshareef. "Blended Learning in English Teaching and Learning: A Review of the Current Literature." *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 10, no. 2 (March 1, 2019): 232. <https://doi.org/10.17507/jltr.1002.03>.
- Basri, Muhammad, and Muhammad Azwar Paramma. "EFL Students' Perspective on the Usefulness of ICT Based Learning in Indonesian Higher Education." *ELT Worldwide: Journal of English Language Teaching* 6, no. 2 (October 31, 2019): 105. <https://doi.org/10.26858/eltww.v6i2.10515>.

- Bernard, Robert M., Philip C. Abrami, Eugene Borokhovski, C. Anne Wade, Rana M. Tamim, Michael A. Surkes, and Edward Clement Bethel. "A Meta-Analysis of Three Types of Interaction Treatments in Distance Education." *Review of Educational Research* 79, no. 3 (September 1, 2009): 1243–89. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654309333844>.
- Bond, Melissa, Svenja Bedenlier, Victoria I. Marín, and Marion Händel. "Emergency Remote Teaching in Higher Education: Mapping the First Global Online Semester." *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 18, no. 1 (December 30, 2021): 50. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00282-x>.
- Bradley, Vaughn Malcolm. "Learning Management System (LMS) Use with Online Instruction." *International Journal of Technology in Education* 4, no. 1 (December 20, 2020): 68–92. <https://doi.org/10.46328/ijte.36>.
- Chang, Wan-Jeng. "Blended Learning in the Context of EFL: Curriculum Design and Implementation." *Indonesian Journal of English Language Studies (IJELS)* 9, no. 1 (May 17, 2023): 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.24071/ijels.v9i1.5193>.
- Creswell, John Ward. *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, Ebook, Global Edition*. Pearson Education, Limited, 2021.
- Dixson, Marcia D. "Measuring Student Engagement in the Online Course: The Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE)." *Online Learning* 19, no. 4 (July 30, 2015). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v19i4.561>.
- Firdaus, Anita, and Yuli Astutik. "Implementation of Blended Learning in Teaching English at Senior High School in Sidoarjo." *New Language Dimensions* 2, no. 2 (December 21, 2021): 70–78. <https://doi.org/10.26740/nld.v2n2.p70-78>.
- Fredricks, Jennifer A, Phyllis C Blumenfeld, and Alison H Paris. "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence." *Review of Educational Research* 74, no. 1 (March 1, 2004): 59–109. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543074001059>.
- Garrison, D R, and N D Vaughan. *Blended Learning in Higher Education: Framework, Principles, and Guidelines*. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series. Wiley, 2011.
- Gayatri, Putri, Helena Sit, Shen Chen, and Hui Li. "Sustainable EFL Blended Education in Indonesia: Practical Recommendations." *Sustainability* 15, no. 3 (January 25, 2023): 2254. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15032254>.
- Graham, Charles R. "Emerging Practice and Research in Blended Learning." In *Handbook of Distance Education*, 3rd ed., 333–50. Routledge, 2013.

- <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203803738.ch21>.
- Halverson, Lisa R., and Charles R. Graham. "Learner Engagement in Blended Learning Environments: A Conceptual Framework." *Online Learning* 23, no. 2 (June 1, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v23i2.1481>.
- Henrie, Curtis R., Lisa R. Halverson, and Charles R. Graham. "Measuring Student Engagement in Technology-Mediated Learning: A Review." *Computers & Education* 90 (December 2015): 36–53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.09.005>.
- Martin, Florence, and Doris U Bolliger. "Engagement Matters: Student Perceptions on the Importance of Engagement Strategies in the Online Learning Environment." *Online Learning* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2018). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v22i1.1092>.
- Mhlongo, Siyabonga, Khanyisile Mbatha, Boitumelo Ramatsetse, and Reuben Dlamini. "Challenges, Opportunities, and Prospects of Adopting and Using Smart Digital Technologies in Learning Environments: An Iterative Review." *Heliyon* 9, no. 6 (June 2023): e16348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e16348>.
- Photopoulos, Panos, Christos Tsonos, Ilias Stavarakas, and Dimos Triantis. "Remote and In-Person Learning: Utility Versus Social Experience." *SN Computer Science* 4, no. 2 (December 21, 2022): 116. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42979-022-01539-6>.
- Saqr, Mohammed, and Sonsoles López-Pernas. "The Longitudinal Trajectories of Online Engagement over a Full Program." *Computers & Education* 175 (December 2021): 104325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2021.104325>.
- Sato, Simone Nomie, Emilia Condes Moreno, Alejandro Rubio-Zarapuz, Athanasios A. Dalamitros, Rodrigo Yañez-Sepulveda, Jose Francisco Tornero-Aguilera, and Vicente Javier Clemente-Suárez. "Navigating the New Normal: Adapting Online and Distance Learning in the Post-Pandemic Era." *Education Sciences* 14, no. 1 (December 24, 2023): 19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14010019>.
- Shafa, Shafa, Muhammad Azwar Paramma, Widya Noviana Noor, and Baharuddin Kordja. "Exploring Digital Learning Support to Foster EFL Student Interests in Indonesian Higher Education." *Indonesian TESOL Journal* 5, no. 2 (November 15, 2023): 235–54. <https://doi.org/10.24256/itj.v5i2.4198>.
- Sitamala, Afandi, and Danial Danial. "Boosting International Humanitarian Law Active Class Participation; Lesson Learned from Blended Learning Policy

Muhammad Azwar Paramma, Pradicta Nurhuda, & Indrawati A. Tajrin

(Kemendikbud Circular No.4 2020).” *Nurani Hukum* 5, no. 1 (July 12, 2022): 84. <https://doi.org/10.51825/nhk.v5i1.15924>.

Staker, Heather, and Michael B. Horn. “Classifying K-12 Blended Learning.” *Innosight Institute*. San Mateo: Innosight Institute, May 2012.

Sun, Anna, and Xiufang Chen. “Online Education and Its Effective Practice: A Research Review.” *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research* 15 (2016): 157–90. <https://doi.org/10.28945/3502>.