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Strategic Leadership and Institutional Readiness for Blended Learning in Higher Education: An Integrative Review of Implementation Frameworks and Contextual Challenges

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ABSTRACT

While the incorporation of blended learning in HE seems to be gaining momentum, its effective use is not just about having access to technology or individual teachers' efforts. Effective planning, sufficient resources, institutional support and leadership are also needed to create sustainable blended learning opportunities for universities. This integrative review investigates how strategic leadership and institutional readiness affect the implementation of blended learning, especially in public universities of Pakistan. Based on selected international and Pakistani literature, this review examines the organisational factors related to the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of blended learning. Institutional vision, administrative support, technological infrastructure, faculty development, and resource allocation are highlighted in the literature. Research in international contexts provides useful frameworks for understanding institutional adoption and change, whereas research from Pakistan highlights management practices, technological constraints, and variation in institutional preparation. Past research has tackled these questions in varied ways; however, this renders it challenging to understand the relationship between leadership and readiness to support effective and sustainable implementation. To address this concern, the review compiles the available evidence and presents a conceptual framework that connects strategic leadership, institutional readiness, implementation quality, and sustainability. The framework can serve as a foundation for future studies and could be useful to university management in understanding the institutional environment required for blended learning. The findings should be understood as an integrative synthesis of the purposively selected literature.

Keywords: *Blended learning, Strategic Leadership, Institutional readiness, Implementation quality, Public universities*

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning is an important modality in higher education because the combination of face-to-face teaching and online learning offers students more flexible learning opportunities and greater interaction with one another. It is the thoughtful design and integration of these learning experiences, however, that

make the difference in its value. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) noted the potential of blended learning as a vehicle to transform higher education through valuable integration of classroom and online learning. However, more recent studies have revealed that successful implementation requires a range of other factors, including technological resources, academic support, institutional policies, and the involvement of various stakeholders (Rasheed et al., 2020; Anthony et al., 2022). Supported individual lectures that make use of digital tools in their lessons are easier to introduce than blended learning within a university. It is important for institutions to consider how teaching methods, academic policies, staff development, and resources may interrelate. Graham et al. (2013) proposed three levels of adoption of institutional blended learning: exploratory, mature and growth. Based on evidence from 11 universities, Porter et al. (2014) demonstrated the role of institutional strategies, structures, and support arrangements in driving the transition to implementation. Porter and Graham (2016) also investigated the factors that affect the adoption of the institution. Later studies by Ali (2024) and Ali and Georgiou (2025) further developed the discussion by considering the role of leadership in involvement, organisational readiness, and institutional diffusion.

This process lies at the core of strategic leadership and institutional readiness. The leadership of the University can drive institutional transformation by developing policies, allocating resources, organising administration and supporting teaching staff. Rogers (2003) described how innovations circulate in the social system, and Fullan (2007) the significance of the organisational processes involved in educational change. Weiner (2009) defined organisational readiness as the level of shared commitment and collective capacity of the organisation to change. Although these are theoretical frameworks that were not created specifically for blended learning, they are useful for understanding aspects of institutional readiness. In higher education, readiness can encompass technological readiness, faculty readiness, financial resources, administrative support, and the coordination of instruction across various delivery formats (Graham et al., 2013; Anthony et al., 2022).

These concerns are especially relevant for Pakistani public universities where variations in technological facilities, institutional resources, staff preparation and students' access could affect the implementation of blended learning. In the study by Chen et al. (2022), significant positive correlations are observed among management strategies, technology infrastructure, and resource support in the context of readiness to diffuse blended learning in higher education institutions in Pakistan. Their results indicate that having digital platforms alone is not enough for organisational preparedness. The problems of internet connectivity and students' participation in the emergency online education process were also identified by Adnan and Anwar (2020). While this is not deliberate blended learning for educators, this evidence suggests some of the technological and access challenges that institutions may experience. A comparative approach to examining implementation challenges across Global North–South contexts also highlights the need to attend to institutional resources and local contexts, rather than assuming that a single implementation approach will work in any context. (Sareen & Mandal, 2024).

Prior studies have made meaningful contributions to the knowledge about blended learning, institutional support, and change. International research has resulted in frameworks that outline stages of adoption, faculty involvement, institutional approaches and processes for implementing the adoption and integrating it into workflows (Graham et al., 2013; Porter et al., 2014; Ali & Georgiou, 2025). Studies conducted in Pakistan have focused on various aspects, such as management approaches, technological facilities, and institutional preparedness, and larger studies have discussed problems associated with blended learning in other educational settings (Chen et al., 2022; Sareen & Mandal, 2024). The studies that follow, however, vary in their research designs, institutional context, and the outcomes that they examine. Others focus on faculty experiences, technological challenges, or organizational diffusion (Rasheed et al., 2020; Anthony et al., 2022; Ali, 2024). Therefore, the literature reviewed for this study is less explicit about the interaction between strategic leadership and institutional readiness regarding implementation quality and sustainability in Pakistani public universities. It is not that there are no existing frameworks, but that the conceptual relationships among them and their relevance to the contexts in which they are applied need to be explored further.

This integrative review builds on previous research, including selected international and Pakistani studies, to explore the institutional conditions associated with implementing blended learning. Existing frameworks of adoption assistance can be used to gain insight into institutional strategy, structure and support (Graham et al., 2013; Porter et al., 2014), and institutional readiness theory can be used to explain the link between institutional commitment and institutional capacity for change (Weiner, 2009). Pakistani evidence provides important context by recognising conditions related to readiness in both the management and technology domains (Chen et al., 2022). Based on these complementary approaches, this review critically explores the linkages between strategic leadership, institutional preparedness, implementation quality and sustainability. It also reflects on the significance of the existing frameworks to the case of public universities in resource-limited settings and provides a preliminary conceptual framework for further empirical exploration.

METHODOLOGY

In order to explore the relationship between strategic leadership and institutional readiness in the implementation and sustainability of blended learning in higher education, an integrative literature review was conducted. This approach was deemed appropriate since the available literature draws from a variety of research fields, including empirical studies, institutional case studies, theories, and research reviews. Integrative reviews integrate multiple types of evidence, helping to gain a wider perspective of issues within the organisations and reveal some variance in how the research is applied or viewed (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005; Torraco, 2005). Grant and Booth (2009) stressed that the type of review approach adopted should be in keeping with the aim of the investigation and evidence available. In light of this, the present review was based on literature that was identified in the earlier manuscript on blended learning and further publications were identified based on the following key terms: institutional adoption, strategic leadership, organisational readiness, challenges of implementation, and sustainability. The relevant keywords were “blended learning”, “institutional readiness”, “strategic leadership”, “university governance”, “faculty development”, “implementation”, “diffusion”, “sustainability” and “Pakistan”. Additional studies were identified by consulting selected publisher records for those that were relevant and for information regarding the publication.

Research in higher education that focused on the institutional policies, management practices, technological infrastructure, organisational readiness, faculty development and ongoing delivery of blended learning received priority. International/ Pakistani studies were taken into account so as to understand the connection between existing institutional frameworks and the context of Pakistani public universities. The research pertaining to emergency remote teaching and general online education was incorporated only when it provided relevant contextual evidence around technological access, administrative support, and challenges. These studies differed from research on intentionally designed blended learning because they noted that there are differences in educational planning and delivery (Hodges et al., 2020). The literature selected for this study was analysed based on the following elements: Research focus, Methodological approach, Unit of analysis, Principal findings and Contextual relevance. These themes of strategic leadership, institutional readiness, implementation quality, and sustainability were organised around recurring issues, based on the general principles of thematic organisation and interpretation discussed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Formal systematic screening, meta-analysis, and standardised risk-of-bias assessment were not performed because a full search of the literature was not conducted.

Findings and Thematic Synthesis

The literature reviewed shows that institutional leadership, institutional readiness and ongoing support are of key importance during the implementation of blended learning. While these issues have been discussed at the international and national level in Pakistan, there are several differences in the research focus of such studies, institutional context, and results explored. Research in the international arena has developed frameworks that explain institutional adoption and organisational change and implementation processes (Graham et al., 2013; Porter et al., 2014; Anthony et al., 2022; Ali & Georgiou,

2025). Preparing institutions, management strategies, technological infrastructure, and implementation issues have received attention in Pakistani studies (Chen et al., 2022; Ali & Rauf, 2023; Akhtar et al., 2024).

International Evidence: Leadership, Adoption, and Implementation

Based on previous international studies, blended learning implementation goes beyond introducing online teaching platforms; it also encompasses organisational changes. Graham et al. (2013) identified phases of institutional adoption, and Porter et al. (2014) looked at the strategies and support mechanisms involved in implementation in universities. Moreover, Anthony et al. (2022) found that the adoption of blended learning is characterised by technological, pedagogical, administrative and individual factors.

Table 1

Selected International Studies on Institutional Blended Learning Adoption and Implementation

Study	**Research design or evidence**	**Main contribution**	**Limitations and contextual relevance**
Garrison and Kanuka (2004).	Conceptual analysis	Explains the educational potential of integrating face-to-face and online learning	Establishes a pedagogical foundation rather than testing institutional readiness
Graham et al. (2013).	Institutional adoption framework	Identifies stages of blended learning adoption and institutional development	Provides an adoption framework; contextual applicability requires examination
Porter et al. (2014).	Multi-institutional study	Examines institutional strategies, structures, and support for blended learning	Useful for institutional planning; does not establish outcomes in Pakistani universities.
Porter and Graham (2016).	Investigation of faculty adoption	Identifies institutional influences on lecturers' adoption of blended learning	Focuses on adoption rather than long-term sustainability
Rasheed et al. (2020).	Systematic literature review	Identifies challenges associated with the online component of blended learning	Emphasises teaching and learning challenges more than university governance

Anthony et al. (2022).	Systematic and theoretical review	Synthesises technological, pedagogical, student, lecturer, and administrative factors	Broad evidence base; does not directly establish sustainability in Pakistani public universities.
Hill and Smith (2023).	Institutional strategy analysis and expert perspectives	Examines institutional vision, governance, professional development, and support	Provides institutional strategy evidence from a different higher education context
Min and Yu (2023).	Systematic literature review	Identifies critical success factors associated with blended learning	Broad factors require contextual interpretation and operational clarification
Ali (2024)	Qualitative institutional investigation	Examines institutional policies, staff beliefs, readiness, support, and diffusion	Provides institutional process evidence; transferability depends on context.
Ali and Georgiou (2025).	Institutional adoption and diffusion research	Explains processes associated with institutional change and diffusion	Provides an existing process framework that must inform claims of originality

Note. Selected studies relevant to institutional blended learning are summarised in the table below. It is not a comprehensive or systematically reviewed literature.

But their results are not to be used as proof of the same. The issues of faculty adoption, institutional diffusion, and implementation challenges are related, but distinct. A key qualification here is that the adoption of an adoption strategy does not necessarily indicate that the use of blended learning has been established as an institutional practice that is both consistent and effective and sustainable (Graham et al., 2013; Porter & Graham, 2016; Ali & Georgiou, 2025).

Pakistani Evidence: Institutional Readiness and Implementation Challenges

The organizational and technological context of the implementation of blended learning in Pakistan is studied. The researchers Chen et al. (2022) studied the conditions that determine the readiness of blended learning in Higher Education Institutions, with a correlation between the management strategy, the availability of resources and technological infrastructure. A blended learning model was developed for Pakistani public sector universities by Ali and Rauf (2023), thus showing that research has already been conducted on the context of model development.

Table 2

Selected Pakistani Studies Relevant to Blended Learning Readiness and Implementation

Study	Sample or methodology	Main findings or contribution	Limitations and relevance
Adnan and Anwar (2020).	Investigation of students' experiences of online learning during COVID-19	Identifies connectivity, access, and participation challenges	Emergency online education provides contextual evidence, not a direct assessment of planned blended learning
Chen et al. (2022).	Quantitative study of readiness in Pakistani higher education	Identifies relationships involving management strategies, resource support, technological infrastructure, and readiness	Examines readiness rather than demonstrated long-term implementation
Qassim et al. (2023).	Qualitative investigation involving university administrators	Examines administrative preparedness, infrastructure, financial resources, and capacity-building challenges	Administrator perspectives do not independently establish implementation quality.
Ali and Rauf (2023)	Blended learning model development in Pakistani public-sector universities	Contributes a context-specific model incorporating institutional teaching and learning considerations	Important prior model-development research; the present review must offer a distinct contribution
Akhtar and Khurshid (2023)	Qualitative investigation of departmental heads in South Punjab higher education institutions	Examines the transition to online teaching, institutional difficulties, and professional training needs	Provides contextual evidence about online teaching rather than planned blended learning
Akhtar et al. (2024).	Qualitative investigation of	Identifies challenges involving infrastructure, professional	Context-specific qualitative evidence; sustained implementation

	blended learning practices	development, institutional support, and collaborative practices	outcomes are not established
Jamshed et al. (2025)	Cross-sectional investigation of university students	Examines psychological, technological, and infrastructural readiness in relation to attitudes toward blended learning	Student-level readiness should not be treated as a measure of institutional leadership

Note. There are variations in the research design, participants, and results of the studies. The findings are interpreted in light of the evidence regarding student readiness, administrative experiences, and institutional preparedness.

The Pakistani studies indicated that the factors affecting the implementation of blended learning are institutional resources, administrative support, technological preparedness, and professional capacity. For instance, positive student perceptions might not mean university policies are being implemented effectively, and sustainable blended learning is in place department-wide. Likewise, the results of emergency online education should not be applied directly to intentionally designed blended instruction (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020).

Cross-Study Thematic Synthesis

Five interrelated themes have emerged from the comparison of international and Pakistani studies: strategic leadership and governance, institutional readiness, faculty development and pedagogical alignment, equity and student support, and sustained implementation.

Strategic Leadership, Vision, and Governance

The institutional direction and support for blended learning are important and supported by strategic leadership. Its impact goes beyond the promotion of the use of educational technology to the development of policy, allocation of resources, academic coordination, and responsibilities for implementation. Graham et al. (2013) and Porter et al. (2014) showed the value of institutional approaches and supports within the adoption process. The focus of more recent studies has been on the impact of institutional policies, staff engagement, and organisational processes on diffusion (Ali, 2024; Ali & Georgiou, 2025). Hill and Smith (2023) also highlighted the significance of institutional vision and continuing support.

The results indicate that we need to examine leadership in ways other than the attitude of administrators as it is manifested in institutional practices. A university can have a blended learning policy but lack the resources, academic support and monitoring in place to implement the policy. Governance also spans various levels of the organisation, with central managers prioritising and departments and lecturers making decisions on teaching arrangements. These relationships are reinforced by evidence from Pakistan regarding management strategies and administration problems (Chen et al., 2022; Qassim et al., 2023).

Institutional Readiness as a Multidimensional Condition

The issue of institutional readiness is also stated in several studies, but in varying ways and on a different scale. Readiness can be technological readiness, financial readiness, administrative readiness, personnel readiness and organisational readiness for change. In terms of the idea of institutional preparedness, Weiner (2009) drew on a theoretical perspective that posits that organisational readiness exists as collective commitment and capacity for change. In Pakistan, relationships between management strategies and resource support, technological infrastructure and readiness were reported.

A key point to keep in mind is that readiness is not necessarily a sign of successful implementation. They can have digital platforms, trained staff, and supportive policies in place but still struggle to ensure consistency of teaching practices within institutions. Likewise, one-time readiness criteria will not indicate that blended learning will proceed successfully from one semester to the next. The findings reviewed then validate the distinction and interrelatedness of institutional readiness, implementation quality, and sustainability.

Faculty Development and Pedagogical Alignment

Lecturers' capacity to create relevant learning activities in both classroom and online learning is one of the factors that enable successful integration of classroom and online learning. Access to learning management systems is not enough to guarantee the effective coordination of teaching practices, assessment and student interactions. Garrison and Kanuka (2004) emphasised the importance of integrating learning experiences in an appropriate manner for learning value, and Rasheed et al. (2020) talked about the challenges associated with the online part of blended learning. Additional research also highlights the need for faculty engagement and professional support (Porter & Graham, 2016; Anthony et al., 2022).

Garone et al. (2022) analysed professional development for blended learning and provided evidence on the necessity of continuing to support academic staff as they shift their practices. The other challenges that are identified by the Pakistani investigations are related to professional preparation and institutional support (Akhtar & Khurshid, 2023; Akhtar et al., 2024).

Equity, Resources, and Student Support

Blended learning must also be taken into account in the institutional strategies, whether students can engage in online and classroom activities effectively. The variability in internet connectivity, device availability, financial resources, accessibility and study conditions may affect student learning. Adnan and Anwar (2020) found some of the challenges of access in the Pakistani context of emergency online education. These results are not directly comparable to targeted blended learning, but are examples of contextual issues that might be considered by universities. Sareen and Mandal (2024) also explored the implementation challenges in various types of schools across different context conditions, underscoring the significance of institutional and stakeholder contexts.

According to the literature, technological readiness needs to be taken in conjunction with affordability, accessibility and the support of students. Some students may not be able to access the University regularly, even though the University has the necessary digital infrastructure. The accessibility of learning materials, student support services and alternatives for students with connectivity issues may therefore be relevant to implementation quality for Pakistani public universities.

From Adoption to Sustained Implementation

Finally, the theme in question is related to the distinction between introducing blended learning and keeping it an institutionalised practice. Previous research has focused on adoption stages (Graham et al., 2013; Porter et al., 2014; Anthony et al., 2022), faculty involvement, organisational diffusion and implementation obstacles. Ali and Georgiou (2025) also made a contribution to the understanding of how the process of blended learning can be disseminated in institutions. But a learning management

system, positive attitudes of staff, or blended courses alone are not a guarantee of long-term sustainability.

Continuity of institutional support, maintenance of technological resources, professional development, academic quality and ability to improve teaching practices in the long term are important factors in sustained implementation. The selected Pakistani studies offer valuable insights into readiness, model development, and challenges for implementation (Chen et al., 2022; Ali & Rauf, 2023; Qassim et al., 2023; Akhtar et al., 2024). However, the body of contributions fails to provide a combined framework to investigate the relationship between strategic leadership and institutional readiness with implementation quality and sustainability in Pakistani public universities.

This is not a lack of institutional research but a lack of institutional research using a common contextual understanding to incorporate leadership, readiness, implementation quality and sustainability. The synthesis of these dimensions offers a foundation for exploring the potential role of institutional decisions and organisational conditions for continued blended learning in the public universities of Pakistan.

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH GAP

The results of this integrative review show that there is a multi-faceted institutional leadership, organisational readiness, academic support and available resources that affect the implementation of blended learning. However, the importance of institutional strategies, governance structures, faculty involvement, and administrative coordination in the adoption and diffusion of blended learning (BL) has been identified in international research (Graham et al., 2013; Porter et al., 2014; Anthony et al., 2022). Recent research has focused on the institutional processes such as leadership, institutional policies and professional support through which blended learning is adopted in higher education institutions (Ali, 2024; Ali & Georgiou, 2025). Similarly, research in Pakistan has also focused on management strategies, technological infrastructure, institutional readiness and implementation challenges (Chen et al., 2022; Qassim et al., 2023; Akhtar et al., 2024).

One of the key themes that came from the reviewed literature is the separation of institutional readiness and effective implementation. Readiness typically means the ability and desire of an institution to enact change, which involves resources, professional skills and organisational means. Weiner (2009) defined organisational readiness as "the level of shared commitment and the perceived ability to execute change. The relationships established by Chen et al. (2022) in the blended learning context included: (1) management strategies and readiness to diffuse blended learning, (2) resource supports and readiness to diffuse blended learning, (3) technological infrastructure and readiness to diffuse blended learning. The readiness of an institution to the blended learning model does not mean that the teacher has effectively integrated and sustained the model over time. Likewise, adoption and diffusion research can be used to gain insights into institutional change but not necessarily into implementation quality and sustainability (Porter & Graham, 2016; Ali & Georgiou, 2025).

The link between strategic leadership and implementation needs to be examined in closer detail. The leaders of institutions have an impact on policy-making, resource allocation, academic planning and support to the teaching staff. However, it is not always the case that formal institutional commitments will be followed through in practice in departments. Graham et al. (2013), Porter et al. (2014) and Hill and Smith (2023) highlighted the importance of institutional strategies and organisational support, and looked at the institutional vision and approaches to blended learning, respectively. Ali (2024) and Ali and Georgiou (2025) also pointed to organisational processes for institutional uptake and diffusion. These studies collectively indicate that leadership is not only a function of strategic decision-making, but also of the arrangements that link institutional planning and the day-to-day teaching practice.

Another major factor to consider is the applicability of International blended learning frameworks in Pakistani Public universities. While the models of institutional adoption are helpful, they may be

applicable in varying contexts that can include differences in student access, staff preparation, technological resources, and governance. Previous studies in Pakistan have revealed a set of management-related and infrastructure-related conditions that can lead to institutional readiness (Chen et al., 2022), and qualitative research has highlighted administrative issues and professional development requirements (Qassim et al., 2023; Akhtar et al., 2024). Problems with access to the internet and participation in emergency online learning have also been reported by Adnan and Anwar (2020). While emergency remote education is not intentionally designed blended learning (Hodges et al., 2020), the results are relevant contextual evidence of inequalities in access to technology-supported learning.

The studies reviewed also vary in terms of the units of analysis and outcomes examined. The outcomes of the student attitude, faculty use, administration experience, institutional readiness, and organisational diffusion studies provide valuable evidence; these are not necessarily mutually interchangeable indicators of implementation success. For instance, good student perceptions do not guarantee good governance of an institution, nor can administrative support alone be interpreted as the quality of the blended learning experienced by students. One way to identify relationships between organisational factors is to conduct cross-sectional readiness studies, but these studies cannot determine how institutional practices are formed or sustained over academic cycles.

Table 3

Proposed Conceptual Dimensions and Illustrative Indicators for Institutional Blended Learning

Conceptual dimensions	**Working definition**	**Illustrative indicators**
Strategic leadership	Institutional actions that align educational priorities, resources, and implementation processes	Shared vision, policy enactment, resource allocation, decision-making, accountability, communication
Institutional readiness	Organizational preparedness and capacity to introduce and support planned blended learning.	Technological infrastructure, staff competence, financial resources, administrative coordination, institutional support
Implementation quality	Extent to which planned blended learning is translated into coherent teaching and learning practices.	Course alignment, assessment practices, feedback, accessibility, student interaction, pedagogical support
Sustainability	Continuation, institutionalization, and improvement of blended learning over time	Recurring resources, technological maintenance, staff support, evaluation, continuity across academic cycles

Note. The definitions and indicators are taken from the integrative synthesis and suggested for conceptualisation. These have not been tested in practice in this review.

It is also crucial to recognise that there are existing models and institutional configurations for blended learning. Graham et al. (2013) created an institutional adoption framework, and Ali and Georgiou (2025) investigated institutional adoption and diffusion processes. In Pakistan, Ali and Rauf (2023) designed a blended learning model for public-sector universities, while Chen et al. (2022) examined the factors related to readiness. The contribution of the current review does not lie, however, with its assertion that there is no institutional blended learning research. Instead, the literature reviewed is less direct in its evidence of the interaction of strategic leadership and institutional readiness with regard to implementation quality and sustainability at Pakistani public universities.

The combination of these viewpoints could shed some light on the impact of leadership decisions on organisational capacity, how readiness enables the incorporation of teaching practices and the conditions that facilitate the continuity and enhancement of blended learning. This interpretation can be further refined by a wider literature search. However, the synthesis offers a good starting point for formulating a preliminary conceptual model to link the four dimensions and to consider institutional conditions and access equity.

Provisional Conceptual Framework and Implications

Based on the conceptual differences illustrated in Table 3, this review suggests a tentative model that connects strategic leadership, institutional readiness, implementation quality and sustainability. In addition, it includes contextual support from the Pakistani higher education sector, such as the relationship between management strategies and technological infrastructure and institutional readiness (Chen et al., 2022; Ali & Rauf, 2023).

The framework recognises the role of strategic leadership as one of the possible influences on institutional readiness and implementation support. Leadership can contribute to creating the conditions for blended learning by developing policy, allocating resources, coordinating academic programs and conducting professional development. Institutional readiness involves the ability and preparedness of the universities to adopt these practices; implementation quality refers to the level of meaningful incorporation of planned online and classroom learning activities. Sustainability is about the maintenance, institutionalisation, and enhancement of blended learning over academic cycles. These relationships are suggested based on the literature synthesis, not by empirical testing.

The framework does not imply that these dimensions follow a linear or only a simple sequence. Leadership decisions can affect institutional preparedness, while implementation experiences can cause changes to policies, reallocation of resources, or enhanced professional support. Likewise, sustainability can be contingent on ongoing assessment, institutional learning and the capacity to adapt to evolving institutional conditions. The diffusion of innovations theory (DIT) (Rogers, 2003) provides an analysis that is relevant to the spread of educational practices, and Weiner's organisational readiness theory (ORT) (2009) emphasises collective willingness and ability.

Other key factors in the proposed framework include equity and institutional context. The impact of governance, financial resources, technological access, and support for students can vary and have the potential to shape the implementation of institutional strategies. The available evidence on access issues in Pakistan and implementation barriers in various contexts with varying resources indicates that in addition to students' ability to practice, institutional readiness must also be taken into account (Adnan & Anwar, 2020; Sareen & Mandal, 2024).

Implications for Research and Practice

The framework will be used as a foundation for future studies that will focus on the organisational conditions of blended learning implementation in public universities in Pakistan. Research on the university administration, departmental management, faculty, and support staff at the level of their work and teaching could provide insight into how strategic decisions are realised in the classroom. Qualitative studies might be helpful in determining the meaning of leadership and readiness within the context, and quantitative and longitudinal studies might be done to explore the connections between institutional preparedness, quality of implementation, and continuity over time.

The synthesis emphasises the need for institutional strategies, adequate resources, faculty development, and ongoing assessment on an institutional level for university administrators and educational planners. Monitoring should not be limited to the availability of learning management systems, but should also take into account the design of the course, the support for learning, the possibility of students accessing the course, providing feedback and continuing the blended learning with the next academic cycle. These are similar to those that have been highlighted in pedagogical integration and institutional support research (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Porter & Graham, 2016; Anthony et al., 2022).

LIMITATIONS

This review is based on purposeful selection of studies, not on an exhaustive search with reproducible screening and formal quality appraisal. Direct comparisons are limited by differences in institutional setting, research design, participants and outcome measures. Some context in Pakistan is for Emergency online teaching, which is a disjointed approach from planned blended learning (Hodges et al., 2020). The proposed relationships have not been tested empirically, and the review cannot draw causal conclusions or conclusions on the institutional outcomes achieved over the long term. However, a broader search and primary research could further enhance the synthesis (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005; Snyder, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Blended learning is not only a pedagogical approach, but also a change process in institutions. Various international and Pakistani studies are already providing adoption frameworks, readiness evidence and context-specific models; the challenge is to link these contributions together without equating readiness, quality of implementation, and sustainability. This review identifies four interconnected dimensions (strategic leadership, institutional readiness, implementation quality, and sustainability), and explores the potential for the relationship between these and institutional context and student access. The suggested framework is a conservative measure to assess practices in public universities in Pakistan and explore continuity from one academic year to the next. Its relationships are provisional and need further empirical assessment that is situation-dependent.

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