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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring Moroccan EFL Undergraduates' Readiness for a Newly-Implemented Blended Learning Course in English Language Proficiency

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| ABSTRACT
Over the last two decades, online learning has gained global attention from education stakeholders worldwide. Given the ubiquitous feature of today's technology-driven world, the switch from face-to-face delivery to technology-delivered instruction has become a necessity. However, the implementation of innovative e-learning models such as blended learning cannot be a success without learners' readiness and adaptability. Therefore, it is a top priority to be aware of students' e-learning readiness to make the teaching-learning process effective and rewarding. This study seeks to gain insights into Moroccan EFL students' readiness for a newly implemented blended language proficiency course. Data were collected using three research questions and a 29-item questionnaire adopted from Shakeel et al. (2023). The findings reveal that Moroccan university EFL students display a moderately positive attitude towards blended learning and this is a prerequisite for a smooth implementation of blended learning.

| KEYWORDS
Blended learning, Readiness, University EFL students.

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1. Introduction

The widespread availability of information and communication technologies (ICT) has instigated novel and inevitable transformations in the education sector worldwide. Distance education, otherwise known as e-learning, web-based learning, online learning, or hybrid/blended learning, has become an alternative to face-to-face learning and has been adopted as an eclectic approach over the last two decades. Being thus aware of the tremendous advantages of e-learning and considering the common features of 21st century learners, the educational authorities have made a significant decision to adopt hybrid learning to empower learners and provide them with opportunities for continuous learning, which is a crucial skill in today's rapidly changing world. The Kingdom of Morocco is no exception in stressing the need to integrate ICT into its educational framework to match the requirements of 21st century skills, as expressed on several occasions, whether through written documents or oral discussions over the past few decades. Ajhoun and Daoudi (2018) have comprehensively documented the adoption of ICT in the Moroccan educational system through reporting and discussing several government reports and websites, chronologically highlighting their inception and development. As education embraces new methodologies and technological integration, investigating today's learners' attitudes and gauging their readiness and adaptability to a newly-blended learning modality becomes crucial (Gardner, 1985).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept Definition

A plethora of attempts have been made to delineate the concept of blended learning. The online Oxford Learner's Dictionaries defines 'Blended Learning' as "a way of studying a subject that combines being taught in class with the use of different technologies, including learning over the internet" (Oxford University Press, n.d.). The term also refers to a teaching method that blends traditional face-to-face teaching methods with innovative instructional technologies (Bonk & Graham, 2012); as the "thoughtful blending of face-to-face learning experiences in the classroom with online activities" (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, p. 96); or as "a formal student-centred educational approach that combines the best practices of traditional education and modern online approaches" (Vasileva-Stojanovska et al., 2015, p. 127). This educational method has been trending in universities worldwide, especially in the post-pandemic era, and is often referred to as the 'new normal' (Zhou et al., 2023, p. 159) of teaching and learning, or as the third generation of innovation in education. While traditional face-to-face learning is considered the first generation, online learning (also referred to as e-learning or distance learning) is considered the second generation (Dang et al., 2016). Despite blended learning's increasing popularity and recognition, there remains some ambiguity vis-à-vis the term under study (Picciano, 2009). This conceptual fogginess, frequently broached in the literature, may stem from institutions' varying allocation of percentages dedicated to each mode of delivery. Each institution has opted for its own model of blended learning, specifically tailored to suit its specific context and environment (Graham & Halverson, 2023). Therefore, determining the optimal balance between online and offline modes of learning remains elusive. For instance, Littlejohn and Peglar (2007) propose a distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' blended learning, arguing that the degree of implementation determines the strength of the blend. Several attempts have also been made to enumerate the amount of face-to-face and online learning and teaching. Dudeney and Hockly (2007) advocate for 75% online and 25% face-to-face learning. Allen and Seaman (2010) argue that, to meet the requirements of blended learning, a course should have a "substantial proportion of the content delivered online, … and typically has a reduced number of face-to-face meetings" (p. 5). They suggest that online content should range from 30 to 79%, and if it exceeds this percentage, it is then best described as online learning, and if it is less than that percentage, it is then best defined as face-to-face learning. Other studies have found that the suggested proportion dedicated to online instruction in some universities was around 50% (Bicen et al., 2014; Diep et al., 2017; Porter et al., 2014), indicating that striking a balance between both modes of delivery is favourable. However, as a proposition to end the ongoing debate, since blended learning aims to combine the merits of both traditional face-to-face and online learning, as argued in substantial scholarship (Broadbent, 2017; Darling-Aduana & Heinrich, 2018; Liu et al., 2024), the distribution of the two modes should not be the main concern; instead, they should be malleably distributed, as there is no one-size-fits-all model. In fact, blended learning has several benefits. While the online mode of blended learning is ubiquitous, allowing students to learn at their own pace and convenience (Caulfield, 2011; Linder, 2017; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004), the offline mode allows students to receive instant feedback from their teachers and engage with their peers (Vanslambrouck et al., 2018). Garrison and Vaughan (2008) point out that blended learning is essential for student learning, as no single mode of learning is without weakness. Different modes of learning are preferable to cater to students' different needs.

Another factor contributing to blended learning's conceptual opacity is its interchangeability with a number of terms. Blended learning has been often referred to as 'hybrid' or 'mixed' learning (Tomilson & Whittaker, 2019). Despite the different terms associated with blended learning, it remains a widely used concept in English language teaching (ELT) scholarship (Chen & Chiou, 2014; Ma'arop & Embi, 2016; Picciano, 2009; Wichadee, 2018). In the literature on blended learning, there appears to be unanimous consensus that it involves the integration of face-to-face and virtual teaching and learning.

To the best of our knowledge, the investigation of students' readiness for a blended language proficiency course has not yet been addressed in any of the published studies in the Moroccan context. Thus far, studies have focused on investigating students' readiness for e-learning in different subjects. Consequently, this study aims to fill this research gap by gaining insights into Moroccan EFL students' readiness for a newly implemented blended language proficiency course.

2.1 Empirical Studies on Students' Readiness for Blended Learning

During the preceding decade, researchers have developed different surveys and models to assess students' readiness for blended learning, which is recognized as a key factor for its successful implementation (Park, 2009; Rasouli et al., 2016). Numerous studies have investigated students' readiness for blended learning, revealing varying levels of readiness. For instance, Sharif et al. (2021) surveyed 283 undergraduates from Utara University in Malaysia and found that students exhibited a high level of readiness for blended learning. In a similar vein, Som et al. (2020) reported a high level of readiness and concluded that factors such as technology, online interaction and study management are positively correlated with blended learning readiness. In a different study, Sriwichai (2020) found that students had a high level of readiness, preferring a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning modality. Nasir and Ismail (2016) conducted a mixed-methods study to investigate students' readiness for a blended learning English language course and found that students exhibited an above-medium level of readiness. In contrast, Adams et al. (2021) conducted a non-experimental quantitative study in a private higher education institution to investigate how ready students are for a blended learning mode of learning and teaching using a blended learning readiness questionnaire. Their sample of 274

undergraduate students exhibited a moderate level of readiness for blended learning. Findings also showed that there were differences in students' readiness based on gender, age, ethnicity, and field of study. Similarly, Kumari and Jayasinghe (2021) conducted a study to investigate 549 undergraduates' readiness for blended learning; they found that the overall readiness is moderate. A study conducted by Abbacan-Tuguic (2021) at Kalinga State University in India also yielded similar results. However, in another study, Hamzah et al. (2021) found out that students demonstrate low readiness for blended learning and preferred the traditional mode of learning. It is worth mentioning that there is still a lack of research related to blended learning readiness in the Moroccan context. Studies often focused on assessing students' e-learning readiness (Brigui, 2020; El Aroui, 2021; Hafa et al., 2023; Kasmi & Anasse, 2023).

Based on what has been advanced thus far, this paper is guided by two research questions:

RQ1. Are Ibn Tofail University EFL undergraduates prepared to learn English in the newly-implemented blended learning course?

RQ2. Are there any statistical disparities between the EFL undergraduates in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) and their counterparts in the Faculty of Languages, Letters, and Arts (FLLA) in terms of readiness in learning English in the newly-implemented blended learning course?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To answer its core and guiding research questions, a cross-sectional quantitative method was used to assess Ibn Tofail University (ITU) students' readiness for blended learning. This design allowed us to gauge ITU students' readiness for blended learning and gain a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes and lived experiences vis-à-vis blended learning. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to measure ITU students' readiness for this mode of learning.

3.2 Sample

The sample consists of 253 first-year EFL students (112 male and 141 female) from two faculties at Ibn Tofail University, Kenitra, Morocco: 125 students from the Faculty of Languages, Letters, and Arts (FLLA) and 128 students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS). This study was conducted in undergraduate general English courses for non-English majored students, using a questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. Convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique, was adopted to collect data from respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate. This method was also chosen due to the inability to study the entire population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.3 Instruments and Procedure

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire adopted from Shakeel et al. (2023) and adapted to measure ITU students' readiness for a blended learning course. The questionnaire consisted of 29 items divided into 7 subscales: (i) attitudes towards learning flexibility; (ii) openness to (new) technology; (iii) attitudes towards online learning; (iv) attitudes towards face-to-face classroom; (v) basic skills in using technology; (vi) attitudes towards study management; and (vii) readiness towards blended learning. Each item was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), with a mid-point labeled undecided (3). The questionnaire also included questions aimed at collecting demographic particulars such as gender and academic affiliation.

Although Shakeel et al.'s (2023) instrument had been previously validated, it was vital to retest its reliability in the Moroccan context. Table 1 displays that each construct of the scale exhibited a Cronbach's alpha coefficient ranging between 0.76 and 0.89, indicating an acceptable level of reliability. The scale demonstrated high overall internal consistency, with a coefficient of 0.90. According to Pallant (2016), values of Cronbach's above 0.70 threshold "are considered acceptable; however, values above [0.80] are preferable" (p. 71).

Table 1: Reliability Test

Constructs	No. of Items	Alpha (α)
Attitude towards learning flexibility (LF)	3	.814
Openness to (new) technology (NT)	5	.860
Attitude towards online learning (OL)	5	.792
Attitude towards face-to-face classroom (CL)	5	.892
Basic skills in using technology (BST)	4	.764
Attitude towards study management (SM)	3	.794
Readiness towards blended learning (BL)	4	.786

Upon receiving a significant number of responses, the data were fed into Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 25) for analysis purposes. In the analysis phase, descriptive statistics were used to assess respondents' level of readiness for blended learning through mean and standard deviation calculations. Furthermore, as charted in Table 2, this study adopted a scale that Dacillo et al. (2022) used to interpret the level of readiness in relation to the mean value. Low readiness was interpreted as (1.00-2.33), moderate readiness as (2.34-3.67), and high readiness as (3.68-5.00). Inferential statistics were also employed in this study. Tests for normal distribution, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test, were performed. As the results of these two tests were significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating a non-normal distribution, a nonparametric test such as Mann-Whitney U was applied to test whether there were any statistically significant differences in students' readiness for blended learning in relation to their academic affiliation.

Table 2: Interpretation of mean value

Mean Scale	Level
1.00 - 2.33	Low
2.34 - 3.67	Moderate
3.68 – 5.00	High

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics for Students' Readiness for Blended Learning

This section presents the results of the study and attempts to answer the research questions posed in the previous section. The blended learning readiness scale was divided into seven tables, each illustrating the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the informants' responses for each item of the subscale, along with the overall mean.

Table 3 displays students' attitudes towards learning flexibility (LF). While item no. (1) "I would like to access the class materials on my own time" and item no. (3) "I would like to access the class materials in my own space" received mean scores of M = 3.59 (SD = 1.092) and M = 3.67 (SD = 1.052), respectively, indicating a moderate level of readiness, item no. (2) "I would like to access the class materials at my own pace" received a mean score of M = 3.71 (SD = 1.126), indicating a high level of readiness. Despite item no. (2) having a high mean score, the composite mean of the LF subscale was M = 3.66, falling within a moderate range.

Table 3: Statistics for LF items

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Attitudes towards learning flexibility (LF)	1. I would like to access the class materials on my own time.	253	3.59	1.092	Moderate
	2. I would like to access the class materials at my own pace.	253	3.71	1.126	High
	3. I would like to access the class materials in my own space.	253	3.67	1.052	Moderate
Total Mean of Items: = 3.66					

Table 4 shows that students' openness to new technology (NT) is moderate. The mean ranged from M = 3.34 to M = 3.71, and the standard deviation ranged from SD = 1.034 to SD = 1.271. Four items were rated as moderate, and only one item was rated as high, with an overall mean M = 3.55, which falls within the moderate range. The highest mean score (M = 3.71; SD = 1.034) of the NT subscale was recorded by item no. (8) "I believe technology improves my quality of learning," while item no. (6) "I would like to be in charge of my learning" recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.34; SD = 1.183).

Table 4: Statistics for NT items

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Openness to (new) technology (NT)	4. I prefer technology while learning.	253	3.58	1.271	Moderate
	5. Access to all digital learning materials helps me understand my lesson precisely.	253	3.61	1.147	Moderate
	6. I would like to be in charge of my learning.	253	3.34	1.183	Moderate
	7. I would like to keep myself updated with new educational technology.	253	3.50	1.245	Moderate
	8. I believe technology improves my quality of learning.	253	3.71	1.034	High
Total Mean of Items: 3.55					

It is apparent from Table 5, which showcases respondents' attitude towards online learning (OL), that each item of the subscale was rated as moderate. The means ranged between M = 3.17 and M = 3.52. The highest mean score (M = 3.52; SD = 1.173) was recorded by item no. (13) "I prefer an online platform to communicate with other teachers and students," while item no. (11) "I do not feel isolated in an online classroom" came in last with the lowest mean (M = 3.17; SD = 1.133). The OL subscale as a whole showed an overall mean of M = 3.34, indicating a moderate level of readiness.

Table 5: Statistics for OL items

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Attitude towards online learning (OL)	9. I believe online tasks help me build my learning capacities.	253	3.50	1.111	Moderate
	10. I am comfortable with self-directed online learning.	253	3.34	1.170	Moderate
	11. I do not feel isolated in an online classroom.	253	3.17	1.133	Moderate
	12. I believe online learning helps me to prepare well for my future endeavours.	253	3.50	1.139	Moderate
	13. I prefer an online platform to communicate with other teachers and students.	253	3.52	1.173	Moderate
Total Mean of Items: 3.34					

What stands out in Table 6, which is reserved for respondents' attitudes towards face-to-face classroom (CL), is the fact that every single item received a significantly high mean score, ranging between M = 3.71 and M = 3.91. Item no. (15) "I learn better in a teacher-directed face-to-face classroom" ranked first with the highest mean (M = 3.91; SD = 1.102), while item no. (16) "I believe face-to-face learning develops my interpersonal and team-building skills" occupied the last position with the lowest mean (M = 3.71; SD = 1.132). Interestingly, all four items recorded a very close mean score. The overall mean (M = 3.77) of respondents' attitudes towards CL was high.

Table 6: Statistics for CL items

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Attitudes towards face-to-face classroom (CL)	14. I prefer to learn in the face-to-face classroom environment.	253	3.76	1.198	High
	15. I learn better in a teacher-directed face-to-face classroom.	253	3.91	1.102	High
	16. I believe face-to-face learning develops my interpersonal and team-building skills.	253	3.71	1.232	High
	17. I prefer immediate feedback from the teacher.	253	3.74	1.095	High
	18. I prefer learning through collaboration with other people in face-to-face classroom.	253	3.74	.992	High
Total Mean of Items: 3.77					

Table 7 reveals informants' responses for the basic skills in using technology (BST) subscale, whose items were rated as moderate. The means ranged between M = 3.23 and M = 3.60 with item no. (19) "I have basic skills in using technology," securing the first place with the highest mean (M= 3.60; SD= .935), and item no. (22) "I prefer browsing the website and various new applications" coming in second place with a mean of (M= 3.56; SD= 1.035), while the last ranked item was no. (20) "I can understand the online instruction for assignments/quizzes/tutorial" with the lowest mean score (M= 3.23; SD= 1.083). The overall mean for the BST subscale was 3.44, indicating a moderate level of readiness.

Table 7: Statistics for BST items

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Basic skills in using technology (BST)	19. I have basic skills in using technology.	253	3.60	.935	Moderate
	20. I can understand the online instruction for assignments/quizzes/tutorial.	253	3.23	1.083	Moderate
	21. I can manage unwanted situations and download the learning materials.	253	3.39	1.043	Moderate
	22. I prefer browsing the website and various new applications.	253	3.56	1.035	Moderate
Total Mean of Items: 3.44					

Table 8 displays the respondents' attitudes towards study management (SM) subscale, whose items, as in the previous subscale, were rated as moderate. The means ranged between M = 3.17 and M = 3.63, with item no. (23) "I believe a change in the teaching-learning environment has a positive influence on my ability" arriving at the first place with the highest mean score (M= 3.63; SD= 1.088), while item no. (25) "I believe online learning helps me organize my time better" coming in the last place with the lowest mean score (M= 3.17; SD= 1.139). Table 8 reveals that the composite mean for the SM subscale was 3.40, falling in the moderate range.

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Attitudes towards study management (SM)	23. I believe a change in the teaching-learning environment has a positive influence on my ability.	253	3.63	1.088	Moderate
	24. Online discussion and collaboration help me to learn efficiently.	253	3.40	1.085	Moderate
	25. I believe online learning helps me organize my time better.	253	3.17	1.139	Moderate
Total Mean of Items: 3.40					

Table 8: Statistics for SM items

Table 9 reveals the last subscale, which is readiness towards blended learning (BL). The means ranged between M = 3.37 and M = 3.90. Three items were rated as moderate, and only one item was rated as high. Item no. (29) "I am open to new ideas and concepts" ranked first with the highest mean score (M = 3.90; SD = 1.008), while item no. (26) "I am more comfortable with blended learning than face-to-face learning" came in last with the lowest mean score (M = 3.37; SD = 1.173). Table 9 shows that the overall mean for the SM subscale was 3.58, falling in the moderate range.

Table 9: Statistics for BL items

Description	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
Readiness towards blended learning (BL)	26. I am more comfortable with blended learning than face-to-face learning.	253	3.37	1.173	Moderate
	27. I want to attend courses that offer blended learning.	253	3.49	1.177	Moderate
	28. I believe a blended learning environment improved my learning capacity.	253	3.57	1.057	Moderate
	29. I am open to new ideas and concepts.	253	3.90	1.008	High
Total Mean of Items: 3.58					

Table 10 indicates the mean and standard deviations of the seven dimensions of readiness for blended learning, arranged in descending order based on the mean. With the highest mean score of (M = 3.91; SD = 1.102), "attitudes towards face-to-face classroom" (CL) occupied the first place, while the last place was reserved for "attitudes towards online learning (OL)" with a mean score of (M = 3.34; SD = .846). Table 10 summarizes the remaining constructs on students' readiness for blended learning. The total mean of the seven dimensions of readiness for blended learning is 3.54, suggesting moderate readiness.

Table 10: Overall statistical results of blended learning scale

Description	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Level of Readiness
CL	253	3.77	.942	High
LF	253	3.66	.931	Moderate
BL	253	3.58	.863	Moderate
NT	253	3.55	.944	Moderate
BST	253	3.44	.784	Moderate
SM	253	3.40	.929	Moderate
OL	253	3.34	.846	Moderate
Total Mean	253	3.54	.714	Moderate

4.2. Inferential Statistics for Students' Readiness for Blended Learning in Relation to their Academic Affiliation

Table 11 displays the results of the Mann-Whitney U test with respect to academic affiliation. According to the results of the test, there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups (FLLA and FHSS) in terms of their readiness for blended learning, U = 6770.500, z = -2.113, p =.035. As shown in Table 11, the mean ranks of the two groups differ. 125 FLLA respondents had a mean rank of 136.84, and 128 FHSS respondents had a mean rank of 117.39. In summary, the FLLA group achieved a higher mean rank than their FHSS counterpart. Based on Mann-Whitney U test results, it can be said that academic affiliation has an effect on students' readiness for blended learning. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference between the students' readiness for blended learning and their academic affiliation.

Table 11: Mann-Whitney U test in relation to academic affiliation

Scale	Faculty	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	Z	*p*-value
Students' Readiness for Blended learning	FLLA	125	136.84	17104.50	6770.500	-2.113	.035
	FHSS	128	117.39	15026.50			
	Total	253					

5. Discussion

The present study aims to investigate ITU students' readiness level vis-à-vis blended learning courses. The results answered the following research questions: (1) Are Ibn Tofail University EFL undergraduates prepared to learn English in the newly-implemented blended learning course? and (2) Are there any statistical disparities between the EFL undergraduates in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) and their counterparts in the Faculty of Languages, Letters, and Arts (FLLA) in terms of readiness in learning English in the newly-implemented blended learning course? Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to address these research questions.

Descriptive statistics revealed that ITU students' attitudes towards the seven dimensions constituting Shakeel et al.'s (2023) blended learning readiness scale were found to be moderately positive in six subscales and highly positive in one. According to the mean scores of the seven dimensions (see Table 10), ITU students exhibit high satisfaction with the traditional classroom. They believe that the face-to-face classroom environment provides instant teacher feedback and promotes teamwork spirit. In addition, with an overall mean score of (M=3.66) close to a high level of readiness, ITU students believe that learning flexibility is vital when taking a blended learning course. They express a highly positive inclination to access the class materials at their own pace, with a mean of (M=3.71) (see Table 3), believing that a blended learning environment provides a malleable and convenient learning schedule. Students also believe that, insofar as studying management (see Table 8) is concerned, a change in the teaching-learning environment has a positive influence on their ability, with a moderate mean score of (M= 3.63). Moreover, students express moderate attitudes towards blended learning; however, they expressed their readiness and openness to new concepts and ideas with a high mean score of (M=3.90) (see Table 9), which indicates that they are likely to be ready to adapt to blended learning. Moreover, ITU students recognize the importance of technology in improving the quality of learning, with a high mean score of (M=3.71) (see Table 4). Nevertheless, they believe that their basic skills in using new technology need honing (see Table 7). In contrast to their attitudes towards the traditional classroom, students' attitudes towards a fully online environment have come in last with an overall mean of (M=3.34). It is likely that their past experiences with such a mode of delivery during the COVID-19 period may have influenced their responses in this study. Generally, the Blended Learning Readiness Scale (BLRS) composite mean score indicates that ITU students' readiness for blended learning is at a moderate level. That is to say, they are prepared to adapt to a blended learning setting, although there is still room for further improvements. As for inferential statistics, results indicate that academic affiliation influences students' readiness for blended learning courses. Specifically, FLLA students exhibit more readiness compared to those enrolled in FHSS.

The results of the present study match several findings in the extant literature. The obtained results indicate that EFL students at Ibn Tofail University display a moderate level of readiness for blended learning. This finding is consistent with those of Adams et al. (2021), Kumari and Jayasinghe (2021), who similarly reported that EFL university undergraduates were moderately prepared for a blended learning experience. Another study which corroborates the findings of this study is that by Abbacan-Tuguic (2021), who reported that students' preparedness for this approach of instruction was similar to the aforementioned ones. However, the findings of Hamzah et al.'s (2021) research do not align with the present study; they concluded that students preferred the traditional approach to learning. Furthermore, the results regarding respondents' preparedness for blended learning in relation to their academic affiliation revealed that FLLA students were more ready for blended learning than FHSS students. This finding is congruent with a study by Adams et al. (2021), who also found significant differences in students' readiness for blended learning based on field of study.

6. Conclusion

Modern technologies have undoubtedly reshaped the traditional teaching-learning process and the delivery of education courses, creating thus an engaging and rich learning environment. One innovative alternative to the conventional classroom setting is blended learning, which has the potential to support teaching and enrich students' learning experiences. Accordingly, blended learning is an approach that needs to be adopted by all pedagogical institutions in order to render the teaching learning process appealing, fruitful and worthwhile. However, it would be unwise to impose its implementation without considering students' attitudes and gauging their readiness. Finally, yet importantly, our findings uncovered that Ibn Tofail University students have a moderate level of e-readiness.

To sum up, this study has contributed empirical knowledge to the field of educational technology. Not only did it explore students' preparedness for a blended learning environment but also highlighted the utility of blended learning as an effective approach, the use of which offers true value to learners and meets their learning needs and styles. In our fast-paced, technology-driven era, education stakeholders are advised to capitalize on this innovative learning modality. Likewise, today's learners are also recommended to cultivate the digital skills required to thrive in the current automated industries.

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