Navigating Blended Teaching Post-COVID: Insights From Language Teachers

Truc Tran-Thi-Thanh
Faculty of Legal Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Law, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Abstract—This study aims to investigate how higher education instructors perceive remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and how prepared they were technologically to implement blended teaching in the wake of the epidemic. A quantitative approach was used, and information was gathered from 53 instructors at a Vietnam national university using questionnaires. The findings indicate that workload is the most difficult obstacle teachers face when teaching remotely, followed by issues on virtual communication with students, teachers' challenges in effectively employing technology in the classroom, and mental health issues due to social distancing. Despite encountering these challenges, most of the experiment's educators strongly endorse the adoption of blended teaching in response to the epidemic, expressing confidence in their technological readiness facilitated by institutional training. The results show that in order for higher education institutions to successfully adopt blended learning in the future, they need to be concerned with lowering the burden of their teachers, giving them training courses on technology pedagogy and providing stress management workshops.

Index Terms—language teaching, technological preparedness, blended teaching, post COVID-19

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has marked the onset of a digital transformation in higher education. The crisis prompted rapid developments in higher education that would typically take years to evolve due to varying management regulations (Strielkowski, 2020). The governments have advocated for a shift from in-person to online instruction during the pandemic. Consequently, the education industry must now adapt to new operational procedures and pedagogical approaches (Sangrà et al., 2012; Corlatean, 2020). Almost all higher education institutions (HEIs) in Vietnam have inevitably adopted online and hybrid learning modalities in response to the pandemic.

Since its inception in February 2021, online instruction has presented both opportunities and challenges for online teaching and learning (OTL). HEI stakeholders made the decision to swiftly implement emergency remote teaching due to a lack of time to undertake necessary restructuring of the subjects to be taught and studied. This decision has had a profound impact on all aspects of education, including institutional management, pedagogical practices, and assessment procedures (García-Peñalvo et al., 2020). In order to adeptly utilize contemporary technologies for emergency remote instruction, a considerable number of higher education (HE) instructors have already undergone ICT training (Rizakhojayeva et al., 2021). Since assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process, HEI stakeholders encountered significant challenges in maintaining assessment integrity in the context of the pandemic. Research suggests that learners' digital competencies do not hinder the implementation of online assessments; instead, successful online assessments rely on meticulous planning and supportive guidelines (Cruz et al., 2013).

HEI stakeholders should immediately implement emergency remote teaching because they do not have enough time to consider a necessary restructuring of the subjects to be taught and studied. This decision had an impact on all aspects of education, including institutional management, pedagogical practices, and assessment procedures (García-Peñalvo et al., 2020). In order to become proficient in the contemporary technologies of emergency remote instruction, a large number of higher education instructors have already received ICT training (Rizakhojayeva et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to recognize that opinions regarding the practice and preparedness for OTL held by HEIs teachers are complex. Given the swift transition to fully online instruction, significant modifications to instructional methods are required. These changes in OTL practice, as well as the willingness of stakeholders to engage in pedagogical and institutional reforms, are influenced by various factors, including individual, institutional, and cultural considerations. Furthermore, given the diverse backgrounds and OTL practices of HEIs teachers, these factors may not have the same impact on all educators. We undertook this study with the aim of addressing the following research questions:

1. What perceptions do instructors hold regarding their experience of teaching remotely during the pandemic?
2. What level of technological readiness do teachers believe they possess for blended learning (BL) in the post-COVID era?
3. What are the correlations between teachers' technological readiness and the factors of teachers' self-efficacy in using ITC and factor of institutional technological readiness?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Distance Learning and Blended Learning

In recent years in the education sector, the emphasis has dramatically changed from face-to- face learning to distance learning. Increased knowledge and/or behavior resulting from mediated experiences constrained by time and/or distance, when the learner does not share the same circumstances as what is being learned, is what Dhawan (2020) described as distant learning. Asserting the outstanding advantages compared to traditional teaching models, distance learning brings tremendous benefits and opportunities for HEI (Lai et al., 2016). With the adoption of technological pedagogical developments, the content of distance learning has become more intuitive, easy to understand, and easy to access (McConnell et al., 2013). This learning method helps learners gradually build a sense of self-study and self-improvement, and thus enhances the effectiveness of the learning process (Lai et al., 2016; Mulig & Rhame, 2012). In addition, Gurajena et al. (2021) argued that online learning provides more effective methods of communication for both teachers and learners.

The epidemic gave an opportunity for academic institutions to try out e-learning and BL. This possibility may also change students' and lecturers' attitudes toward e-learning, thereby reducing resistance (Mashwama et al., 2018; Mbunge, 2018). Since the 2000s, BL has appeared in many countries around the world, such as in North America, Western Europe, Asia and Australia. Organized form of blended teaching has merged the advantages of online teaching and traditional teaching. It is emerging as the dominant teaching model of the future (Watson, 2008). BL classes, according to Picciano (2009), are ones in which some face-to-face time is substituted with online activity and in which traditional face-to-face class activities and online activities are blended in a structured, pedagogically valuable manner. Moreover, Bliuc et al. (2007) defined BL as a term that describes learning activities combining face-to-face interactions with technologically mediated interactions between students, teachers, and learning materials. This definition embraces the two concepts of BL: a pedagogically based process and a course that includes both face-to-face and online components (Alammary et al., 2014).

B. Blended Learning Models

According to Victoria (2003), learners participate in the learning process in the form of face-to- face learning in class (groups, individuals, seminars, conferences), combined with the form of combination via the Internet (chat, blog, forum) and self-study at home (online, offline, spatially independent). BL models bring great benefits such as creating flexibility for both teachers and learners, enabling introverted learners to be more confident in the learning process, allowing teachers to easily connect with learners regardless of geographical distance and learning time can be relatively flexible (Graham, 2012).

Among twelve different kinds of BL models, Horn and Stake (2014) suggested that based on the class's characteristics and the students' and the teacher's roles, the BL classroom models can be classified into six common types: Station rotation model; Lab rotation model; Enriched Virtual model; Flex model; Flipped classroom model; Individual rotation model.

The above BL models are relatively commonly applied in high schools. Thereby, we present additional views from other researchers who developed supplementary BL approaches for higher education teachers. As stated by Alammary et al. (2014), he suggested 3 different BL design approaches: low- impact, medium-impact and high-impact blends according to the potential changes to the existing teaching program and student learning experience. Then the author describes the benefits and the challenges of applying each approach and provides recommendations about when and how each approach should be used. Figure 1 presents a summary of Alammary et al.'s (2014) approaches, by which the author emphasized that selecting a BL design approach should be made with great concern on a number of important factors. It is recommended that educators who are new to BL begin with the low-impact strategy. They ought to switch to the medium-impact blend once they have increased their understanding, self-assurance, and expertise. When using the medium-impact technique, educators might pursue the high-impact approach after setting up a backup plan for a few semesters to become more familiar with technology and their courses (Alammary et al., 2014).
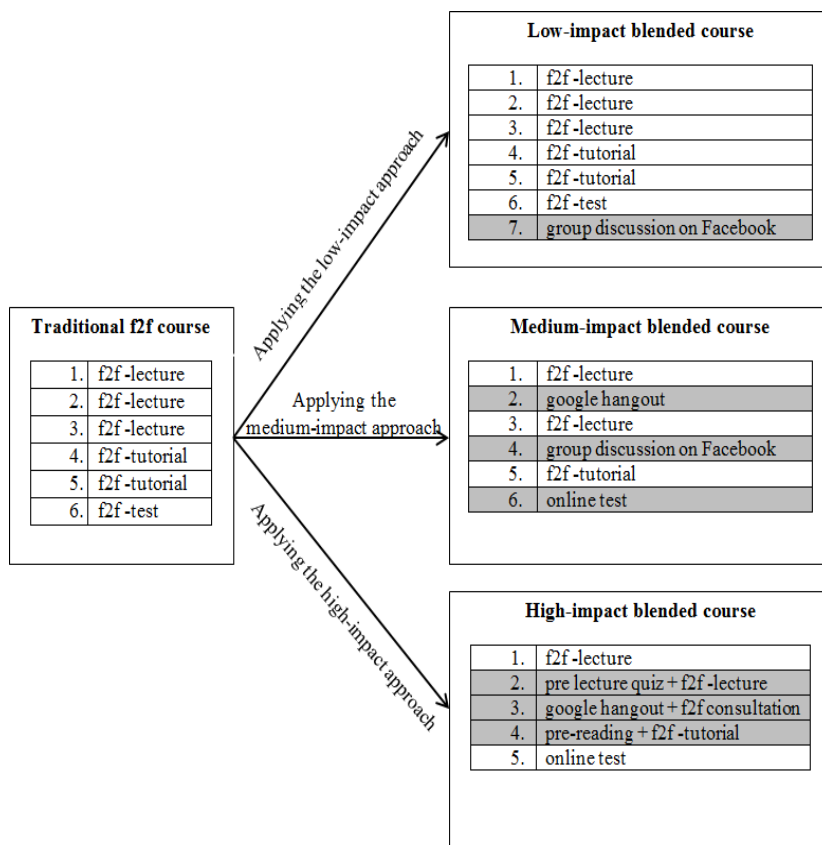
Low-impact blended course

1.	f2f -lecture
2.	f2f -lecture
3.	f2f -lecture
4.	f2f -tutorial
5.	f2f -tutorial
6.	f2f -test
7.	group discussion on Facebook

Traditional f2f course

1.	f2f -lecture
2.	f2f -lecture
3.	f2f -lecture
4.	f2f -tutorial
5.	f2f -tutorial
6.	f2f -test

Applying the low-impact approach

Applying the medium-impact approach

Applying the high-impact approach

Medium-impact blended course

1.	f2f -lecture
2.	google hangout
3.	f2f -lecture
4.	group discussion on Facebook
5.	f2f -tutorial
6.	online test

High-impact blended course

1.	f2f -lecture
2.	pre lecture quiz + f2f -lecture
3.	google hangout + f2f consultation
4.	pre-reading + f2f -tutorial
5.	online test

Figure 1. Applying Blended Learning Approaches to a Traditional Face-to-Face Course (Alammary et al., 2014)

C. Literature on Teachers' Technological Readiness, External and Internal Factors Influencing ICT Use in Education

Recent research has underscored the importance of comprehending teachers' digital literacy alongside the internal and external factors shaping their utilization of ICT in education. The following presents a concise literature review of pivotal constructs pertinent to this investigation, drawing from the insightful contributions of Eshet-Alkalai (2004), Fu (2013), and Ribble (2015). These include access to IT resources, computer skills readiness, digital communication readiness, as well as two influential factors impacting teachers' IT utilization: the internal factor of teacher self-efficacy and the external factor of institutional technological readiness as in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1
KEY CONSTRUCTS IN TEACHERS' DIGITAL LITERACY AND FACTORS INFLUENCING ICT UTILIZATION

	Constructs	**Definition**	**Supporting Literature**
1.	ICT access resources	Individual's ability of to find, retrieve, and utilize digital materials and information by using technology	Eshet-Alkalai (2004)
2.	Computer skill readiness	The degree to which an individual is equipped to use computers to carry out various IT tasks	Fu (2013)
3.	Digital communication readiness	Individual's readiness in using digital platforms to communicate, collaborate, and exchange information	Ribble (2015)
4.	ICT Self-efficacy	Individual's ability and aptitude to actively participate in ICT learning activities without external guidance or supervision	Fu (2013)
5.	Perceived institutional technological readiness	Individual's perception or opinion on how well-equipped organization is for its members to accept and use technology to fulfill its aims and objectives	Fu (2013)

Recent research has increasingly focused on comprehending teachers' technological readiness, alongside the internal and external factors shaping their utilization of ICT in teaching. The following presents a concise literature review of pivotal constructs pertinent to this investigation, drawing from the insightful contributions of Eshet-Alkalai (2004), Fu (2013), and Ribble (2015). These include access to IT resources, computer skills readiness, digital communication readiness, as well as two influential factors impacting teachers' IT utilization: the internal factor of teacher self-efficacy and the external factor of institutional technological readiness.

(a). Access to IT Resources

Eshet-Alkalai (2004) highlights access to IT resources as an individual's capacity to utilize technology for searching, retrieving, and utilizing digital documents and information. The author underscores these skills as pivotal in the

contemporary digital era, essential for global citizens. Moreover, the author emphasizes that teachers' capability to integrate technology into the teaching and learning process significantly hinges on their access to IT resources.

(b). Computer Skills Readiness

Fu (2013) defines computer skills readiness as the extent to which an individual is proficient in using a computer for various IT tasks. This proficiency holds crucial significance in integrating IT within the increasingly prevalent digital education landscape. Teachers possessing advanced computer skills are better positioned to effectively harness technology in supporting instructional objectives.

(c). Digital Communication Readiness

Digital communication readiness refers to an individual's preparedness to utilize digital platforms for communication, collaboration, and information exchange. Ribble (2015) asserts that contemporary digital citizens must possess adept communication skills in digital environments. Particularly for educators, proficiency in digital communication facilitates collaboration and interaction with students and colleagues within the learning environment, particularly in online settings.

(d). ICT Self-Efficacy

ICT self-efficacy or self-directed IT learning skills denote an individual's ability to actively engage in IT learning activities autonomously. Fu (2013) accentuates the significance of self-directed learning in IT integration among educators. Educators with robust self-directed ICT learning skills are more inclined to adapt to new technologies and engage in continual professional development to enhance their digital literacy.

(e). Teacher's Perceived Institutional Technological Readiness

An individual's perception of an organization's technological readiness reflects their assessment of the organization's preparedness for members to embrace and utilize technology in fulfilling its objectives. Fu (2013) discusses the pivotal role of organizational support and infrastructure in facilitating IT integration within educational contexts. Teachers' perceptions of their institution's technological readiness influence their confidence and propensity to adopt technology-enhanced teaching methodologies.

In summary, the literature review on teachers' digital literacy and the factors shaping their ICT utilization underscores the multifaceted nature of digital competencies and their interplay with external contextual factors. Investigating the correlations among these constructs is vital for comprehending teachers' perceptions and perspectives, thereby facilitating effective ICT integration and enhancing teaching and learning outcomes in the digital age.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

A. Data Collection and Participants

This quantitative study was conducted in December 2021 by giving questionnaires to 72 teachers to collect data on their experience and perspective in online teaching and blended teaching. The questionnaire using Google Form was designed with 19 questions related to the topic. Snowball sampling was employed due to time limitation and the convenience of the data collection process. The questionnaire was then sent to participants by email and social media. Among 72 participants receiving our survey request, 53 respondents sent back their answers. With a limited scale of data collection, the study is still expected to provide a general description of foreign language teaching practice during the pandemic and the teachers' perception on the future of BL in the post-COVID time.

B. Instrument and the Questionnaire

Quantitative method is mainly used to identify the descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis is employed to examine the associations between teachers' readiness towards blended teaching and other factors. The questionnaire consists of five demographic variables (academic department, gender, age, teaching experience and education); nine variables concerned with online teaching practice during the pandemic and blended teaching models they support. There are five more variables delivered in a five-point Likert-type response format to assess the participants' perceived technological readiness towards blended teaching in post-COVID time. The sections of the questionnaire were as follows:

(1) Online teaching practices: This section aimed to gather insights into participants' experiences and practices related to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. It encompassed inquiries about the utilization of learning management systems (LMS), methods of student communication, preferred video conferencing platforms (such as Google Meet, Zoom, and MS Teams), and the time allocated for lesson preparation.

(2) Teacher's Technological Readiness: This segment was designed to assess teachers' perceived preparedness for blended teaching, focusing on their familiarity with digital communication tools, access to technological resources, and capacity for independent ICT learning.

(3) Teaching Preferences: This section delved into participants' preferences regarding teaching modalities post-COVID, with a particular emphasis on BL models and traditional in-person instruction.

The questionnaire underwent rigorous examination to ensure its relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives. Pilot testing may have been conducted to validate the effectiveness of the questionnaire in eliciting insightful responses and identifying any ambiguities or inconsistencies. Upon completion of the questionnaire design, potential participants were informed of its availability via email and social media platforms. Given the constraints of time and convenience, snowball sampling was employed to recruit participants, facilitating the efficient collection of data from a diverse pool of respondents.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Participants' Socio-Demographic Profile

The respondents are from different foreign language faculties, the proportion of which is stated in Table 2 below showing the socio-demographic profile of the participants with a majority of female teachers (88.7%), mostly from the age range of 36-45 (50.9%). This implies that most participants belong to the group who is less confident in using online teaching technology as confirmed by Cooper (2006) who mentioned that women in general are less confident and more anxious in using technology.

TABLE 2
PARTICIPANTS' SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Variables	Attributes	Quantity	Percentage
Gender	Male	6	11.3
	Female	47	88.7
Age	Below 35 years old	18	34
	36–45 years old	27	50.9
	46–55 years old	6	11.3
	Above 55 years old	2	3.8
Years of teaching	Under 3 years	3	5.7
	3–8 years	10	18.9
	9–15 years	17	32.1
	More than 15 years	23	43.4
Education	Professor/ Associate Professor	1	1.9
	Doctor of Philosophy	17	32.1
	Master	35	66

Nearly half of the respondents (43.4%) have more than 15 years of teaching experience representing that most faculty are competent in the teaching profession. In addition, most of the respondents (66%) own a master degree and 32.1% of them are Ph.D. This ratio is reasonably reflecting the education background of foreign language teachers in the university on a whole.

TABLE 3
ACADEMIC FACULTY OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Faculty	Quantity	Percentage
Faculty of English Language Teacher Education	14	26.4
Faculty of Japanese Language and Culture	13	24.5
Faculty of Russian Language and Culture	7	13.2
Faculty of French Language and Culture	4	7.5
Faculty of English	4	7.5
Faculty of Chinese Language and Culture	3	5.7
Others	8	15.2

As in Table 3, most of the participants come from different foreign language departments. Many of them are English teachers (33.9%) who come from the Faculty of English Language Teacher Education and the Faculty of English. This indicates that these faculties have the highest number of faculty in this university as English is the most popular foreign language in HEI in Vietnam.

B. Teachers' Perception of Their Online Teaching Practices

Table 4 below provides a comprehensive overview of survey responses pertaining to online teaching practices. It outlines the usage of various video conferencing platforms, with Google Meet and Zoom being equally popular at 30.2%, followed by Microsoft Teams at 5.7%. Additionally, the data highlights the prevalence of Learning Management Systems (LMS), with 58.5% of respondents incorporating them into their online teaching. Various methods of contacting students are reported, with Zalo and Zalo Groups being the most utilized at 49.1%. Moreover, the table delineates the extent of training undertaken by participants, with 49.1% engaging in more than four online teaching courses. Insights into lesson preparation time reveal that 35.8% of respondents spend less than two hours, while 30.2% allocate more than three hours. Notably, a substantial majority (79.2%) find that preparing online lessons demands more time compared to traditional teaching modalities.

TABLE 4
SURVEY RESPONSES ON ONLINE TEACHING PRACTICES

Variables	Attributes	Quantity	Percentage
Video conferencing and application usage in online teaching	Google Meet	16	30.2
	Zoom	16	30.2
	MS Teams	3	5.7
	I combine video conferencing with 1,2 apps	5	9.4
	I combine video conferencing with 3 or more apps	13	29
Usage of LMS in online teaching	Yes	31	58.5
	No	22	41.5
Methods of contacting students	Zalo + Zalo Group	26	49.1
	Facebook + Messenger Group	10	18.9
	LMS forum	7	13.2
	Other (Email, Line, Whatsapp…)	10	18.9
Number of training courses in online teaching	1 or 2 courses	11	20.8
	3 or 4 courses	16	30.2
	More than 4 courses	26	49.1
Time taken to prepare a lesson	Less than 1 hours	2	3.8
	Less than 2 hours	19	35.8
	Less than 3 hours	16	30.2
	More than 3 hours	16	30.2
Comparison of lesson preparation time to traditional teaching modality	More time	42	79.2
	Equal time	11	20.8
	Less time	0	0

Of the total of 53 respondents, 31/53 teachers have applied LMS into online teaching, accounting for 58.5%. Thus, up to 41.5% of teachers do not use LMS in their online teaching. The fact that a large number of teachers who are not ready for applying LMS in foreign language teaching shows that teachers may face certain difficulties in terms of technological competence or they might have problems adapting to distance teaching in an emergent time of pandemic.

In Table 4, the teachers agree that it takes them more than 3 hours to prepare for each lesson with 30.2% of the respondents supporting this idea and 35.8% of the teachers spent from 2 to 3 hours to prepare for an online teaching session. 79.2% of lecturers reveal that the preparedness is more time-consuming than face-to-face teaching modality and the workload is the biggest obstacle for teachers in fully applying the online teaching model.

Table 5 illustrates teachers' perceptions of the most challenging issues in distance teaching, categorized by factors influencing students' academic performance. Findings reveal a variety of challenges: a small fraction of respondents (5.7%) reported no difficulty, while 7.5% cited health problems as impacting student performance. Furthermore, 11.3% highlighted a lack of technological pedagogical knowledge as a significant challenge. Limited virtual interactions with students emerged as a prevalent issue, with 22.6% of teachers noting its impact on academic performance. Notably, a majority of respondents (49.1%) identified a heavy workload as the most challenging factor affecting students' academic performance in distance teaching.

TABLE 5
CHALLENGING ISSUES IN DISTANCE TEACHING

Factors Affecting Students' Academic Performance	Quantity	Percentage
No difficulty	3	5.7%
Health problems	4	7.5%
Lack of technological pedagogical knowledge	6	11.3%
Limited virtual interactions with students	12	22.6%
Heavy workload	26	49.1%

C. Teachers' Choice of Teaching Modes and Their Perception on Technological Readiness Towards Blended Teaching in the Post-COVID Time

BL involves courses that are taught both in the classroom (face-to-face) and at a distance; combining instructional technology with actual job tasks to create a harmonious effect of learning and working. Reverse instruction, flip instruction, reverse teaching, or flip teaching are terms used in BL to describe the use of technology in conjunction with traditional teaching methods. Thus, teachers' technological readiness towards BL is one of the vital factors to the BL adoption in the future.

Although there are certain difficulties from both students and teachers in applying the online teaching model in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, teachers' opinions on the learning model that they support after the pandemic is not the traditional face-to-face teaching but blended teaching. Table 4 shows teachers' viewpoint on the adoption of BL in the post-COVID time.

TABLE 6
TEACHERS' CHOICE OF TEACHING MODES IN THE POST-COVID ERA

Teaching Mode	Quantity	Percentage
Synchronous teaching	0	0%
Onsite teaching	4	7.5%
Blended teaching (70% onsite-30% offsite)	24	45.3%
Blended teaching (50% onsite-50% offsite)	17	32.1%
Blended teaching (30% onsite-70% offsite)	5	9.4%
Other ideas	3	5.7%

Results show that the majority of lecturers voted for blended teaching with 45.3% of the respondents in favor of blended teaching with 70% onsite-30% off-site model. Taking second place was the combined teaching model of 50% onsite-50% offsite with 32.1% supporting ideas. The results reveal a high level of faculty support for BL showing that teachers have recognized its outstanding benefits. Only 4/53 teachers support traditional face-to-face teaching.

Data in Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics concerning teachers' perceptions on their readiness towards blended teaching in the post-COVID time. The results show that teachers positively perceive their readiness towards blended teaching (M>3.85). Among the examined factors, digital communication readiness has the highest level of agreement (M=4.12), while access resources and computer skill readiness show a similarity in teachers' perception (M=3.86 and 3.85 respectively). The influential factors that influence teachers' readiness towards blended teaching show a similarity in teachers' agreement of their importance (M= 3.70 for Self-directed ICT learning skills M= 3.90 for Teacher's perceived institutional readiness).

TABLE 7
MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF TECHNOLOGICAL READINESS AND INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

	Factors	Mean	SD	skewness	kurtosis
Teacher's technological readiness	ICT access resources	3.86	0.59	-0.04	-0.18
	Computer skill readiness	3.85	0.57	0.29	-0.46
	Digital communication readiness	4.12	0.59	-0.50	0.95
Influential factors	Self-directed ICT learning skills	3.70	0.62	-1.20	6.11
	Perceived institutional technological readiness	3.90	0.54	0.34	-0.21

On exploring factors that influence teachers' technological readiness towards blended teaching, Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the associations between teachers' readiness and factors: Self-directed ICT learning skills (internal factor) and Teacher's perceived institutional readiness (external factor). The results are presented in Table 8 and Table 9 showing that the correlation varies considerably according to these two factors.

TABLE 8
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERCEIVED INSTITUTIONAL READINESS AND TEACHERS' READINESS

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r)		r^2
Computer skill readiness	0.33**	0.10 (10%)
Digital communication readiness	0.39**	0.15 (15%)
Access resources	0.56***	0.31 (31%)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)*

Correlation analysis in Table 8 shows that teachers relate their technological readiness to Teacher's perceived institutional readiness more than Self-directed ICT learning skills. The correlation between Teacher's perceived institutional readiness and teachers' access resources is intense ($r=0.56$, $p<0.001$) whilst this factor is relatively connected with digital communication readiness ($r=0.39$, $p<0.01$) and computer skill readiness ($r=0.33$, $p<0.01$) respectively.

TABLE 9
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY IN USING ICT AND TEACHERS' TECHNOLOGICAL READINESS

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r)		r^2
Computer skill readiness	0.31*	0.09 (9%)
Digital communication readiness	0.42***	0.18 (18%)
Access resources	0.27*	0.07 (7%)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)*

Correlation analysis in Table 9 shows a weaker correlation between teachers' readiness and their Self-directed ICT learning skills. Digital communication readiness is highly associated with teachers' Self-directed ICT learning skills ($r=0.42$, $p<0.001$) whilst the correlation is lower between this factor and computer skill readiness ($r=0.31$, $p<0.05$) and access resources ($r=0.27$, $p<0.05$) respectively.

V. DISCUSSION

Based on the results provided above, several key issues can be discussed as follows:

A. Teachers' Choice of Blended Teaching and Their Technological Readiness

The choice of a blended teaching model by educators in this study signals a shift in pedagogy in the post-COVID landscape. The reasons behind this preference point to the growing role of technology in education. Our findings align with Zhang's (2023) study which investigates hybrid learning, which combines online and traditional classroom training to enhance teaching strategies and expand educational options in English translation teaching. The results demonstrate that the communication component encompasses the fundamentals, interactions, and links essential for effective teaching. The report also outlines the construction of a hybrid teaching ecosystem, comprising software and hardware components tailored for translation instruction, resulting in reliable and practical performance compared to conventional teaching methods.

The way teachers perceive their technological readiness for blended teaching in this study can shed light on teachers' willingness to invest in enhancing their technological pedagogical knowledge to adapt to the new situation. However, there is a more intense correlation between teachers' technological readiness and teacher's perceived institutional readiness rather than their Self-directed ICT learning skills. This implies that the better prepared HEI is towards blended teaching, the more confident teachers can be in adopting blended teaching modality in the future. Our finding is supported by Petko et al. (2018) whose work confirmed that although there are differences in teachers' technology-related skills and beliefs, they are influenced by the context of the schools and thus should be supported by the schools in terms of digital tools, strategic importance and the goal clarity with regard to educational technology integration (Petko et al., 2018).

B. Challenges and Opportunities in Blended Teaching

While blended teaching offers various benefits, such as flexibility and enhanced learning experiences, educators may face challenges in adapting to blended teaching. Findings of this study show that during online teaching practice, most teachers found themselves overloaded with abundant work related to lesson preparedness. Other problems that teachers might face include their virtual interaction with students, weakness in IT appliances into teaching and health issues. These findings are supported by various studies on teachers' perception towards online teaching practice. Maguire (2005) found one barrier for online teachers is the increased workload, especially in research time for lesson preparedness. Lee and Busch (2005) identified a negative impact on teachers' willingness towards distance teaching by communication issues such as lack of social contact.

Findings in this study revealed key challenges identified by teachers, such as workload and technological capacity. Our research is supported by Tierney et al.'s (2024) study which evaluates hybrid teaching's benefits and drawbacks in light of current developments in higher education. The paper draws on existing literature to justify institutional usage of hybrid teaching by using a multi-method approach to data collection. Findings indicate that there may be strong reasons to think about using hybrid technology, such as accessibility. Effective hybrid implementation depends on effective communication on the definitions, advantages, restrictions, support and training for hybrid.

C. Teacher Professional Development and Future Research Implications

Examining factors that influence teachers' technological readiness for blended teaching, such as access to resources and self-directed ICT learning skills, can inform initiatives to help educators effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. Our findings are supported by prior research, which highlights the significant influence that teachers' self-efficacy has on their professional commitment and job satisfaction (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), attrition from the teaching profession (Hong, 2012), and is a significant predictor of students' motivation and achievements (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Caprara et al., 2006; Guo et al., 2022). Thus it is crucial to look into the variables that may affect teachers' confidence in their ability to use ICT in the classroom.

Finally, it is necessary to consider the implications of the findings for future research and practice in educational technology and teacher professional development. Discussion of potential strategies, such as training in digital media tools and pedagogical approaches for BL, may be valuable for teachers' professional development. Moreover, further investigation can be done, such as longitudinal research on the impact of blended teaching on student outcomes and the effectiveness of different teaching approaches, could provide valuable insights into this area.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although educators may face challenges in teaching online, their strong support for the post-pandemic blended teaching model underscores the need for proactive measures to improve teachers' technological readiness and minimize implementation challenges. Institutional support, along with targeted professional development initiatives, can play a crucial role in facilitating educators' transition to blended teaching. It is strongly recommended that to ensure the adoption of blended teaching after the pandemic, HEI should be concerned about teachers' workload reduction and enhance their ability to virtually interact with students. Further studies could be conducted on assessing the faculty's perception towards blended teaching that focus on teachers' technological competencies and their motivators and

barriers in this teaching modality to promote effective educational technology integration and enhance teaching practices in the digital age.

REFERENCES

[1]   Alammary, A., Sheard, J., and Carbone, A. (2014). Blended learning in higher education: Three different design approaches. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *30*(4), 440- 454.
[2]   Bliuc, A. M., Goodyear, P., and Ellis, R. A. (2007). Research focus and methodological choices in studies into students' experiences of blended learning in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *10*, 231-244. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2007.08.001.
[3]   Caprara, G., Barbaranelli, C., Steca, P., and Malone, P. (2006). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and students' academic achievement: A study at the school level. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44*, 473-490. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.09.001.
[4]   Cooper, J. (2006). The Digital Divide: The Special Case of Gender. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, *22*(5), 320-334.
[5]   Corlatean, T. (2020). Risks, discrimination and opportunities for education during the times of COVID-19 pandemic. *Proceedings of the 17th Research Association for Interdisciplinary Studies*, pp. 37-46.
[6]   Cruz, G., Dominguez, C., Maia, A., Pedrosa, D., and Grams, G. (2013). Web-Based Peer Assessment: A Case Study with Civil Engineering Students. *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy*, *3*, 64-70. DOI: 10.3991/ijep.v3iS1.2411
[7]   Dhawan, S. (2020). Online Learning: A Panacea in the Time of COVID-19 Crisis. Journal of Educational Technology Systems. *0*(0), 1-18. DOI: 10.1177/0047239520934018.
[8]   Eshet-Alkalai, Y. (2004). Digital Literacy: A Conceptual Framework for Survival Skills in the Digital Era. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, *13*(1), 93-10.
[9]   Fu, J. S. (2013). ICT in education: A critical literature review and its implications. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology*, *9*, 112-125.
[10]   García-Peñalvo, F. J., Corell, A., Abella-García, V., and Grande, M. (2020). Online assessment in higher education in the time of COVID-19 - La evaluación online en la educación superior en tiempos de la COVID-19. *Education in the Knowledge Society (EKS)*, *21*, 1–26. DOI: 10.14201/eks.23086.
[11]   Graham, C.R. (2012). Blended learning systems: Definition, current trends, and future directions. In C.J. Bonk & C.R. Graham (Eds.), *Handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local Designs*, pp. 3-21. John Wiley & Sons Inc.
[12]   Guo, P., Admiraal, W., and van der Rijst, R. (2022). *Hybrid Approaches to Teaching in Higher Education*. Leiden, Netherlands: Leiden University.
[13]   Gurajena, C., Mbunge, E. and Fashoto, S. (2021). Teaching and learning in the new normal: Opportunities and challenges of distance learning amid COVID-19 pandemic. SSRN Electronic Journal, *1*(2), 9-1. DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3765509.
[14]   Hong, J. Y. (2012). Why Do Some Beginning Teachers Leave the School, and Others Stay? Understanding Teacher Resilience through Psychological Lenses. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *18*, 417-440. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2012.696044
[15]   Klassen, R., and Chiu, M. (2011). The Occupational Commitment and Intention to Quit of Practicing and Pre-service Teachers: Influence of Self-efficacy, Job Stress, and Teaching Context. *Fuel and Energy Abstracts*, *36*, 114-129. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2011.01.002
[16]   Lai, C., Shum, M., and Tian, Y. (2016). Enhancing learners' self-directed use of technology for Language learning: the effectiveness of an online training platform. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *29*, 1-29. DOI: 10.1080/09588221.2014.889714.
[17]   Lee, J.A., and Busch, P. E. (2005). Factors related to instructors' willingness to participate in distance education. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *99*(2), 109-115. DOI:10.3200/JOER.99.2.109-115.
[18]   Maguire, L.L. (2005). Literature review – faculty participation in online distance education: Barriers and motivators. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, *8*(1), 1-16. http://www.westga.edu/~distance/ojdla/spring81/maguire81.htm.
[19]   Mashwama, P., Fashoto, P., Mbunge, E. and Gwebu, S. (2018). Development of a mobile intervehicular communication system based on gossip algorithm. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, *14*(11), 1-21.
[20]   Mbunge, M. (2018). Adoption of Smart Grid Framework Which Tracks Power Consumption of Household Appliances in Zimbabwe. *American journal of operations management and information System, 3*(1), 27-32. DOI:10.11648/j.ajomis.20180301.14.
[21]   McConnell, T. J., Parker, J. M., Eberhardt, J., Koehler, M. J., and Lundeberg, M. A. (2013). Virtual professional learning communities: Teachers' perceptions of virtual versus face-to-face professional development. *Journal of science education and technology*, *22*(3), 267-277.
[22]   Horn, M. B., and Stake, H. (2014). *Blended: Using disruptive innovation to improve schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
[23]   Mulig, L., and Rhame, S. (2012). Time requirements in an online teaching environment: How to be more effective and efficient in teaching online. *Journal of Accounting and Finance*, *12*(4), 101-109.
[24]   Petko, D., Prasse, D., and Cantieni, A. (2018). The Interplay of School Readiness and Teacher Readiness for Educational Technology Integration: A Structural Equation Model. *Computers in the Schools*, *35*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/07380569.2018.1428007
[25]   Picciano, A. G. (2009). Blending With Purpose: The Multimodal Model. *Journal of the Research Center for Educational Technology (RCET)*, *5*(1), 4-14.
[26]   Rizakhojayeva, G., Yussupova, G., Mamyrbayeva, B., and Meirbekov, A. (2021). Professional foreign language training in the context of the digital university: Example of modeling and experimental validation. *International Journal of Engineering Pedagogy*, *11*, 50-69.
[27]   Ribble, M. (2015). *Digital Citizenship in Schools: Nine Elements All Students Should Know* (3rd ed.). Washington DC: International Society for Technology in Education.

[28] Sangrà, A., Vlachopoulos, D., and Cabrera, N. (2012). Building an inclusive definition of elearning: An approach to the conceptual framework. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *13*(2), 145 – 159.

[29] Skaalvik, E. M., and Skaalvik, S. (2007). Dimensions of Teacher Self-Efficacy and Relations With Strain Factors, Perceived Collective Teacher Efficacy, and Teacher Burnout. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99*(3), 611-625. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.611

[30] Strielkowski, W. (2020). COVID-19 pandemic and the digital revolution in academia and higher education. *Preprints*. http://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202004.0290.v1.

[31] Tierney, A., Hopwood, I., and Davies, S. (2024). Staff and student experiences of hybrid teaching in a pandemic-impacted context. *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, *19*(17), 1-19. DOI: 10.58459/rptel.2024.19017.

[32] Victoria, L. T. (2003). *ICT in Education*. Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme. e-ASEAN Task Force.

[33] Ware, H., and Kitsantas, A. (2007). Teacher and collective efficacy beliefs as predictors of professional commitment. *Journal of Educational Research*, *100*(5), 303-310. https://doi.org/10.3200/JOER.100.5.303-310

[34] Watson, J. (2008). *Blended learning: The Convergence of Online and Face-to-face Education*. Promising Practice in Online Learning.

[35] Zhang, X. (2023). Application of hybrid teaching mode in translation teaching from the perspective of ecological concept teaching. *3C TIC: Cuadernos de desarrollo aplicados a las TIC*, *12*, 261-276. DOI: 10.17993/3ctic.2023.122.261-276.

Truc Tran-Thi-Thanh holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Linguistics from University of Social Sciences and Humanities – Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City and has been actively engaged in academia for over two decades. She currently serves as a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh city University of Law, contributing significantly to the institution's academic community.

Dr. Tran's scholarly pursuits encompass various facets of linguistics, with a primary focus on cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors, intercultural communication and computer-assisted language learning. Her extensive research and pedagogical experience have contributed significantly to the advancement of linguistic studies, particularly in understanding the intricate dynamics of language acquisition and cross-cultural communication. Email address: ttttruc@hcmulaw.edu.vn.