





Blended Learning: Examining Must-Have, Hybrid, and Value-Added Quality Attributes of Hospitality and Tourism Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the asymmetric impact of hybrid learning attributes on satisfaction to discover which features are more sensitive to the dissatisfaction, satisfaction, and delight of students. An online survey (n = 647) was conducted using snowball and convenience sampling. By implementing impact range performance and asymmetry analyses, the differential effects of hybrid learning attributes (must-have, hybrid, and value-added) on student satisfaction were identified. Considering the limited knowledge regarding the quality attributes of hybrid learning in the extant hospitality and tourism literature, this research offers understanding as to the dynamic nature of hybrid learning attributes on student satisfaction rather than just identifying quality dimensions. The results suggest that there are multiple attributes related to the hybrid learning environment (student support, innovative program, industry involvement, program reputation, hybrid learning support and safety measures, and protection) that produce distinctive impacts on satisfaction.

KEYWORDS

Hybrid learning; quality attributes; education; asymmetric impact; classroom; satisfaction

Introduction

Hospitality and tourism are among the most important industries as they create meaningful employment opportunities, therefore contributing to the economic improvement of many destinations (Tuna & Basdal, 2021). With the dynamic development of tourism over the past decades, scholars and practitioners have increasingly paid attention to this sector (Fakfare et al., 2020a, 2020b). The demand for hospitality and tourism management education has also increased (M.J. Lee et al., 2019). Thus, many educational institutions worldwide have developed and advanced their hospitality and tourism curricula to cater to the demands anticipated from both students and the industry. According to Griffin (2022), the hospitality and tourism sector is a labor-intensive industry, requiring skilled employees to deliver, operate, and maintain tourism products and services. To develop a highly qualified workforce, higher education is important because the hospitality and tourism sector is heavily reliant on young workers skilled in these areas (Li & Liu, 2016).

Unsurprisingly, the continued development of hospitality and tourism education has been documented in a variety of studies in that area. The extant research generally covers skill and competency requirements for a hospitality and tourism career (Jiang & Aexakis, 2017),

the evaluation and development of hospitality and tourism curriculum (Horng et al., 2019; Ramis, 2021; Tuna & Basdal, 2021; Yusuf et al., 2018), student internships (Qu et al., 2021; Ramaprasad et al., 2021; Zopiatis et al., 2021), the application of technology in education (Ali et al., 2016; Qiu et al., 2021; Tolkach & Pratt, 2021), and learning experience/engagement (Gao et al., 2020; Yildiz, 2021). More recently, due to the emergence of COVID-19, hospitality and tourism education research has covered student satisfaction and delivery methods during the pandemic (Cheng & Agyeiwaah, 2021; Choi et al., 2021; Tavitiyaman et al., 2021).

According to Zapata-Cuervo et al. (2021), “hybrid learning” (also known as “blended learning”) refers to an instructional delivery approach that integrates online learning with a traditional face-to-face classroom through a platform that combines an application- and/or web-based technique for teaching/coaching. Traditionally, hybrid learning has been generally seen as an innovative teaching method that comprises classwork supplemented by online activity or an extra activity facilitated by the blend of different styles of learning or modes of delivery (Pang et al., 2010). Instructors typically mix online technology with face-to-face teaching practices, thereby enhancing the learning experience of students (Choi et al., 2021). Recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic,