

# From Classroom to Career: Exploring the Synergy of Internships and Blended Learning in Enhancing Student Satisfaction in China

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## Abstract

This conceptual paper examines the combined impact of internships and blended learning on student learning satisfaction within Chinese higher education. Internships are explored as critical experiential opportunities that bridge academic knowledge with real-world application, fostering career readiness and practical skills. Simultaneously, blended learning integrates traditional instruction with online tools to provide flexible, personalized, and engaging educational experiences. Guided by Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the paper highlights how these pedagogical strategies address cognitive and motivational needs, enhancing satisfaction and engagement. The study identifies key factors influencing their effectiveness, such as mentorship quality, technological infrastructure, and curriculum design, and underscores the unique challenges posed by the Chinese context, including resource disparities and cultural expectations. By proposing a multidimensional framework, the paper provides insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop innovative strategies that balance academic excellence with professional preparation, ultimately contributing to global discourses on higher education reform.

**Keywords:** internships, blended learning, student satisfaction, higher education, China, Experiential Learning Theory, Self-Determination Theory

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## Introduction

Higher education has become a cornerstone of global development, preparing students to meet the demands of an increasingly competitive and dynamic workforce. As traditional approaches to teaching and learning face scrutiny for their inability to fully engage students or prepare them for real-world challenges, innovative methods such as internships and blended learning are emerging as transformative tools. These approaches not only enhance academic rigor but also cater to the diverse

needs of modern students. In China, where the higher education sector has undergone unprecedented expansion, these strategies are particularly relevant for fostering student engagement and satisfaction.

Internships, which bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical application, have become integral to higher education curricula worldwide. They allow students to experience the dynamics of real workplaces, build professional networks, and develop critical skills necessary for their careers. Research shows that internships significantly enhance students' satisfaction by enabling them to see the tangible value of their academic pursuits (Khalil, 2015). However, challenges such as inadequate mentorship, misalignment with academic goals, and organizational inefficiencies can negatively impact these experiences (Ruslan et al., 2020).

Simultaneously, blended learning—a pedagogical model that combines online learning with traditional face-to-face instruction—has gained traction in higher education. This approach leverages technology to create flexible, engaging, and personalized learning environments. Studies indicate that students in blended learning settings report higher satisfaction levels due to the flexibility, accessibility, and interactivity these platforms provide (Rahman et al., 2015). However, the success of blended learning depends on factors such as technological infrastructure, course design, and teacher readiness, which can vary significantly across institutions and regions (Cheng et al., 2023).

In the Chinese context, the rapid expansion of higher education has created a pressing need to ensure both the quality and relevance of learning experiences. Large class sizes, diverse student populations, and the intense pressure to secure employment underscore the importance of adopting strategies that enhance student satisfaction and engagement. Despite the individual benefits of internships and blended learning, there is a paucity of research on how these two approaches interact to influence student satisfaction. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for optimizing educational strategies in Chinese universities and beyond.

## **Background of Study**

Internships have long been regarded as a critical component of experiential learning, offering students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts. These programs are particularly valuable in fostering career readiness and skill development. According to Khalil (2015), internships enhance workplace adaptability, professionalism, and career potential, making them a cornerstone of student satisfaction (Khalil, 2015). Similarly, studies in the Chinese higher education context highlight the importance of supervisor support, task alignment, and organizational clarity in shaping internship experiences (To & Lung, 2020).

Blended learning, on the other hand, represents a paradigm shift in teaching methodologies. By integrating traditional classroom interactions with online resources, it offers students a flexible and personalized approach to learning. Research shows that blended learning enhances not only academic performance but also student satisfaction, provided that it is well-implemented (Tabassum et al.,

2024). In Chinese universities, where technological advancements have enabled widespread adoption of blended learning, key factors such as curriculum design, teacher competence, and resource quality play significant roles in determining its success (Cheng et al., 2023).

Despite the potential of internships and blended learning to transform higher education, little research has been conducted on their combined impact on student satisfaction. This study seeks to bridge this gap by examining how these approaches interact to influence students' perceptions of their learning experiences, particularly in the context of Chinese universities.

### **Problem Statement**

As higher education evolves to meet the demands of a globalized workforce, institutions face the dual challenge of maintaining academic rigor while equipping students with practical skills. This challenge is particularly pronounced in China, where rapid expansion in higher education has created a pressing need for innovative pedagogical strategies to enhance student satisfaction and success. Despite the growing popularity of internships and blended learning as transformative educational tools, there is limited understanding of how these approaches influence student satisfaction, particularly in the Chinese context (Jiang, 2024). This gap in knowledge underscores the need to explore their impacts in a structured and contextualized manner.

The first research question focuses on understanding how internship experiences influence student satisfaction in Chinese universities. Internships have been widely acknowledged for their ability to bridge academic learning with real-world application, fostering workplace readiness and personal development. However, the quality of internships varies greatly, and poor alignment between internship tasks and academic goals can lead to dissatisfaction. For example, studies suggest that students are most satisfied when internships offer clear objectives, strong mentorship, and meaningful tasks (To & Lung, 2020). In the context of Chinese universities, where students often face intense academic pressures, the value and structure of internships need to be assessed to determine their effectiveness in enhancing satisfaction and career preparedness (Yi, 2018).

The second research question examines the impact of blended learning on student satisfaction in Chinese universities. Blended learning has been heralded as a flexible and engaging approach that integrates traditional face-to-face teaching with online resources. Research shows that blended learning environments can improve accessibility, foster active participation, and cater to diverse learning preferences (Rahman et al., 2015). However, its implementation often faces challenges such as insufficient technological support, varying levels of teacher readiness, and a lack of tailored course designs (Cheng et al., 2023). These issues are particularly relevant in China, where the diversity of student backgrounds and the scale of educational institutions add layers of complexity to the adoption of blended learning models.

Given these challenges, this study seeks to fill the critical gap in understanding how internship

experiences and blended learning interact to influence student satisfaction in the Chinese higher education context. By addressing these research questions, the study aims to contribute not only to the improvement of pedagogical strategies in China but also to the global discourse on balancing academic excellence with professional preparation. The insights gained will offer valuable lessons for other countries facing similar challenges, providing a roadmap for integrating innovative learning approaches to enhance student satisfaction and success.

### **Significance of Study**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to advance our understanding of how innovative pedagogical strategies can enhance the quality of higher education. By exploring the combined impact of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction, this research offers several key contributions to academia, policy, and practice.

First, this study provides valuable insights for educators and curriculum designers. Understanding the synergies between internships and blended learning can help universities design more integrated and effective educational programs. For instance, aligning internship tasks with blended learning content can create a cohesive learning experience that maximizes student engagement and satisfaction. These insights can also inform the development of training programs for faculty, equipping them with the skills to effectively implement blended learning and support students in internships.

Second, the study has implications for policymakers and institutional leaders. In China's rapidly evolving higher education landscape, ensuring the quality and relevance of learning experiences is a top priority. This research highlights the importance of investing in technological infrastructure, industry partnerships, and student support services to optimize the benefits of internships and blended learning. Policymakers can use these findings to develop guidelines and funding initiatives that promote the best practices in these areas.

Third, the research offers practical benefits for employers and industry stakeholders. By identifying the factors that contribute to internship satisfaction, the study can help organizations design programs that not only meet the needs of students but also align with industry requirements. Such partnerships can ensure a steady pipeline of skilled and satisfied graduates who are better prepared for the workforce.

Finally, this study contributes to the global discourse on higher education reform. While focused on the Chinese context, the findings have broader applicability, offering lessons for universities worldwide that aim to balance academic excellence with professional preparation. By shedding light on the interplay between internships and blended learning, this research paves the way for more holistic approaches to student development.

### **Research Objectives**

By focusing on the Chinese higher education context, this study also contributes to the global

discourse on innovative pedagogical strategies. It offers valuable lessons for other countries grappling with similar challenges in balancing academic excellence with professional preparation. To achieve these goals, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do internship experiences influence student satisfaction in Chinese universities?
2. How do blended learning impact on student satisfaction in Chinese universities?

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

This section reviews existing research on the effects of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction in higher education, with a focus on identifying their combined impact. While these two pedagogical approaches have been widely studied individually, their integration remains underexplored, particularly in the context of Chinese universities. This review aims to synthesize relevant findings and highlight critical gaps in literature.

### **Internships and Student Satisfaction**

Internships play a pivotal role in higher education, offering students opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. Research by Vélez and Ribes Giner (2015) demonstrated that internships positively influence skill development, career readiness, and overall student satisfaction. These benefits are amplified when internships are well-structured and include meaningful tasks, strong mentorship, and alignment with academic learning objectives. Conversely, internships with unclear goals or inadequate support can lead to frustration and reduced satisfaction (Ruslan et al., 2020).

Internship satisfaction is further influenced by the organizational environment and interpersonal dynamics within the workplace. Gamboa et al. (2013) explored how supervisor support, colleague interactions, and the quality of assigned tasks contribute significantly to vocational development and satisfaction. High-quality internships, marked by effective supervision and opportunities for skill enhancement, foster greater professional growth and engagement. However, when these factors are absent, the internship experience can leave students feeling underprepared for their career paths.

In the Chinese context, where employability is a key focus of higher education, internships are increasingly valued as a bridge between academic learning and professional success. To and Lung (2020) identified that supervisor support and task clarity significantly enhance internship satisfaction among Chinese students. However, challenges such as unequal access to quality internships and limited institutional support hinder the effectiveness of these programs. Addressing these challenges requires a deeper understanding of the factors that influence internship experiences in China.

Additionally, research highlights that cultural values and expectations shape students' internship experiences in China. Students often prioritize internships that align with their academic

achievements and career aspirations. Studies have revealed that internships offered through university partnerships with reputable organizations tend to yield higher satisfaction levels (Rose, 2018). These insights underscore the importance of creating structured and meaningful internship opportunities tailored to the Chinese educational context.

### **Blended Learning and Student Satisfaction**

Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online components, has gained traction as an effective teaching approach. Studies have consistently shown that blended learning environments increase student satisfaction by offering flexibility, personalized learning opportunities, and enhanced engagement (Owston et al., 2013). Cheng et al. (2023) highlighted that factors such as curriculum design, instructor competence, and the quality of digital resources are critical determinants of satisfaction in blended learning environments.

A unique advantage of blended learning lies in its ability to cater to diverse student needs through technology-enhanced methods. Martínez-Caro and Campuzano-Bolarín (2011) demonstrated that students in blended courses reported higher satisfaction compared to those in traditional courses, primarily due to improved accessibility, peer collaboration, and interactive learning features. These findings are particularly relevant in the Chinese context, where large class sizes and regional disparities in educational resources pose significant challenges.

In China, blended learning has been widely adopted in higher education as institutions seek to modernize teaching methods and accommodate diverse student needs. Kintu et al., 2017 found that individual factors such as student motivation and self-efficacy play a significant role in determining satisfaction with blended learning. However, challenges such as technological barriers, inconsistent teacher training, and insufficient infrastructure often undermine its potential. These issues are particularly pronounced in resource-constrained regions, where access to digital tools and platforms is limited.

Moreover, recent studies emphasize the role of instructor engagement in enhancing blended learning outcomes. Cheng et al. (2023) found that students were more satisfied with courses where instructors actively utilized digital tools to foster interaction and provided timely feedback. This highlights the importance of equipping educators with the skills and resources needed to effectively implement blended learning strategies.

### **Research Gap**

Despite the growing body of literature on internships and blended learning, several key gaps remain, offering opportunities for further investigation. First, there is a notable lack of studies examining the combined impact of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction, particularly within the Chinese higher education context. This represents a critical void in the research, as understanding the intersection of these strategies could inform the development of more comprehensive and effective

pedagogical models.

Second, limited attention has been given to the unique challenges faced by Chinese universities in implementing these approaches. Issues such as disparities in access to quality internships, variability in digital infrastructure, and the cultural nuances of the Chinese educational system require deeper exploration. Addressing these context-specific challenges is essential for ensuring that both internships and blended learning are effectively adapted to local needs.

Third, existing studies often prioritize institutional or programmatic outcomes, with comparatively little focus on student-centered perspectives. Research that delves into students' lived experiences, satisfaction levels, and perceived value of these strategies is crucial for creating more engaging and impactful learning environments.

Fourth, the long-term effects of internships and blended learning on career readiness and academic development remain underexplored. While many studies examine short-term satisfaction and performance metrics, there is a need for longitudinal research to assess how these approaches influence students' professional trajectories and lifelong learning attitudes.

Finally, the potential of digital innovation in enhancing internship experiences through blended learning remains underutilized. Virtual mentorship, digital simulations, and collaborative online tools could offer new avenues for integrating these strategies, yet their role in improving student satisfaction has not been adequately studied. Investigating these innovations could provide valuable insights into how technology can bridge gaps between academic and professional learning.

### **Hypotheses Development**

The hypotheses in this study are directly derived from the research objectives, focusing on the individual impacts of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction within the context of Chinese higher education. The following hypotheses are proposed:

#### **Hypothesis 1: Impact of Internships on Student Satisfaction**

Internships provide students with opportunities to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, fostering professional skills and career readiness. Existing research highlights that internships with clear objectives, strong mentorship, and task alignment significantly enhance student satisfaction. However, when internships lack structure or relevance, they may lead to dissatisfaction. In the Chinese context, where employability is a key priority, internships are particularly valued for their role in enhancing students' readiness for the job market.

- **H1:** Internship experiences have a positive impact on student satisfaction in Chinese universities.

#### **Hypothesis 2: Impact of Blended Learning on Student Satisfaction**

Blended learning integrates traditional face-to-face instruction with online educational resources,

offering flexibility, personalization, and engagement. Research suggests that well-designed blended learning environments, supported by competent instructors and quality digital resources, lead to higher student satisfaction. However, factors such as technological barriers and inconsistent implementation can limit its effectiveness. In the Chinese higher education system, blended learning is increasingly adopted to address diverse student needs and modernize teaching methods.

- **H2:** Blended learning has a positive impact on student satisfaction in Chinese universities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by two key theoretical frameworks: Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). These theories provide complementary perspectives to understand the impact of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction in the context of Chinese higher education.

#### **Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)**

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), developed by David Kolb, emphasizes the importance of learning through experience (Koln et al., 2014). ELT posits that effective learning occurs through a cyclical process involving four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. This theory is particularly relevant to internships, as they offer students the opportunity to engage in concrete experiences, where they apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations. Internships allow students to immerse themselves in professional environments, solve practical problems, and develop critical skills that enhance their readiness for the workforce (Morreale & Fronczak, 2017). Simultaneously, blended learning aligns with other stages of the ELT cycle. For instance, reflective observation and abstract conceptualization are facilitated through online platforms, where students can analyze their experiences, draw connections between theory and practice, and deepen their understanding of academic content (Oh, 2019). Together, internships and blended learning form a holistic experiential learning process that engages students at multiple levels, resulting in greater satisfaction and deeper learning.

#### **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), proposed by Deci and Ryan, focuses on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation as key drivers of learning and satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2020). SDT emphasizes three fundamental psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—that must be fulfilled to foster motivation and well-being. Blended learning addresses students' need for autonomy by allowing them to control various aspects of their learning experience, such as pace, location, and the choice of learning resources. This flexibility empowers students to take ownership of their education, enhancing their engagement and satisfaction (Chiu, 2021). Internships, on the other hand, fulfill the need for competence by providing students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in practical, real-world settings. This hands-on approach builds their confidence in their abilities and

prepares them for professional success. Both internships and blended learning also satisfy the need for relatedness, as they foster meaningful interactions with peers, instructors, and mentors, creating a supportive learning environment that encourages collaboration and connection.

### Integration of theories

Integrating ELT and SDT offers a comprehensive framework for examining how internships and blended learning impact student satisfaction. ELT provides insight into the experiential dimensions of learning, explaining how students engage with and apply knowledge through internships and reflective blended learning activities. SDT complements this by highlighting the motivational factors that drive engagement and satisfaction, such as autonomy in blended learning and competence development through internships. The synergy of these two theories underscores the potential for combining internships and blended learning to create enriching educational experiences that meet both cognitive and psychological needs. By addressing these dimensions, the integration of ELT and SDT helps to explain the mechanisms through which these pedagogical strategies enhance student satisfaction in higher education.

This theoretical framework forms the foundation for exploring the relationship between internships, blended learning, and student satisfaction in this study, providing a multidimensional perspective that incorporates both experiential and motivational aspects of learning.

### Conceptual Framework

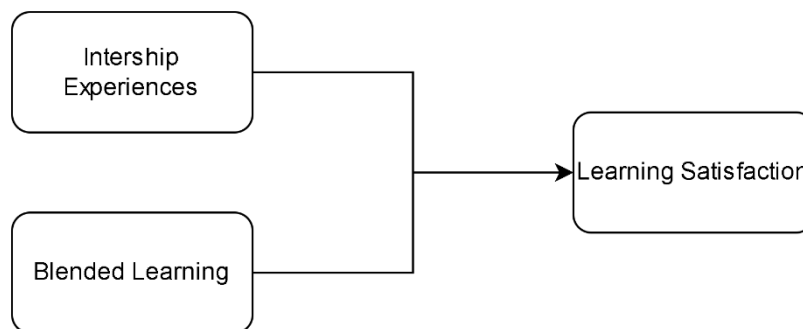


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of current paper

### Discussion

#### Practical Implications

The integration of internships and blended learning carries substantial practical implications for higher education institutions, educators, and policymakers. For institutions, fostering partnerships with industry to provide structured and meaningful internships tailored to students' academic goals is crucial. These internships should align with the curriculum, offering students opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, which can significantly enhance their satisfaction and

engagement. Additionally, the use of blended learning platforms can support students before and during internships by offering preparatory modules such as virtual workshops, online skills training, and simulations. These preparatory tools ensure a smoother transition between theoretical learning and practical application.

Blended learning also facilitates continuous engagement throughout the internship process. By leveraging digital tools such as online collaboration platforms, real-time feedback mechanisms, and virtual mentorship, institutions can provide a supportive and interactive environment for students. This creates opportunities for students to reflect on their internship experiences and connect them with academic theories, fostering a more cohesive learning process.

Educators have a vital role in designing curricula that integrate internships and blended learning. Embedding real-world case studies, industry scenarios, and problem-solving tasks into blended learning modules can bridge the gap between academic content and professional skills development. This approach ensures that students are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the practical competencies needed for their careers.

For policymakers, supporting the integration of these approaches involves providing funding for digital infrastructure, promoting industry-academia collaborations, and addressing resource disparities, particularly in underprivileged regions. Policymakers can also establish guidelines to ensure equal access to high-quality internships and blended learning tools, enabling all students to benefit from these innovative strategies.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This conceptual paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of student satisfaction in higher education by integrating two complementary frameworks: Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). ELT emphasizes the cyclical nature of learning, where students progress through stages of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Internships align closely with the concrete experience phase, as they allow students to immerse themselves in practical tasks and real-world challenges. Blended learning complements this process by providing opportunities for reflective observation and abstract conceptualization, where students can analyze and connect their practical experiences with theoretical knowledge. Together, these approaches create a holistic experiential learning process that enhances engagement and satisfaction.

SDT adds depth to this framework by addressing the psychological drivers of motivation and satisfaction. The theory identifies three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—as essential for fostering intrinsic motivation. Blended learning meets the need for autonomy by offering flexibility and self-directed learning options, enabling students to control their learning environment and pace. Internships fulfill the need for competence by providing real-world

opportunities to apply and enhance skills, boosting students' confidence in their abilities. Both strategies satisfy the need for relatedness by fostering meaningful interactions with instructors, peers, and mentors. This combination of experiential and motivational dimensions helps explain how internships and blended learning can enhance overall student satisfaction.

By integrating ELT and SDT, this paper extends the theoretical discourse on student satisfaction, offering a multidimensional framework that addresses both cognitive and emotional aspects of learning. Additionally, this study situates these theories within the specific context of Chinese higher education, emphasizing the influence of cultural and institutional factors. The integration of internships and blended learning addresses key challenges in this context, such as large class sizes, employability pressures, and disparities in resource availability. This theoretical framework is not only relevant to the Chinese context but also offers insights that can be adapted to other educational systems facing similar challenges globally.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

Implementing the integration of internships and blended learning in Chinese universities faces a range of challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its success. One of the primary challenges is the disparity in technological infrastructure across institutions, particularly between urban and rural areas. Many universities in rural or less developed regions lack access to reliable internet connectivity, modern devices, and advanced digital tools. This technological gap disproportionately affects students from underserved areas, limiting their ability to fully engage in blended learning. Without equitable access to these resources, blended learning cannot achieve its full potential, and students from underprivileged backgrounds may be left behind.

Another significant challenge lies in institutional readiness and faculty competence. Many universities may not have the administrative capacity or policies in place to seamlessly integrate blended learning with internships. Institutions often struggle to develop clear frameworks that align academic objectives with internship programs. Furthermore, educators' ability to effectively utilize blended learning platforms varies widely. Some instructors lack the necessary training and experience to create engaging, interactive online content that complements practical internship experiences. This lack of faculty competence can result in suboptimal learning outcomes and diminished student satisfaction.

The quality and accessibility of internships also pose critical challenges. While internships are designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice, inconsistencies in their quality can lead to dissatisfaction. Internships that lack clear objectives, meaningful tasks, or adequate mentorship often fail to meet students' expectations and professional development needs. Additionally, the availability of internships varies significantly across regions and institutions, with students in less developed areas facing limited access to high-quality opportunities. This disparity creates unequal learning experiences, hindering the overall impact of internships on student satisfaction.

Cultural and institutional factors further complicate the adoption of these strategies. In China, there is often a strong cultural emphasis on academic achievements and examination success, which may overshadow the importance of experiential learning. This traditional focus can lead to a lack of institutional prioritization of internships and blended learning, as well as limited student engagement with these approaches. Overcoming these cultural and institutional barriers requires deliberate efforts to promote the value of holistic education that balances academic excellence with practical and professional readiness.

### **Future Recommendations**

The findings and conceptual underpinnings of this study provide several avenues for future research to further enhance our understanding of the impact of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction in higher education, particularly within the Chinese context. These recommendations aim to address existing gaps and contribute to the development of more effective educational strategies. First, future studies should explore the long-term effects of internships and blended learning on students' career trajectories and lifelong learning attitudes. While much of the current research focuses on short-term satisfaction and academic performance, understanding how these pedagogical approaches shape graduates' professional skills, job satisfaction, and adaptability over time would provide a more comprehensive perspective on their value. Second, researchers should investigate the interplay between cultural factors and the implementation of internships and blended learning. In China, where traditional educational norms often prioritize exam-based achievement, it is crucial to examine how cultural expectations influence students' perceptions of experiential learning and technology-enabled instruction. Comparative studies across different cultural or regional contexts would further enrich our understanding of these dynamics.

Third, future research could examine the role of emerging technologies in enhancing the effectiveness of internships and blended learning. Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) offer immense potential to create immersive and personalized learning experiences. Studies should assess how these tools can bridge gaps between theoretical knowledge and practical application, particularly in resource-constrained regions. Fourth, there is a need to explore the impact of faculty training and institutional policies on the success of blended learning and internship programs. Investigating how professional development for educators influences the quality of course design, mentorship, and student engagement can offer actionable insights for universities. Additionally, research on institutional frameworks that integrate internships, and blended learning seamlessly could provide guidelines for policy and curriculum development. Lastly, future studies should focus on equity and inclusivity in the implementation of these strategies. The digital divide, disparities in access to high-quality internships, and variations in institutional resources create unequal opportunities for students. Research should prioritize understanding how these inequalities impact learning outcomes and explore strategies to ensure equitable access to

internships and blended learning tools for all students, regardless of their geographic or socioeconomic background.

By addressing these areas, future research can build upon the foundations laid by this study, offering innovative and inclusive strategies that enhance student satisfaction and better prepare students for the challenges of the modern workforce.

## **Conclusion**

This conceptual paper explores the potential impact of internships and blended learning on student satisfaction in Chinese higher education, presenting a theoretical framework that integrates Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). By examining the synergies between these two approaches, the paper provides a comprehensive understanding of how experiential and motivational dimensions can enhance students' learning experiences.

Internships are conceptualized as critical opportunities for students to bridge academic knowledge with real-world application, fostering workplace readiness and practical skills. Blended learning, on the other hand, offers flexibility and personalization, addressing the diverse learning needs of students while promoting autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Together, these strategies have the potential to create a cohesive educational experience that fosters both academic engagement and professional preparedness.

The framework proposed in this paper emphasizes the importance of aligning internships and blended learning with institutional goals, student needs, and the unique context of Chinese higher education. It highlights the role of factors such as mentorship, technological infrastructure, and curriculum design in shaping student satisfaction. The challenges and disparities identified within the Chinese education system, such as unequal access to resources and cultural expectations, underscore the need for tailored strategies to implement these approaches effectively.

This paper contributes to the theoretical discourse by proposing a multidimensional framework that integrates ELT and SDT, offering a structured lens for future research to explore the interplay between internships and blended learning. Additionally, it underscores the importance of further empirical investigation to validate and expand upon these conceptual insights, particularly in diverse educational and cultural settings.

By advancing these ideas, this paper aims to inform educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders on how to design more innovative and inclusive strategies for enhancing student satisfaction. The integration of internships and blended learning, as conceptualized here, holds significant promise for creating transformative educational experiences that prepare students to thrive in an increasingly dynamic and globalized workforce.

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