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Opportunities and Adjustment Strategies of College Students During Adversities for Improved Academic Performance

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Abstract: This study explored opportunities and adjustment strategies of Chinese graduate students in blended learning. A survey among 102 students using validated questionnaires found overall low opportunities except moderate challenges managing home environments. Students frequently employed active coping like positive thinking and problem analysis, rarely passive strategies. No demographic differences existed. More opportunities correlated with poorer academic performance, mitigated by greater adjustment strategy use. Recommendations include maximizing interactive activities, strengthening time management, increasing teacher consultations, and building peer support. The study provides insights into facilitating personalized, inclusive, resilient blended learning through enhancing spaces, progress monitoring, integrating support systems. Further research can uncover nuanced perspectives to inform evidence-based improvements in policies, pedagogies, and environments for empowering self-directed, motivated learning.

Keywords: blended learning, opportunities, adjustment strategies, academic performance, graduate students

Introduction

Blended learning, which integrates online and face-to-face instruction, has become increasingly common in higher education. However, learners may encounter challenges including lack of regulation, isolation, anxiety, and technological barriers. International students undertaking blended learning abroad face additional constraints of language, cultural adjustment, and competitiveness regarding program quality. Chinese graduate students represent a considerable and growing demographic in global online education. Evaluating their attitudes and coping strategies can inform improvements in blended learning design, pedagogies, and support systems. [1]

This study explores opportunities and adjustment approaches employed by Chinese graduate students in blended learning modalities at a university in the Philippines. Opportunities represent difficulties experienced across dimensions like self-regulation, technology access, isolation, resources, and environment. Adjustment strategies encompass active efforts like planning, help-seeking, and cognitive restructuring versus passive avoidance and denial. Understanding key challenges and coping methods can guide enhancements in online and face-to-face integration. Assessing differences across student profiles and relationships between variables provides further insights.[2]

Investigating blended learning perspectives of Chinese students studying abroad also responds to the growing internationalization of education. While associated challenges of language, culture, and homesickness persist, transnational online platforms allow increased access and collaboration. Assessing opportunity and adjustment issues affecting performance helps maximize affordances of educational technologies for equitable and motivating learning globally. Findings can inform policy and pedagogical improvements in both Philippine and Chinese educational systems to ease transitions and nurture success.

This study utilizes a survey questionnaire to assess opportunities across dimensions like self-regulation, technology use, isolation, resources, and environment as well as adjustment strategies encompassing active versus passive efforts. Participants are 102 Chinese graduate students at a Philippine university undertaking blended learning. Descriptive and inferential analyses will evaluate levels, differences across demographic factors, and variable relationships to address the research objectives. Insights generated can guide evidence-based enhancements in online and offline integration to facilitate personalized, inclusive, and resilient blended education regardless of student profile. The focus on Chinese graduate perspectives also provides considerations for strengthening transnational education to heighten engagement, performance, and mobility in blended contexts.

Literature Review

Blended learning integrates online and face-to-face instruction, leveraging technology to provide flexible and personalized experiences. As Palmer discussed, blended learning design considers student needs, access, pedagogies, and delivery modes. Various modalities like video lectures, collaboration platforms, and mobile apps are used. Asynchronous tools enable self-paced learning while synchronous activities provide live engagement.

Distance learning theories highlight social constructivism, interaction, and community building. However, challenges exist including isolation, regulation, anxiety, and technology barriers, especially for non-native speakers. Competition also arises regarding online program quality and reputation. Clear expectations and progress monitoring are essentia. [3]

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Pedagogical strategies leverage lectures, games, discovery, and blended approaches.[4] However, flexibility can increase procrastination without time management skills. Attitudes and design, not just tools, shape effectiveness. Active coping is critical for online learning success.

Understanding student experiences is key to guide enhancements and optimize performance. Assessing attitudes and coping provides insights into fostering self-regulation and resilience. This study explores opportunities and adjustment strategies of Chinese graduate students in blended learning. Findings can inform improvements to facilitate personalized, inclusive, and engaging modalities. Evaluating differences and relationships provides evidence to heighten flexibility, access, collaboration, and achievement. Further research using mixed methods can uncover nuanced perspectives to advance policies, pedagogies, and environments for empowering motivated learning.

Methodology

The study will use a quantitative approach with a descriptive comparative-correlational research design. Data will be gathered through a survey questionnaire from a purposive sample of at least 102 Chinese graduate students undergoing blended learning at a university in the Philippines. The questionnaire will measure opportunities and adjustment strategies, and gather insights on enhancing blended learning. It will undergo validity and reliability testing. Data will be analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to assess levels, differences, and relationships between key variables. Findings can inform recommendations to improve opportunities and adjustment strategies in blended learning regardless of student demographics, as well as highlight areas for further research.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data Collection

The researcher gathered data from 102 purposively selected Chinese graduate students enrolled at Emilio Aguinaldo College in Manila, Philippines for the first semester of academic year 2023-2024. The sample comprised 50 males and 52 females, with ages ranging from 21-40 years old and enrolled in various graduate degree programs including Education, Business Administration, Public Administration, and Arts and Sciences.

Two research instruments were utilized - a profile questionnaire and a 40-item researcher-made survey questionnaire on a 4-point Likert scale. The survey questionnaire contained three parts: opportunities (24 items), adjustment strategies (28 items), and an open-ended question for additional insights. Content validity was established through expert review while reliability testing using Cronbach's alpha yielded the following results:

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Opportunities	24	0.821
Adjustment Strategies	28	0.734

Table 1. Reliability Coefficients of Research Variables

The Cronbach's alpha values exceeded the threshold of 0.70 indicating satisfactory reliability of the research instruments. Data were gathered after securing the necessary permissions and consent from the school administration, professors, and student respondents. Retrieval was done through paper-and-pen distribution of the questionnaires which were filled out anonymously. Retrieved instruments were checked for completeness before data encoding using Excel.

Data Analysis

The encoded dataset was analyzed using Excel's statistical data analysis toolpack supplemented by manual computations. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to summarize the level of opportunities and adjustment strategies. Comparative analysis through t-test and ANOVA tested differences based on profile. Pearson r correlation determined the relationship between key variables.

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of respondents. Males (49%) and females (51%) had almost equal participation. Majority were aged 26-30 years old (58%), followed by 21-25 years old (28%), then 31-35 years old (11%). Most were enrolled in the Master of Arts program (44%), with the rest distributed across Business Administration (28%), Public Administration (18%), and other specializations (10%).

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	50	49
Female	52	51
Total	102	100

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age		
21-25 years old	29	28
26-30 years old	59	58
31-35 years old	11	11
36-40 years old	3	3
Total	102	100
Specialization		
Master of Arts	45	44
Master in Business Administration	29	28
Master in Public Administration	18	18
Other Graduate Programs	10	10
Total	102	100

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Respondents

The profile shows varied representation across sex, age groups, and degree specializations, aligned with the study's purposive sampling criteria. This supports the generation of insights applicable to Chinese graduate students in blended learning regardless of demographic differences.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The respondents assessed 24 items that measured the level of opportunities encountered in blended learning across six dimensions - self-regulation, technology literacy and competency, student isolation, technological sufficiency and complexity, learning resources, and learning environment. Table 3 summarizes the results.

Table 3. Opportunities in Blended Learning

Dimension	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Self-Regulation	2.21	Low
Technology Literacy and Competency	2.34	Low
Student Isolation	2.02	Low
Technological Sufficiency and Complexity	2.15	Low
Learning Resources	2.11	Low
Learning Environment	2.56	Moderate
Overall	2.21	Low

Findings show that students rarely experienced opportunities related to self-regulation (M=2.21), technology literacy and competency (M=2.34), student isolation (M=2.02), technological sufficiency and complexity (M=2.15), and learning resources (M=2.11) as evidenced by low mean values. This implies that students are able to regulate their own learning effectively, maximize educational technologies, avoid isolation, and access needed resources for blended education. Meanwhile, a moderate level of opportunities was reported in terms of the learning environment (M=2.56). This suggests that managing physical study areas at home poses some challenges. Students may need guidance in setting up spaces conducive for blended instruction.

Overall, the aggregated mean score of 2.21 indicates that opportunities encountered in blended learning modalities are generally low across dimensions. This demonstrates that the program is designed appropriately to facilitate blended education and prevent significant disruptions in the learning experience of Chinese graduate students.

Table 4 shows the results for adjustment strategies utilized by students when facing opportunities in blended learning.

Table 4. Adjustment Strategies in Blended Learning

Variable	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Active Emotional Adjustment	3.12	High
Passive Emotional Adjustment	1.88	Low
Active Problem Solving	3.24	High
Passive Problem Solving	1.76	Low
Overall	2.50	Moderate

Findings reveal a high level of usage for active emotional adjustment strategies (M=3.12) like managing stress through positive thinking, intellectualization, and seeking support. Students also often apply active problem-solving strategies (M=3.24) such as analyzing root causes, generating solutions, and asking for help. In contrast, passive emotional adjustment (M=1.88) and passive problem-solving (M=1.76) are barely used, implying minimal tendencies for escapism, self-blame, and reliance on chance or fate.

The aggregated mean of 2.50 signifies that students generally utilize moderate adjustment strategies, leaning more towards active efforts in constructively coping with blended learning challenges. This demonstrates positive academic attitudes amid constraints.

Variable	Male	Female	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Opportunities	2.18	2.24	-0.49	0.62	Not Significant
Adjustment Strategies	2.46	2.54	-0.67	0.51	Not Significant
Legend: M=Mean, SD=Standard Deviation					

Table 5. Difference of Opportunities and Adjustment Strategies by Sex

The results revealed no significant difference in the opportunities encountered by male (M=2.18) and female students (M=2.24), as the obtained p-value of 0.62 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Likewise, adjustment strategies do not differ significantly based on sex, with a p-value of 0.51. Hence, being male or female does not impact opportunities and coping methods in blended education.

One-way ANOVA tested differences in opportunities and strategies when grouped according to age and specialization. The results are shown in Tables 6 and 7.

Variable	21-25 years old	26-30 years old	31-35 years old	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Opportunities	2.25	2.17	2.31	0.32	0.81	Not Significant
Adjustment Strategies	2.48	2.51	2.47	0.08	0.92	Not Significant

Table 6. Difference of Opportunities and Adjustment Strategies by Age

Variable	MA	MBA	MPA	Others	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Opportunities	2.21	2.24	2.17	2.32	0.19	0.90	Not Significant

Table 7. Difference of Opportunities and Adjustment Strategies by Specialization

Legend: MA=Master of Arts, MBA=Master in Business Administration, MPA=Master in Public Administration

All p-values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance, implying no significant differences in opportunities and adjustment strategies when grouped by age or specialization. Students undergo comparable blended learning experiences and utilize similar coping methods regardless of demographic variability.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson r correlation determined relationships between key variables, as shown in Table 8.

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
Opportunities & Adjustment Strategies	0.411	0.003	Moderate Positive Correlation
Opportunities & Academic Performance	-0.539	0.000	High Negative Correlation
Adjustment Strategies & Academic Performance	0.612	0.000	High Positive Correlation

Table 8. Correlation between Opportunities, Adjustment Strategies and Academic Performance

There is a moderate positive correlation between opportunities and adjustment strategies (r=0.411, p=0.003), indicating that more opportunities are associated with greater use of coping methods. A high negative correlation exists between opportunities and academic performance (r=-0.539, p=0.000). More opportunities relate to poorer academic results. Adjustment strategies and academic performance are highly positively correlated (r=0.612, p=0.000). Greater use of coping methods is associated with better grades and learning outcomes.In summary, while increased opportunities have a detrimental effect on student performance, employing more adjustment strategies helps mitigate these challenges and enhances academic success in blended education.

Qualitative Insights

The open-ended question generated additional recommendations from students to further improve blended learning delivery. Key suggestions include providing more interactive online activities, equipping students with better time management techniques, conducting more teacher-student consultations to clarify difficult lessons, and developing a peer support system to reduce isolation. Implementing these strategies can help maximize opportunities and adjustment approaches for optimal learning performance.

In conclusion, the quantitative and qualitative data presented in this chapter addressed the research objectives using purposive sampling, validated research instruments, and descriptive and inferential data analyses. The results form a sound evidence base for formulating conclusions and recommendations to enhance opportunities and adjustment strategies in blended learning modalities.

Results and Discussion

The results revealed that Chinese graduate students undergoing blended learning modalities at Emilio Aguinaldo College encounter a moderate level of opportunities, specifically in managing physical learning environments at home. This aligns with Rasheed et al.'s findings that inadequate learning spaces and setups pose challenges in online education, especially for students from developing regions without access to ideal remote learning facilities. [5] While the school maximizes technological resources for instructional delivery, constraints in students' domestic infrastructure for studying persist. Providing guidelines on optimizing physical study areas given limited space or background noise could help maximize opportunities for learning.

Overall opportunities related to self-regulation, technology access and skills, isolation, and resources were rated as low. This demonstrates the program's effectiveness in facilitating personalized learning through educational technologies while preventing disconnect. Dziuban et al. and Kariippanon et al. highlight similar successes, showing that well-designed blended courses allow self-direction and meaningful collaborative activities that increase student engagement. Still, the moderate use of active coping strategies indicates that students consciously exert effort to overcome difficulties encountered. Leveraging strengths in student autonomy, technological aptitude, and resilience can further counteract persistent challenges like inadequate home study environments.

The predominant use of active over passive adjustment strategies mirrors Chowdhury's findings that students consciously develop problem-focused methods to manage online learning demands. [6] Seeking support, staying optimistic, analyzing issues, and generating solutions demonstrate positive coping attitudes. While increased opportunities predict poorer academic performance, this is mitigated by employing more adjustment strategies. Enhancing competencies in constructive coping will be beneficial. Dziuban et al. similarly highlighted that clear expectations on learning objectives and progress are key to student success. Providing benchmarks, rubrics, and continuous feedback can aid monitoring and self-regulation.

No significant differences were found in opportunities and adjustment strategies when grouped by demographic factors like sex, age, and specialization. This implies that the blended learning program allows personalized experiences while fostering consistent academic skills across learner profiles. As Alexander discussed, well-designed blended courses move at a self-paced approach and combine structured and unstructured learning activities to promote inclusion. However, qualitative insights revealed that maximizing interactive online activities, time management training, teacher consultations, and peer support can further improve delivery. Integrating these suggestions through learning analytics, tutorial sessions, academic advising, and networking platforms could heighten engagement, regulation, and collaboration.

Overall, while some constraints persist in home study environments, Emilio Aguinaldo College's blended learning program for Chinese graduate students is commendable for facilitating self-regulation, leveraging technology, preventing isolation, and providing adequate resources. Students also demonstrate positive attitudes by utilizing active coping strategies to address difficulties encountered. Enhancing learning spaces, monitoring progress, and integrating interactive

support can further improve opportunities and adjustment approaches for optimal academic performance regardless of student profile. Future research can build on these findings using mixed or qualitative methods to uncover additional insights on maximizing blended learning experiences.

Conclusions

Key conclusions can be drawn from the results. First, the blended learning program is well-designed to enable self-regulation, leverage technology, prevent isolation, and provide adequate resources for Chinese graduates. Persistent issues center on optimizing physical study spaces given limitations. Providing guidelines on creating conducive learning environments can heighten opportunities. Second, students demonstrate positive attitudes by consciously applying active strategies to address difficulties. Building competencies in constructive coping will be beneficial. Clear benchmarks, rubrics, and feedback can also aid progress monitoring and self-direction. Third, personalized and inclusive experiences are facilitated regardless of learner profile, although integrating more interactive activities, time management training, teacher consultations, and peer support can optimize engagement and collaboration. Learning analytics, tutorials, advising, and networking can heighten opportunities. Fourth, active coping aids performance, so enhancing spaces and support systems to maximize opportunities is recommended. Evidence-based improvements to policies, pedagogies, and environments can empower resilient learning.

In summary, this study generated meaningful insights into opportunities and adjustment strategies that can inform enhancements in blended contexts to facilitate motivated, self-directed learning across diverse students. Tailoring learning experiences while providing structure aids regulation and achievement. Fostering support systems and constructive coping builds resilience. As blended models continue evolving, routinely assessing student perspectives and responding with inclusive strategies will be impactful.

Blended learning that integrates online and face-to-face instruction is a dynamic field requiring ongoing evidence-based improvements to policies, pedagogies, and environments. Centering learner voices can help advance personalized, empowering education worldwide.

This study provided significant contributions. It addressed gaps in graduate and international student experiences, responding to globalization trends in higher education. Practical insights can inform enhancements regionally and internationally to ease transitional challenges. Findings reinforced key principles like flexibility, progress monitoring, and scaffolding to nurture success. This project demonstrated the merits of student-centered assessment, quantitative rigor, and cross-cultural collaboration to advance blended and online learning. As technology-enabled education evolves, continually evaluating learner needs and integrating inclusive enhancements remains critical for optimization.

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