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RESEARCH ARTICLE – 15

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF HYBRID LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The rapid integration of digital technologies into higher education has accelerated the adoption of hybrid learning models, particularly within management education. While prior studies have largely focused on empirical assessments of effectiveness or technology acceptance, limited attention has been given to the conceptual mechanisms through which students perceive hybrid learning environments. Addressing this gap, the present study develops a comprehensive conceptual framework to explain students' perception of hybrid learning in management education. Drawing on constructivist learning theory, experiential learning theory, and technology acceptance perspectives, the paper systematically synthesizes extant literature to identify key hybrid learning dimensions—perceived usefulness, ease of learning, flexibility, and interaction and engagement—that shape students' perceptual evaluations.

The proposed framework positions students' perception as a central mediating construct linking hybrid learning design characteristics with student satisfaction and acceptance of hybrid learning. By articulating theoretically grounded research propositions, the study advances conceptual clarity and offers a structured explanation of how instructional features are cognitively and affectively processed by management students. The framework contributes to hybrid learning scholarship by integrating fragmented insights into a coherent, parsimonious model that is empirically testable using multivariate analytical techniques in future research. Beyond theoretical contribution, the study provides meaningful implications for curriculum design, faculty pedagogy, and institutional policy, emphasizing the importance of learner-centered and perception-driven hybrid learning strategies. Overall, this conceptual paper serves as a foundation for future empirical validation and offers a robust theoretical lens for understanding the sustainability and effectiveness of hybrid learning in management education.

Keywords: *Hybrid learning; Management education; Student perception; Conceptual framework; Higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Context and Importance

The digital transformation of higher education has significantly reshaped traditional teaching–learning practices, leading to the adoption of technology-enabled instructional models. Among these models, hybrid learning, which combines face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning components, has emerged as a prominent pedagogical approach (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham, 2013). Hybrid learning seeks to leverage the strengths of both physical and virtual learning environments by promoting flexibility, accessibility, and learner-centered engagement.

In recent years, the relevance of hybrid learning has increased substantially in higher education institutions due to advancements in digital technologies and evolving learner expectations (Means et al., 2014). Unlike fully online learning, hybrid learning preserves interpersonal interaction while integrating digital tools such as learning management systems, recorded lectures, online discussions, and virtual simulations. This blended instructional approach has been widely acknowledged for its potential to enhance learning effectiveness and student satisfaction (Bernard et al., 2014).

In the domain of management education**,** the adoption of hybrid learning is particularly significant. Management programs emphasize experiential learning, case-based pedagogy, collaborative problem-solving, and industry engagement, all of which require active student participation and contextual learning (Boud & Kolb, 2017). Hybrid learning environments provide opportunities to support these pedagogical requirements while offering flexibility and technological support. As business schools increasingly institutionalize hybrid learning models, understanding how students perceive these learning environments becomes critical for ensuring pedagogical effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Need for Conceptual Clarity

Despite the growing adoption of hybrid learning in higher education, the literature reveals considerable conceptual ambiguity regarding its definition and scope. Terms such as *online learning*, *blended learning*, and *hybrid learning* are often used interchangeably, leading to inconsistencies in theoretical interpretation and empirical investigation (Hrastinski, 2019). This lack of conceptual clarity limits the comparability of findings across studies and hinders the development of coherent theoretical frameworks.

Furthermore, existing research on hybrid learning predominantly emphasizes empirical assessments of learning outcomes, technology acceptance, or instructional effectiveness (Alammary et al., 2014; Rasheed et al., 2020). While these studies provide valuable insights, they often overlook the need for a structured conceptual understanding of students' perception within hybrid learning environments. Students' perception is a multidimensional construct influenced by factors such as perceived usefulness, ease of learning, flexibility,

interaction, and engagement, which collectively shape learning satisfaction and acceptance (Sun et al., 2008).

In the context of management education, where learner expectations, professional relevance, and pedagogical complexity are high, the absence of a comprehensive conceptual framework becomes more pronounced. There is a need to synthesize existing theoretical perspectives and prior empirical findings to clearly articulate the dimensions influencing students' perception of hybrid learning. Addressing this gap will contribute to conceptual refinement and provide a foundation for future empirical validation.

Objectives

The primary objective of this conceptual paper is to develop a comprehensive framework that explains students' perception of hybrid learning in management education through a synthesis of existing literature and theoretical perspectives.

The specific objectives of the paper are as follows:

- To review and integrate existing scholarly literature on hybrid learning in higher education.
- To identify and conceptualize key dimensions influencing students' perception of hybrid learning in management education.
- To develop a conceptual framework linking hybrid learning dimensions with student perception, satisfaction, and acceptance.
- To propose theoretically grounded propositions that can guide future empirical research.

HYBRID LEARNING IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Evolution and Relevance

The evolution of hybrid learning in higher education can be traced to the increasing integration of digital technologies into traditional classroom environments. Initially conceptualized as a strategic blend of face-to-face instruction and online learning activities, hybrid learning emerged as a response to the limitations of purely online and purely traditional instructional models (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham, 2013). Rather than serving as a transitional phase toward online education, hybrid learning has evolved into a deliberate pedagogical design that combines synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences to enhance learner engagement and instructional effectiveness.

The relevance of hybrid learning has grown substantially with advancements in learning management systems, collaborative digital platforms, and multimedia instructional tools. These developments have enabled institutions to design flexible learning environments that accommodate diverse learning styles while maintaining academic rigor (Means et al., 2014). Research suggests that hybrid learning environments often outperform traditional classroom-only approaches in terms of student satisfaction, engagement, and perceived

learning effectiveness, particularly when instructional design is intentional and learner-centered (Bernard et al., 2014).

In recent years, hybrid learning has gained renewed attention due to large-scale disruptions in traditional education systems and the increasing demand for flexible learning pathways. However, its relevance extends beyond crisis-driven adoption. Hybrid learning is now viewed as a sustainable instructional model that supports lifelong learning, digital competency development, and learner autonomy (Hrastinski, 2019). This shift has prompted higher education institutions to re-evaluate curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and assessment practices to align with hybrid learning principles.

Within this broader context, hybrid learning has become especially relevant for professional and practice-oriented disciplines such as management education. Business schools are increasingly adopting hybrid formats to balance academic instruction with practical exposure, technological integration, and industry relevance. As management education continues to respond to rapidly changing business environments, hybrid learning provides a flexible and scalable approach to delivering contemporary management curricula.

Unique Requirements of Management Education

Management education is distinct from many other academic disciplines due to its strong emphasis on experiential learning, applied knowledge, and professional skill development. Unlike content-heavy disciplines that rely primarily on knowledge transmission, management education focuses on developing analytical thinking, decision-making ability, leadership skills, and collaborative competencies (Boud & Kolb, 2017). These learning outcomes require pedagogical approaches that actively engage students and connect theoretical concepts with real-world business contexts.

Traditional classroom teaching methods alone may be insufficient to address the dynamic and interdisciplinary nature of management education. Case-based learning, simulations, role plays, group projects, and industry interactions are integral components of management pedagogy, all of which demand flexibility in instructional delivery (Mintzberg, 2009). Hybrid learning environments support these requirements by enabling a combination of in-person discussions and technology-mediated learning activities, thereby extending learning beyond classroom boundaries.

Furthermore, management students increasingly expect learning experiences that mirror contemporary organizational practices, which are themselves digitally enabled and hybrid in nature. Exposure to virtual collaboration tools, online data sources, and digital communication platforms is essential for preparing students for modern managerial roles (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). Hybrid learning facilitates this alignment by integrating digital competencies into the learning process, thereby enhancing the professional relevance of management education.

Another unique requirement of management education is the need for continuous interaction between students, faculty, and industry stakeholders. Hybrid learning

environments allow institutions to incorporate guest lectures, webinars, and virtual industry interactions without the constraints of physical presence (Rasheed et al., 2020). This flexibility enhances access to industry expertise and supports the development of practical insights, which are critical for management students.

Given these distinctive pedagogical and professional demands, the adoption of hybrid learning in management education must be carefully conceptualized. Understanding how students perceive hybrid learning environments is particularly important, as their perceptions influence engagement, satisfaction, and acceptance of instructional innovations. A clear conceptual understanding of hybrid learning within the context of management education is therefore essential for designing effective learning experiences and guiding future empirical research.

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

Definition of Perception

Perception is a fundamental psychological construct that refers to the process through which individuals interpret and make sense of stimuli from their environment. In educational contexts, perception encompasses learners' cognitive and affective evaluations of instructional methods, learning environments, and educational experiences (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Rather than being an objective reflection of reality, perception is shaped by prior experiences, expectations, beliefs, and contextual factors, which collectively influence how learners respond to instructional innovations.

Within higher education, students' perception plays a critical role in determining learning engagement, motivation, satisfaction, and acceptance of pedagogical approaches. Research suggests that students do not merely react to instructional designs based on their structural features but based on how these features are perceived in terms of usefulness, relevance, and ease of engagement (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Consequently, perception acts as an intermediary mechanism through which instructional strategies influence learning outcomes.

In technology-enabled learning environments, perception becomes even more significant due to the presence of multiple interaction modes, digital interfaces, and varying levels of learner autonomy. Studies on e-learning and blended learning consistently demonstrate that students' positive perception of technology integration enhances their willingness to engage with learning systems and improves overall learning experiences (Sun et al., 2008). Conversely, negative perceptions related to complexity, lack of interaction, or insufficient support can hinder learning effectiveness regardless of the technological sophistication of the instructional design.

From a conceptual standpoint, students' perception in hybrid learning environments can be understood as a multidimensional construct reflecting learners' holistic evaluation of the learning experience. This evaluation includes cognitive judgments (e.g., perceived usefulness), affective responses (e.g., satisfaction), and behavioral intentions (e.g.,

acceptance or continued use). Recognizing perception as a complex and integrative construct is essential for developing theoretical frameworks that explain student responses to hybrid learning in management education.

Key Perception Dimensions from Literature

The literature on technology-enabled and hybrid learning identifies several key dimensions that collectively shape students' perception of learning environments. One of the most widely recognized dimensions is perceived usefulness, which refers to the extent to which students believe that hybrid learning enhances their learning performance and academic effectiveness. Rooted in technology acceptance research, perceived usefulness has been consistently shown to influence learners' attitudes, satisfaction, and intention to engage with digital learning systems (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). In management education, perceived usefulness is particularly relevant as students evaluate learning methods based on their applicability to real-world managerial contexts.

Another important dimension is ease of learning, which reflects students' perception of how effortlessly they can navigate, understand, and engage with hybrid learning platforms and instructional materials. Ease of learning influences cognitive load and learning efficiency, thereby shaping students' overall learning experience (Al-Fraihat et al., 2020). Hybrid learning environments that are perceived as complex or poorly structured may negatively affect students' perception, even if the content quality is high.

Flexibility is frequently cited as a defining feature of hybrid learning and a critical determinant of student perception. Flexibility refers to the degree to which learners can control the time, place, pace, and mode of learning. Prior studies highlight that flexibility enhances learner autonomy and supports self-directed learning, particularly for students balancing academic, professional, and personal commitments (Graham, 2013; Means et al., 2014). In management education, flexibility is often perceived as a value-enhancing attribute that aligns with the dynamic and time-constrained nature of professional programs.

Interaction and engagement constitute another key dimension influencing students' perception of hybrid learning environments. Interaction may occur between students and instructors, among peers, and between learners and digital content. Research indicates that meaningful interaction is essential for sustaining engagement, fostering collaborative learning, and supporting higher-order cognitive processes (Moore, 1989; Bernard et al., 2014). In management education, where discussion, debate, and collaborative problem-solving are central to learning, students' perception of interaction quality significantly affects their evaluation of hybrid learning effectiveness.

Finally, student satisfaction is often conceptualized as an outcome of perception rather than a standalone construct. Satisfaction reflects learners' overall evaluative judgment of their educational experience and serves as an indicator of instructional success (Sun et al., 2008). In conceptual models, satisfaction is commonly positioned as a mediating outcome linking

perception dimensions with behavioral intentions such as acceptance, continued use, and recommendation of hybrid learning systems.

Collectively, these dimensions provide a comprehensive foundation for conceptualizing students' perception of hybrid learning in management education. Synthesizing these constructs enables the development of an integrative framework that captures the complexity of learner experiences and offers theoretical guidance for future empirical validation.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Learning Theory Explanation

Theoretical grounding is essential for conceptualizing how and why students perceive hybrid learning environments in particular ways. Learning theories provide structured explanations of how knowledge is constructed, how learners interact with instructional environments, and how learning outcomes are achieved. In the context of hybrid learning, theories that emphasize learner agency, interaction, and experiential engagement are particularly relevant. Among these, constructivist learning theory and experiential learning theory offer strong conceptual foundations for understanding students' perception of hybrid learning in management education.

Constructivist learning theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with content, peers, and instructors rather than passively receiving information (Piaget, 1972; Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is viewed as a meaning-making process influenced by prior knowledge, social interaction, and contextual factors. From this perspective, effective learning environments are those that facilitate collaboration, reflection, and problem-solving. Constructivism is widely applied in higher education due to its emphasis on learner-centered pedagogy and active engagement (Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Closely aligned with constructivism, social constructivism highlights the role of social interaction and dialogue in knowledge construction. Vygotsky's concept of the *zone of proximal development* emphasizes the importance of guided interaction and collaborative learning for cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978). This theoretical lens underscores the significance of interaction and engagement—key dimensions shaping students' perception of hybrid learning environments.

Another influential framework relevant to management education is experiential learning theory, which conceptualizes learning as a cyclical process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Experiential learning emphasizes learning through doing and reflection, making it particularly applicable to management education where real-world problem-solving and decision-making are central. This theory highlights the importance of designing learning environments that integrate experience with reflection, a principle that hybrid learning environments are well positioned to support.

Together, these learning theories conceptualize students as active participants in the learning process whose perceptions are shaped by the quality of interaction, relevance of learning experiences, and opportunities for reflection and application. As such, they provide a robust theoretical basis for examining how hybrid learning environments influence students' perception in management education.

Relevance to Hybrid Learning

The relevance of constructivist and experiential learning theories to hybrid learning lies in their alignment with the pedagogical features of hybrid instructional models. Hybrid learning environments combine face-to-face interaction with technology-mediated learning, thereby creating opportunities for active learning, collaboration, and reflective engagement (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). These environments support constructivist principles by enabling learners to engage with content through multiple modalities and to co-construct knowledge through discussion and collaboration.

Hybrid learning also facilitates social constructivist processes by expanding the spaces for interaction beyond the physical classroom. Online discussion forums, collaborative digital tools, and synchronous virtual sessions enable sustained peer-to-peer and learner–instructor interaction, which are critical for meaningful learning (Moore, 1989; Hrastinski, 2019). Students' perception of hybrid learning is therefore influenced not only by the availability of technological tools but by the extent to which these tools support meaningful interaction and collaborative knowledge construction.

From an experiential learning perspective, hybrid learning environments offer flexible opportunities for integrating experience, reflection, and application. For instance, management students can engage in real-world projects, simulations, or case analyses offline and subsequently reflect upon and discuss their experiences through online platforms. This integration of experiential activities with reflective learning processes enhances perceived learning effectiveness and professional relevance (Boud & Kolb, 2017).

Furthermore, hybrid learning aligns with learner-centered pedagogical principles by offering flexibility in terms of time, place, and pace of learning. Such flexibility supports self-directed learning and autonomy, which are central to both constructivist and experiential learning theories (Graham, 2013). When students perceive hybrid learning environments as supportive of their learning needs and professional goals, their engagement, satisfaction, and acceptance of hybrid learning are likely to increase.

In management education, where learning outcomes extend beyond knowledge acquisition to include leadership, communication, and decision-making skills, the theoretical alignment between hybrid learning and constructivist–experiential principles is particularly significant. These theories provide a conceptual lens for understanding why students may perceive hybrid learning as effective, relevant, or challenging. Accordingly, grounding the

conceptual framework in established learning theories strengthens the theoretical rigor of the study and enhances its contribution to the hybrid learning literature.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The development of a conceptual framework is a central requirement of conceptual research, as it enables the systematic integration of theoretical constructs and clarifies the relationships among them (Jabareen, 2009). In the context of hybrid learning in management education, a conceptual framework serves to organize fragmented insights from prior studies and present a coherent explanation of how students form perceptions of hybrid learning environments and how these perceptions translate into meaningful educational outcomes.

Drawing upon constructivist learning theory, experiential learning theory, and extant literature on technology-enabled learning, the proposed conceptual framework identifies key dimensions of hybrid learning that shape students' perception, which in turn influences satisfaction and acceptance of hybrid learning in management education. The framework is designed to be parsimonious yet theoretically robust, ensuring conceptual clarity and suitability for future empirical validation.

Hybrid Learning Dimensions

Hybrid learning dimensions represent the foundational instructional characteristics that students experience within a hybrid learning environment. These dimensions are conceptualized as antecedent constructs that influence students' cognitive and affective evaluations of learning experiences.

Perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which students believe that hybrid learning enhances their academic performance and professional competence. Rooted in technology acceptance literature, perceived usefulness reflects learners' judgment of the instrumental value of instructional methods (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). In management education, where applicability to real-world managerial contexts is critical, students are likely to evaluate hybrid learning based on its contribution to analytical skills, decision-making ability, and industry readiness.

Ease of learning captures students' perception of the simplicity, clarity, and navigability of hybrid learning environments. This construct reflects cognitive effort and learning efficiency and is closely associated with learners' ability to engage meaningfully with instructional content (Al-Fraihat et al., 2020). When hybrid learning systems are perceived as intuitive and well-structured, students are more likely to develop positive learning experiences and sustain engagement.

Flexibility is a defining characteristic of hybrid learning and refers to learners' perceived control over time, pace, location, and learning modalities. Flexibility supports self-directed learning and autonomy, both of which are central to adult learning and management education (Graham, 2013; Knowles et al., 2015). For management students, flexibility is

particularly salient due to academic workload, professional commitments, and the need for experiential exposure.

Interaction and engagement encompass the quality and extent of communication between learners and instructors, among peers, and between learners and learning content. Interaction is a critical determinant of meaningful learning, especially in hybrid environments where physical and virtual spaces coexist (Moore, 1989; Bernard et al., 2014). In management education, interactive learning is essential for developing leadership, communication, and collaborative problem-solving skills.

Students' Perception

Students' perception is conceptualized as a higher-order, multidimensional construct reflecting learners' overall cognitive and affective evaluation of hybrid learning experiences. Perception integrates students' judgments about usefulness, ease of learning, flexibility, and interaction into a holistic assessment of the learning environment (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Rather than functioning as a single evaluative dimension, perception represents a synthesis of multiple experiential cues that shape learners' attitudes and responses to instructional design.

In hybrid learning contexts, students' perception acts as an interpretive mechanism through which instructional features are translated into learning-related outcomes. Positive perceptions enhance motivation, engagement, and persistence, whereas negative perceptions may lead to disengagement despite the presence of advanced technological infrastructure (Sun et al., 2008).

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction represents learners' overall evaluative judgment of their educational experience and serves as an affective outcome of perception. Satisfaction reflects the extent to which students' expectations are met or exceeded by hybrid learning environments (Oliver, 1997). In conceptual terms, satisfaction is positioned as a proximal outcome influenced by students' perception of hybrid learning rather than as a direct response to instructional features alone.

In management education, student satisfaction is particularly important as it influences learning commitment, program reputation, and institutional sustainability. Prior research consistently identifies satisfaction as a key indicator of instructional effectiveness in technology-enabled learning environments (Sun et al., 2008; Al-Fraihat et al., 2020).

Acceptance of Hybrid Learning

Acceptance of hybrid learning refers to students' willingness to adopt, continue using, and endorse hybrid learning as a preferred instructional mode. Acceptance is conceptualized as a behavioral intention outcome influenced by satisfaction and perception (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In a conceptual framework, acceptance reflects the likelihood that students will support the long-term integration of hybrid learning into management education curricula.

Acceptance is particularly relevant in post-adoption contexts where institutions seek to institutionalize hybrid learning beyond temporary or crisis-driven implementation. Understanding acceptance enables institutions to design sustainable hybrid learning strategies aligned with learner expectations.

Logical Linkages among Constructs

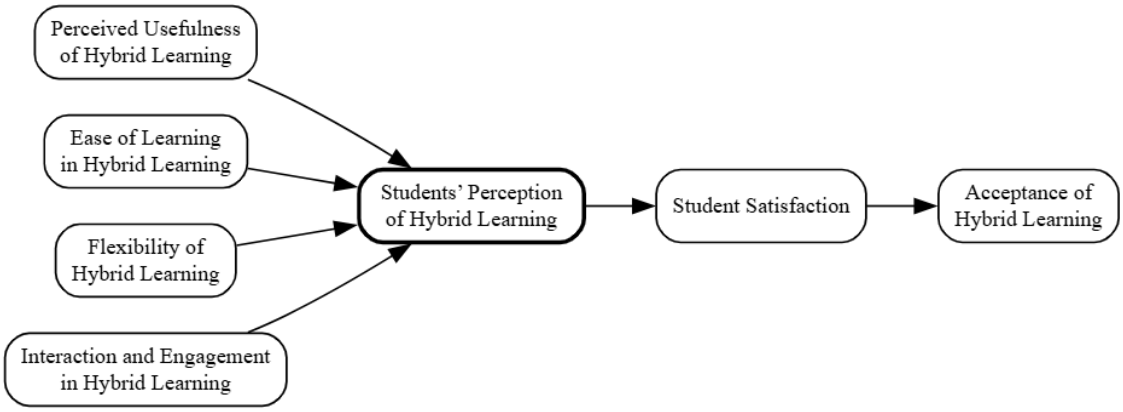
The conceptual framework proposes a sequential and theoretically grounded set of relationships among constructs. Hybrid learning dimensions are positioned as exogenous antecedents that shape students' perception by influencing how learners cognitively and affectively evaluate their learning experiences. This positioning is supported by constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that learning outcomes are mediated by learners' interpretation of instructional environments (Piaget, 1972; Biggs & Tang, 2011).

Students' perception functions as a central mediating construct, translating instructional characteristics into affective and behavioral outcomes. This mediation logic aligns with prior conceptualizations in educational psychology and technology acceptance research, where perception-based evaluations precede satisfaction and acceptance (Davis, 1989; Sun et al., 2008).

Student satisfaction is conceptualized as an affective outcome resulting from positive perception, reflecting learners' emotional response to hybrid learning experiences. Satisfaction, in turn, influences acceptance of hybrid learning by reinforcing favorable attitudes and behavioral intentions. This sequential linkage ensures conceptual coherence and allows future researchers to empirically test both direct and indirect effects within the framework.

Diagram of the Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: The proposed conceptual framework



This framework visually represents the progression from instructional design features to perceptual evaluation and, ultimately, to affective and behavioral outcomes. The directional flow reflects theoretical assumptions derived from constructivist and experiential learning

perspectives and provides a clear roadmap for future empirical validation using structural modeling or regression-based approaches.

RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Conceptual papers are expected to move beyond descriptive synthesis by articulating clear, theoretically grounded propositions that logically emerge from the proposed conceptual framework (MacInnis, 2011). Research propositions serve as formal statements that explain anticipated relationships among constructs based on theory and prior empirical evidence, without subjecting them to immediate statistical testing. In the present study, the propositions are derived from constructivist learning theory, experiential learning theory, and established models of technology acceptance and learner satisfaction.

The proposed framework positions hybrid learning dimensions as antecedent constructs, students' perception as a central mediating construct, and student satisfaction and acceptance of hybrid learning as outcome constructs. The following propositions (P1–P5) articulate these relationships in a sequential and theoretically coherent manner.

Proposition P1

Perceived usefulness of hybrid learning positively influences students' perception of hybrid learning in management education.

Perceived usefulness refers to learners' belief that a particular instructional approach enhances their learning effectiveness and performance. Originating from the Technology Acceptance Model, perceived usefulness has consistently been identified as a primary determinant of individuals' cognitive evaluations of technology-enabled systems (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). In educational contexts, students are more likely to form positive perceptions of learning environments when they believe that these environments contribute meaningfully to academic achievement and skill development.

From a constructivist perspective, learners actively evaluate instructional environments based on their perceived relevance and value to learning goals (Biggs & Tang, 2011). In management education, where students are strongly outcome-oriented and professionally focused, perceived usefulness is particularly salient. Hybrid learning environments that integrate real-world cases, simulations, and digital resources are likely to be perceived as useful due to their alignment with managerial competencies and industry expectations. Consequently, perceived usefulness is conceptually positioned as a key antecedent shaping students' overall perception of hybrid learning.

Proposition P2

Ease of learning in hybrid learning environments positively influences students' perception of hybrid learning.

Ease of learning reflects students' perception of the effort required to engage with learning systems and instructional content. Cognitive load theory suggests that learning effectiveness is influenced by the extent to which instructional designs minimize unnecessary cognitive effort, allowing learners to focus on meaningful learning activities (Sweller, 1988). When hybrid learning environments are perceived as intuitive, well-organized, and user-friendly, students are more likely to develop favorable perceptions of the learning experience.

Empirical research in e-learning and blended learning contexts consistently demonstrates that ease of use or ease of learning significantly influences learners' attitudes and perceptions (Sun et al., 2008; Al-Fraihat et al., 2020). From a theoretical standpoint, ease of learning functions as an enabling condition that facilitates engagement and reduces resistance to instructional innovation. In management education, where students often engage with multiple digital platforms simultaneously, the perceived simplicity and clarity of hybrid learning environments play a crucial role in shaping overall perception.

Proposition P3

Flexibility of hybrid learning positively influences students' perception of hybrid learning in management education.

Flexibility is widely recognized as a defining characteristic of hybrid learning and a key driver of learner autonomy. Adult learning theory emphasizes that adult learners value control over their learning processes, including decisions related to time, pace, and learning modalities (Knowles et al., 2015). Hybrid learning environments offer flexibility by combining structured face-to-face instruction with self-paced online learning components.

From an experiential learning perspective, flexibility enables learners to engage in reflective observation and active experimentation across different contexts (Kolb, 1984). Prior research indicates that flexibility enhances learner satisfaction and perceived effectiveness, particularly for students balancing academic and professional responsibilities (Graham, 2013; Means et al., 2014). In management education, where students often experience time constraints and diverse learning needs, flexibility is likely to positively shape perceptions of hybrid learning as supportive and learner-centered.

Proposition P4

Interaction and engagement in hybrid learning environments positively influence students' perception of hybrid learning.

Interaction and engagement are central constructs in both constructivist and social learning theories, which emphasize that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and collaborative processes (Vygotsky, 1978). Moore's (1989) interaction framework further highlights the importance of learner–instructor, learner–learner, and learner–content interaction in distance and hybrid learning environments.

Hybrid learning environments extend opportunities for interaction by integrating face-to-face discussions with online forums, collaborative tools, and synchronous virtual sessions. Research consistently demonstrates that meaningful interaction enhances learner engagement, deep learning, and positive perceptions of instructional quality (Bernard et al., 2014; Hrastinski, 2019). In management education, where discussion, debate, and teamwork are integral to pedagogical practice, students' perception of interaction quality is likely to be a strong determinant of their overall evaluation of hybrid learning environments.

Proposition P5

Students' perception of hybrid learning positively influences student satisfaction and acceptance of hybrid learning in management education.

Students' perception functions as a higher-order evaluative construct that integrates cognitive judgments and affective responses to learning environments. Expectation–confirmation theory posits that satisfaction arises when perceived performance meets or exceeds prior expectations (Oliver, 1997). In educational settings, positive perceptions of instructional quality, relevance, and usability are strongly associated with learner satisfaction and continued engagement (Sun et al., 2008).

Furthermore, models of technology acceptance suggest that perception-based evaluations precede behavioral intentions such as acceptance and continued use (Venkatesh et al., 2003). In a conceptual framework, student satisfaction serves as an affective outcome that reinforces acceptance of hybrid learning as a legitimate and preferred instructional mode. This proposition is particularly important in management education, where long-term acceptance of hybrid learning is essential for institutional sustainability and curriculum innovation.

Conceptual of Propositions

Collectively, Propositions P1–P4 position hybrid learning dimensions as antecedents influencing students' perception, while Proposition P5 establishes perception as a central mechanism linking instructional characteristics with affective and behavioral outcomes. This structure reflects a logically ordered causal chain that can be empirically examined using multivariate techniques such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling in future research.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Conceptual research is expected to offer meaningful implications that extend beyond theoretical synthesis by demonstrating how proposed frameworks advance knowledge and inform practice (Whetten, 1989; MacInnis, 2011). The conceptual model developed in this study provides important theoretical and practical insights into students' perception of hybrid learning in management education. By integrating learning theories with perception-based constructs, the model contributes to the refinement of hybrid learning scholarship

and offers guidance for stakeholders involved in curriculum design, pedagogy, and institutional governance.

Theoretical Implications: Contribution to Hybrid Learning Literature

The proposed conceptual model makes a significant theoretical contribution by systematically integrating hybrid learning dimensions, students' perception, satisfaction, and acceptance into a coherent explanatory framework. Existing studies on hybrid learning often examine isolated variables such as learning effectiveness, technology adoption, or student satisfaction without explicitly articulating the underlying perceptual mechanisms that link instructional design to learner outcomes (Bernard et al., 2014; Hrastinski, 2019). By positioning students' perception as a central mediating construct, the model advances theoretical understanding of how hybrid learning environments are interpreted and evaluated by learners.

From a learning theory perspective, the model extends constructivist and experiential learning frameworks by explicitly operationalizing how instructional features are cognitively and affectively processed by students. While constructivist theory emphasizes active knowledge construction, the present model clarifies the specific hybrid learning dimensions—perceived usefulness, ease of learning, flexibility, and interaction—that shape learners' interpretive processes in management education contexts (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Kolb, 1984). This integration strengthens the explanatory power of learning theories in technology-mediated environments.

Additionally, the model contributes to the hybrid learning literature by offering a parsimonious yet comprehensive structure that is conceptually robust and empirically testable. By articulating clear propositions and logical linkages among constructs, the framework provides a foundation for future quantitative research using multivariate techniques such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling. This theoretical clarity addresses a common limitation in hybrid learning research, where conceptual ambiguity often undermines cumulative knowledge development (Jabareen, 2009).

Practical Implications: Implications for Curriculum Design

The conceptual model offers valuable guidance for curriculum designers by emphasizing the importance of aligning hybrid learning components with students' perceptual evaluations. Curriculum design in management education should move beyond content digitization and focus on structuring learning experiences that enhance perceived usefulness, flexibility, and interaction. Integrating real-world case studies, simulations, and industry-oriented projects within hybrid formats can strengthen students' perception of relevance and applicability (Boud & Kolb, 2017).

Furthermore, the model underscores the need for balanced integration of online and face-to-face components. Curriculum designers should ensure that online activities complement rather than replicate classroom instruction, thereby enhancing learning efficiency and cognitive engagement. Modular curriculum structures that allow flexible sequencing and

pacing can further support learner autonomy and self-directed learning, which are critical for management students.

Implications for Faculty Pedagogy

From a pedagogical standpoint, the conceptual model highlights the central role of faculty in shaping students' perception of hybrid learning. Faculty members are not merely content deliverers but facilitators of learning experiences that influence students' cognitive and affective evaluations. Teaching strategies that promote interaction, collaborative learning, and reflective engagement are essential for fostering positive perceptions of hybrid learning environments (Moore, 1989; Hrastinski, 2019).

Faculty pedagogy should therefore emphasize active learning techniques such as problem-based learning, group discussions, and experiential assignments, supported by digital tools that enable continuous interaction. Additionally, instructors should be mindful of cognitive load and instructional clarity when designing hybrid learning activities, as ease of learning significantly influences students' perception and satisfaction (Sweller, 1988). Professional development initiatives focused on digital pedagogy and instructional design can equip faculty with the skills needed to effectively implement hybrid learning models.

Implications for Institutional Policy

At the institutional level, the conceptual model provides insights for policy formulation and strategic planning related to hybrid learning implementation. Institutions should recognize that successful adoption of hybrid learning depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on students' perception and acceptance. Policies should therefore support learner-centered design principles, faculty capacity building, and continuous evaluation of hybrid learning effectiveness.

Institutional policies can promote the sustainability of hybrid learning by encouraging standardized guidelines for hybrid course design, assessment practices, and quality assurance mechanisms. Investments in learning management systems, digital collaboration tools, and instructional support services should be guided by an understanding of how these resources influence students' perception and satisfaction (Means et al., 2014). Moreover, institutions should foster a culture of innovation and flexibility that supports the evolving needs of management education in a digitally mediated environment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Conceptual papers, while valuable for theory development and synthesis, inherently involve certain limitations that must be transparently acknowledged to strengthen scholarly rigor and credibility (Whetten, 1989; MacInnis, 2011). Recognizing these limitations is essential not only for setting appropriate boundaries for interpretation but also for guiding future research agendas. The present study, which develops a conceptual framework to explain students' perception of hybrid learning in management education, is subject to

limitations related primarily to the absence of empirical testing and the scope for future validation.

Absence of Empirical Testing

The primary limitation of the present study lies in its conceptual nature and the absence of empirical data to test the proposed relationships among constructs. While the conceptual framework and research propositions are grounded in established learning theories and supported by prior empirical literature, they remain theoretically inferred rather than statistically validated. As a result, causal inferences cannot be drawn, and the strength, direction, and significance of the proposed relationships cannot be empirically confirmed at this stage.

From a methodological standpoint, the lack of empirical testing limits the ability to assess measurement reliability, construct validity, and model fit—key considerations in quantitative research using techniques such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019). Although the framework is designed to be empirically testable, its current contribution is confined to theory building rather than theory testing. This limitation is consistent with the purpose of conceptual research, which prioritizes explanation and integration over statistical generalization (Jabareen, 2009).

Furthermore, without empirical evidence, it is not possible to examine potential moderating or mediating effects that may influence students' perception of hybrid learning, such as demographic characteristics, prior digital learning experience, or institutional context. Acknowledging this limitation underscores the need for caution when applying the proposed framework directly to specific educational settings without empirical substantiation.

Scope for Validation Studies and Future Research Directions

Despite these limitations, the conceptual model offers substantial opportunities for future research and empirical validation. One important direction for future studies is the quantitative testing of the proposed framework using survey-based research designs. Researchers may operationalize the constructs using validated measurement scales and test the propositions through multivariate statistical techniques such as multiple regression analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, or structural equation modeling. Such studies would enable the assessment of direct, indirect, and mediating relationships among hybrid learning dimensions, students' perception, satisfaction, and acceptance (Hair et al., 2019).

Future research may also extend the conceptual framework by incorporating additional variables that could influence students' perception of hybrid learning. For instance, learner characteristics such as self-regulated learning ability, digital literacy, or learning motivation may act as moderating variables. Similarly, contextual factors such as institutional support, technological infrastructure, and faculty readiness could be examined as antecedents or boundary conditions affecting the proposed relationships.

Another promising avenue for future research involves comparative and longitudinal studies. Comparative research could examine differences in students' perception of hybrid learning across disciplines, institutions, or geographical contexts, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the framework. Longitudinal studies could investigate how students' perceptions evolve over time as they gain greater exposure to hybrid learning environments, offering insights into post-adoption behavior and sustained acceptance (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Finally, qualitative and mixed-methods research designs may complement quantitative validation efforts by providing deeper insights into students' lived experiences within hybrid learning environments. In-depth interviews, focus group discussions, or case studies could help refine construct definitions and uncover context-specific nuances that may not be captured through survey instruments alone. Such methodological pluralism would further strengthen the theoretical robustness and practical relevance of the proposed conceptual model.

CONCLUSION

9.1 Summary of Conceptual Contribution

This conceptual paper set out to advance understanding of students' perception of hybrid learning in management education by developing an integrative theoretical framework grounded in established learning theories and prior scholarly work. Through a systematic synthesis of literature, the study identified key hybrid learning dimensions—perceived usefulness, ease of learning, flexibility, and interaction and engagement—as critical antecedents shaping students' perceptual evaluations of hybrid learning environments. By positioning students' perception as a central mediating construct linking instructional characteristics to satisfaction and acceptance, the paper offers a structured explanation of how hybrid learning is cognitively and affectively processed by learners.

The proposed conceptual framework contributes to the hybrid learning literature in several important ways. First, it addresses conceptual fragmentation by clarifying the relationships among instructional design features, learner perception, and outcome variables, thereby strengthening theoretical coherence. Second, it extends constructivist and experiential learning theories into hybrid learning contexts by explicating how learner-centered and experience-based pedagogical principles operate within technology-mediated environments. Third, by articulating clearly defined research propositions, the study provides a foundation for future empirical validation and cumulative theory building in management education research.

Final Remarks

Hybrid learning has evolved from an emergent instructional alternative into a strategically important pedagogical model within higher education, particularly in management education where flexibility, experiential learning, and professional relevance are paramount. As institutions continue to institutionalize hybrid learning models,

understanding students' perceptions becomes critical for ensuring instructional effectiveness, learner engagement, and long-term sustainability. This conceptual paper underscores that the success of hybrid learning is not determined solely by technological infrastructure or curriculum design, but by how learners perceive and experience the learning environment.

By offering a theoretically grounded and analytically coherent framework, the study contributes to scholarly discourse while providing practical insights for educators, curriculum designers, and institutional leaders. The conceptual model encourages a learner-centric approach to hybrid learning implementation, emphasizing the importance of perceptual and experiential dimensions in shaping educational outcomes. Ultimately, the framework serves as a roadmap for future research and practice aimed at enhancing the quality and effectiveness of hybrid learning in management education.

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