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Perceptions of Readiness for English Language Blended Learning among UiTM Shah Alam Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perceptions of readiness for English language blended learning among Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam undergraduates, with the aim of identifying key influencing factors and exploring potential gender differences. By adapting the Learning Readiness Theory and the Readiness for Blended Learning Model, this study examines the insufficient emphasis on language-specific readiness and demographic factors in Malaysian higher education. A quantitative research design was utilised, comprising 100 English major undergraduates from the Academy of Language Studies, selected via simple random sampling. An online questionnaire was used to collect data, and SPSS Version 27 was used to analyse the data using descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests. Findings reveal that the students generally demonstrate strong technical abilities and self-directed learning skills, yet attitudes toward blended learning and computer skills vary. Gender differences were minimal overall but evident in specific skill areas. The study concludes that readiness is affected by both personal skills and support from the institution, which shows that targeted interventions are needed. The implications indicate the necessity of improving digital literacy, fostering positive attitudes towards blended learning, and overcoming infrastructural challenges. Recommendation for future studies include using a mixed-methods design, examining rural-urban differences, enhancing pedagogical alignment with readiness dimensions and instructional design, and examining longitudinal differences in order to design more inclusive and effective blended learning opportunities in Malaysian higher education.

Keywords: blended learning, readiness, gender differences, technical abilities, self-directed learning, attitudes, Malaysian higher education

INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has changed higher education by using new technologies in teaching and learning. UiTM has welcomed this change by introducing Education 5.0@UiTM. This framework encourages teaching that is based on learner-driven instruction, flexible learning paths, and the use of smart technologies to make learning more meaningful (Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2019). The goal is to prepare graduates the technical and cross-functional skills they will need in the future. In this context, blended learning becomes a strategic approach because it fits with Education 5.0's goal of personalised, technology-enhanced education that gives students control over their own learning.

In Malaysia, blended learning readiness is becoming more popular among universities as this model necessitates the integration of both online and face-to-face instruction. Research shows that students typically possess fundamental technological competencies, yet the difference lies in the self-directed learning ability and students' attitudes towards blended learning (Yong, 2023). Using technology to improve the efficacy of English



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language education is one of the Malaysian government's initiatives for getting students to be proficient in English as outlined by CEFR alignment and technology integration in Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025, (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013) and blended learning has been one of the approaches to do so (Fazlinda et al., 2021).

While many students adapt well, others face challenges in transitioning from traditional classrooms to virtual platforms. This is because readiness may be affected by various contributing factors including internet accessibility, computer literacy, and motivation (Chung et al, 2020). Several studies have demonstrated that students' lack of preparation and familiarity with technology may become a barrier to the effective adoption of blended learning (Geng et al., 2019; Adams et al., 2021). This suggests that readiness is not uniform. Not only that, despite the vision of the 4IR, the affordance of blended learning remains dependable of various external factors such as accessibility and facilities, and internal factors like motivation and attitude, which could vary greatly based on geographical factors as well. Therefore, understanding these diverse factors is crucial, as it highlights that successful adoption of blended learning requires not only individual readiness but also strong institutional support and equitable access to resources.

This study also focuses on the gap of blended learning readiness involving English major undergraduates from the perspective of gender differences. While demographic factors such as age and field of study have been explored, gender-based perspectives in language learning contexts remain underdeveloped (Abdul Wab, 2022). Recent studies also highlight that male and female students often show distinct levels of confidence in navigating digital platforms, which in turn influences their participation and engagement in blended learning environments (Korlat et al., 2021; Yu, 2021). These differences indicate that gender is often overlooked as a demographic variable. However, it could be a significant determinant influencing attitudes towards technology-mediated learning.

In the context of higher education in Malaysia, it is important to evaluate students' perceptions of their readiness for blended learning implementation. This is because, the attitude of students and their willingness to investigate new technologies are significant factors in the success of technology use in education (Mohd Yasin et al., 2020). Despite the growing implementation of blended learning in UiTM, there are still problems like unequal access to technology, different levels of self-efficacy, and different attitudes experienced by the students. Therefore, this study aims to examine the perceptions and readiness of UiTM Shah Alam undergraduates toward English language blended learning based on these two research questions:

- 1. What factors influence students' readiness for English language blended learning?
- 2. Does gender influence readiness for English language blended learning among university students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Readiness Theory

Ertmer and Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2010) defined learning readiness as the degree to which an individual or group possesses the necessary qualities and abilities to participate in a specific task or series of tasks. The theory explains how readiness for learning is shaped by a combination of knowledge, self-efficacy, beliefs, and contextual factors that influence the ability to engage with technology-enhanced education. Nortvig et al. (2018) further pointed out that readiness encompasses both cognitive and affective preparedness to adapt to new learning modes. Together, these theories served as the framework to the present study.

Readiness for Blended Learning Model

The Readiness for Blended Learning Model by Fazlinda et al. (2021) expands on these notions of Blended Learning Readiness by identifying five dimensions which include technical abilities, technological accessibility, self-directed learning, attitudes towards traditional classroom setting and attitudes towards blended learning setting. For UiTM Shah Alam undergraduates, these dimensions are especially important for learning English, which active participation, technological proficiency, and adaptability are manifested within



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the physical and classroom environment. Previous studies indicate that readiness serves as a predictor of engagement and performance in blended learning environments (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Nortvig et al., 2018; Fazlinda et al., 2021). This suggests that comprehending readiness factors can assist educators in formulating interventions that overcome problems in skill and motivation among students, thereby enhancing students' preparedness for blended English language learning.

The use of these theories in previous research indicates that readiness is not only essential for effective blended learning but also a crucial factor influencing learning satisfaction and achievement. For instance, studies conducted in Malaysian universities indicate that students possessing high self-directed learning abilities and favourable attitudes towards technology are more likely to effectively adapt to blended learning (Chung et al., 2020). On similar ground, Fazlinda et al. (2021) found that English language learners' levels of readiness varied greatly across dimensions, with their attitudes about blended learning often being lower than their perceptions about traditional methods. Research examining demographic factors has revealed gender disparities in domains such as computer proficiency and technological confidence (Yong, 2024). The application of these findings to UiTM Shah Alam undergraduates indicates that readiness assessment must take into account both the unique attributes of individual learners of different gender and the particular requirements of English language learning. This underscores the necessity for focused strategies that address readiness deficiencies while promoting favourable attitudes towards blended learning.

The review of Learning Readiness Theory and the Readiness for Blended Learning Model reveals a consistent pattern in which technical competence, self-directed learning, and attitudes toward technology interact to shape students' preparedness. These frameworks connect closely with past studies showing that readiness is both a skill-based and mindset-driven construct, yet they also highlight that English language learning presents unique demands.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on Learning Readiness Theory and the Readiness for Blended Learning Model, which include both skill-based and attitudinal aspects. It demonstrates how different readiness factors, such as technical abilities, self-directed learning, attitudes toward traditional and blended learning, and computer skills, are likely to affect how ready students are for blended learning in English. Gender is identified as a moderating variable, indicating that previous research has demonstrated that demographic factors can influence particular dimensions of readiness. This framework integrates theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence, offering a structured approach to addressing the research questions. It also shows how the characteristics of each learner and the context of the blended learning environment affect each other.

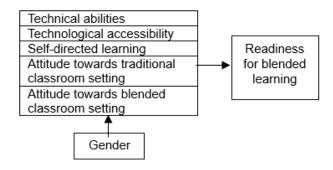


Figure 1 Readiness for Blended Learning Model

Blended Learning Practices in Tertiary Education

Blended learning has gained growing popularity in Malaysian higher education in response to the changing needs of teaching and learning and advancements in technology. A qualitative study conducted by Jassni et al. (2024) examined ESL learners' experiences with web-based technologies at a public university through semi-structured interviews with five students, revealing significant enhancements in 21st-century skills.



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Nonetheless, difficulties such as diminished social interaction and motivation were also noted. Zetty Harisha et al. (2019) conducted a study during the early adoption of blended learning in Malaysia on students' perception and readiness in the implementation of blended learning in one of the universities in Malaysia. The findings revealed the students were ready to embrace blended learning.

Another study was conducted by Sharif et al. (2021) which focused on the blended learning among undergraduate students at University Utara Malaysia (UUM) and the findings agreed with Zetty Harisha et al. (2019) which demonstrated most students were highly ready and prepared for their technology skills, psychology, and necessities. Overall, these studies indicate that students are generally ready for blended learning, with strong technological and psychological preparedness. However, issues such as reduced social interaction and motivation remain key challenges for effective implementation.

Blended Learning and Gender

Research on gender differences in blended learning readiness and satisfaction have been conducted in multiple settings. First, Adams et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative study with 366 student participants at a prominent Malaysian university, using the Blended Learning Readiness Engagement Questionnaire. The study used Differential Item Functioning analysis and found large differences in readiness based on gender. Female students performed better on both the self-regulation and communication skills tests. This suggests that gender-specific strategies might be useful to increase engagement.

Then, Mohamad et al. (2020) administered a survey study at UiTM Pahang focused on student satisfaction and intention to online distance learning in the context of Movement Control Order (MCO). Although no significant gender differences in satisfaction was found,. The qualitative feedback from students showed that male and female students faced different challenges regarding managing workload and connectivity issues. This underlines the importance of considering contextual factors alongside gender explanations.

In a more recent study, Yong (2024) looked at how demographic factors shaped Malaysian undergraduates' readiness for blended learning. The results showed that, while there were no broad gender-based gaps in readiness, female students tended to report stronger computer skills and greater confidence in handling technology. Yong argued that giving male students more targeted support in these areas might help close the gap. All in all, these findings point to the idea that gender differences in blended learning readiness do exist, though they often appear subtle or only in specific aspects.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the factors influencing readiness for English language blended learning and the influence of gender in this context. Quantitative designs are appropriate for objectively measuring variables and analysing relationships through statistical methods, making them ideal for studies with large student populations (Adams et al., 2018; Chan et al., 2022).

Next, a 5-point Likert scale online questionnaire to gauge students' perceptions and readiness levels was used as the instrument. Such scales are commonly employed in blended learning research because they let respondents indicate not just agreement or disagreement but the extent to which they feel one way or the other, which in turn produces data that can be analysed quantitatively (Mohd Nasir et al., 2021). The questionnaire was organised into two sections. Part A focused on demographic details, such as gender and current semester of study. Part B contained 27 items grouped according to the Readiness for Blended Learning Model, which outlines five dimensions: technical abilities, technological accessibility, self-directed learning, attitudes towards traditional classroom settings, and attitudes towards blended classroom settings.

The participants for this study were 100 English major undergraduates, comprising both male and female students majoring in English courses from the Academy of Language Studies at UiTM Shah Alam. The sample size was determined based on similar sample sizes and types used in the study of Fazlinda et al. (2021), who surveyed 100 English language learners in a Malaysian public university, and Yong (2024), who examined blended learning readiness among 102 undergraduates in language-related programmes. Keeping the sample size within this range ensured that the data would be both manageable and sufficiently representative.



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Importantly, it also allowed for gender perspectives to be considered while still supporting meaningful statistical comparisons within the target population.

Next, the study applied a simple random sampling technique so that every student in the population had an equal chance of being chosen. This method has been successfully employed in similar studies, including Chengjun and Mustakim (2022), who surveyed 379 Malaysian undergraduates, as well as Duhaim (2017), who examined 151 students in a blended learning course utilising the same technique, respectively. For this research, participants were randomly picked from the official enrolment list. This step was intended to minimise selection bias and, at the same time, to strengthen the representativeness of the sample.

Data collection was initiated by distributing the online questionnaire to the participants on Google Forms platform. Online data collection methods such as those used Lau et.al (2023) and Saidalvi and Wan Fakhruddin (2021) showed that Google Forms enabled efficient collection and organization of data. Participation was on a voluntary basis and prior informed consent was obtained from the participants and UiTM's research ethics was upheld by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Data were collected between January 1, 2023 to January 1, 2024 and were compared to the target sample, where the data was recorded in a spreadsheet. The dataset was cleaned to remove missing or incomplete data, as required for coding before being analysed statistically.

For the analysis, this study made use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 27, a tool commonly applied in quantitative educational research. Descriptive statistics including the mean and standard deviation were first generated to give an overview of students' readiness across the five dimensions. Independent-samples t-tests were then carried out to see whether there were any gender-related differences. The choice of SPSS is consistent with past studies, such as Wong et al. (2025) and Yong (2024) both relied on the software when examining blended learning readiness and satisfaction. In line with standard practice, the level of significance was set at p < .05, meaning that only results below this threshold were treated as statistically significant. Together, these steps allowed the study to identify overall patterns of readiness and to compare male and female students in a systematic way.

Validity and Reliability

Cronbach's Alpha was applied in this study to check the internal consistency of the questionnaire, in other words, to see whether the items under each dimension were measuring the same construct in a reliable way. This method is often used in educational research, especially with multi-item questionnaires. Previous work, such as that of Nurhafizah et al. (2024) and Muhamad et al. (2017), also relied on Cronbach's Alpha when testing blended learning readiness, and both reported values above 0.80, which are generally taken as evidence of strong reliability. In the present study, the test produced results that confirmed the modified readiness questionnaire was consistent across dimensions. This gives confidence that the instrument was not only grounded in theory but also statistically reliable.

In order to ensure reliability in the study, the online questionnaire was provided to the respondents via Google Forms to ensure that questions were displayed consistently and responses were recorded uniformly. Google Forms has well established its effectiveness in terms of gathering standardised data from large and diverse populations, specifically in higher education. Chung et al. (2020) and Hadi et al. (2022) endorsed the use of online questionnaires to measure readiness for online or blended learning, noting benefits of accessibility, cost savings, and the ability to reach respondents irrespective of their locations.

RESULTS

RQ1: What factors influence students' readiness for English language blended learning?

Table 1 Factors influencing Readiness for English Language Blended Learning

Readiness	Male (M,	Female (M,	Higher	Interpretation
Dimension	SD)	SD)	Mean	
Technical Abilities	4.55–4.72	4.42-4.65	Male	Both genders scored high, suggesting strong



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	(0.55-1.03)	(0.63–0.94)		perceived technical readiness.	
Technology	4.22-4.53	4.08-4.60	Mixed	Males had higher internet access (sig. diff.),	
Accessibility	(0.75-1.00)	(0.62-1.06)		females slightly higher in online activity time.	
Self-Directed	3.80-4.30	4.03-4.13	Mixed	Moderate-to-high readiness; females slightly	
Learning	(0.64-1.22)	(0.73-1.19)		higher.	
Traditional	4.38-4.70	4.22-4.63	Male	Positive attitudes toward traditional learning	
Classroom	(0.56-0.90)	(0.61-1.00)		remain strong.	
Attitudes					
Blended Classroom	3.63-4.03	3.73-4.12	Mixed	Neutral-to-positive attitudes toward blended	
Attitudes	(1.10-1.29)	(1.02-1.17)		learning, but lower than traditional.	

Table 1 illustrates the factors influencing students' readiness for English language blended learning. The analysis of readiness dimensions shows that students demonstrated varying levels of preparedness across technical, cognitive, and attitudinal factors. For technical abilities, male students reported slightly higher mean scores (M = 4.55-4.72, SD = 0.55-1.03) compared to females (M = 4.42-4.65, SD = 0.63-0.94), with both groups indicating strong technical readiness. In terms of technology accessibility, results were mixed, as males reported significantly higher internet access, while females recorded slightly more time spent on online activities. For **self-directed learning**, both genders reflected moderate-to-high readiness, with females showing marginally higher means (M = 4.03-4.13, SD = 0.73-1.19) compared to males (M = 3.80-4.30, SD =0.64–1.22). Regarding traditional classroom attitudes, male students scored higher (M = 4.38–4.70, SD = 0.56-0.90) than females (M = 4.22-4.63, SD = 0.61-1.00), suggesting stronger preference for face-to-face learning. Finally, for blended classroom attitudes, both genders reported neutral-to-positive perceptions, though females scored slightly higher (M = 3.73-4.12, SD = 1.02-1.17) than males (M = 3.63-4.03, SD = 1.10-1.29). Overall, the findings suggest that while students are technically capable and moderately selfdirected, their attitudes toward blended learning remain less positive than toward traditional classrooms, highlighting the need for strategies to strengthen acceptance and engagement in blended English language learning.

RQ2: Does gender influence readiness for English language blended learning among university students?

Table 2 Gender and its Influence towards Readiness for English Language Blended Learning

Dimension	t	p-value	Significance
Technical abilities	0.30	.77	Not significant
Self-directed learning	-0.47	.64	Not significant
Attitudes (traditional)	0.54	.59	Not significant
Attitudes (blended)	-0.46	.65	Not significant
Computer skills (subscale)	-2.41	.02	Significant

Table 2 displays the results of independent samples t-tests conducted to examine gender differences across the five readiness dimensions. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in technical abilities, self-directed learning, attitudes toward traditional learning, or attitudes toward blended learning (p > .05). However, a significant difference was found in computer skills (t = -2.41, df = 70.29, p = .02), with female students (M = 3.12, SD = 0.64) scoring higher than male students (M = 2.75, SD = 0.81). This suggests that gender does not substantially influence most readiness dimensions, but it does play a role in digital competency. The results imply that while readiness is broadly similar across genders, male students may require additional support in developing computer skills to ensure equitable participation in blended learning environments.



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DISCUSSION

The results related to RQ1 suggest that undergraduate students at UiTM Shah Alam generally display a high level of technical skills and moderate to high levels of self-directed learning skills, a more positive attitude towards traditional learning than blended learning, and lower computer skills. These results are consistent with those of Fazlinda et al. (2021), whose data indicated that Malaysian undergraduates had high technical readiness, but their beliefs about blended learning proved to be less positive than face-to-face instruction. Similarly, Chung et al. (2020) demonstrated that readiness is influenced by technological skills and an individual attitude, identifying digital literacy as an important component of success. The computer skill score reported in this study was low compared to other studies, particularly for male students. The results portray that while many people engage with technology, technical readiness is still sometimes inconsistent. This supports Nortvig et al. (2018), who concluded that readiness is based on skill and mindset. Therefore, supporting digital literacy as well as a broader positive perception of blended learning could dramatically influence readiness to learn English in this context.

The findings for RQ2 demonstrate that gender does not substantially affect overall readiness dimensions, with the exception of computer skills, in which female students performed better. This is consistent with the research conducted by Yong (2024) whereby it was concluded that gender made negligible differences to overall readiness dimensions, but these results show that female students had superior digital competences. Similarly, research by Adams et al. (2018) found gender differences did not have an effect on overall blended learning engagement. However, gender effects were present for particular skills such as technology use and communication. The findings in this study indicated that differences by gender are not widespread but these effects may exist in specific skill areas potentially linked to differences in prior exposure or learning strategies. This reinforces the notion of intervening on specific skills rather than gender as a whole. As such, bridging the gap of computer skills could be helpful in creating equitable readiness which aligned with the inclusive aims of Education 5.0@UiTM as well as other higher education initiatives in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of readiness for English language blended learning among UiTM Shah Alam undergraduates, highlighting the factors that influence readiness and the influence of gender on these dimensions. Based on Learning Readiness Theory and the Readiness for Blended Learning Model, the study emphasises that readiness is a multidimensional construct influenced by technical skills, self-directed learning, attitudes, and computer proficiency. The literature review highlighted that while blended learning provides flexibility and skill enhancement, issues with lack of digital literacy and differences in learners' attitudes continue to be a prevalence. The findings suggest that readiness is not only an individual trait but also a reflection of institutional support and contextual challenges.

On a practical level, this study highlights the importance of nurturing students' confidence and competence in digital environments. Strengthening digital literacy through hands-on training and supportive learning experiences can help students feel more capable and engaged in blended settings. At the same time, small shifts in attitude both from learners and instructors tend to matter, and the learning environment itself (such as internet access or classroom facilities) cannot be overlooked. Institutions can play a key role by offering targeted workshops, allocating resources strategically, and ensuring that support systems are in place to meet the diverse needs of students navigating blended English language learning in both physical and virtual environments. It is hoped that this study managed to contribute to the broader discussion on blended learning readiness in Malaysian universities and, hopefully, opens the door for more comprehensive strategies in English language education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could enrich the understanding of blended learning readiness through these recommendations. Firstly, it is encouraged to adopt mixed-methods designs that include qualitative data such as interviews or focus groups. Since the findings for gender differences in this study reveals only minimal differences, mixed-



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method approach could provide more in-depth understanding of gendered experiences and learning strategies that may not be evident through quantitative analysis alone. Next, in future studies, external contextual factors should also be considered specifically related to rural-urban distinctions in terms of connectivity and infrastructure. Stratified sampling across different geographical locations could provide broader reflections about technology access and equity.

Moreover, future studies should explore the connection between readiness and pedagogical and practical strategies in English language instructions, for instance in investigating how instructional design can be adapted to support students with lower digital literacy or less favourable attitudes toward blended learning. Furthermore, longitudinal studies would also benefit this field by measuring readiness over time as blended learning technology evolves. Finally, expanding the sample to include students from other faculties or institutions could help determine whether readiness challenges are discipline-specific or more broadly applicable across Malaysian higher education. In short, there is still plenty of opportunities to sharpen both the scope and depth of this line of research so that efforts to strengthen blended learning readiness in higher education become more practical and better targeted.

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