

Research Methodology 2.0: A Hybrid Theoretical-Pedagogical Model for Postgraduate Marketing Education

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Abstract: The teaching of research methodology in postgraduate marketing education has long relied on traditional, linear, and largely instrumental approaches, which often emphasise procedural compliance over deep conceptual understanding and critical engagement. While such approaches may adequately convey technical skills, they frequently fail to foster the higher-order analytical, reflective, and self-directed competencies required of marketing postgraduates to navigate complex, real-world research challenges. Despite the proliferation of hybrid and technology-enhanced learning environments in higher education, scholarship on research methodology pedagogy in business and management remains largely fragmented, with limited conceptual frameworks that integrate theory-driven learning principles into hybrid teaching models. Addressing this gap, this paper proposes Research Methodology 2.0, a theoretically grounded conceptual framework for hybrid research methodology education tailored to postgraduate marketing students and related disciplines. The framework is developed through the synthesis of Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) (Fosnot, 2013; Vygotsky, 1978) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) (Kolb, 2015; Kolb et al., 2014), two complementary pedagogical paradigms that together provide a robust theoretical foundation for hybrid teaching. Constructivist Learning Theory emphasises active knowledge construction, cognitive scaffolding, and the contextualisation of learning within authentic disciplinary practices, thereby enabling students to develop critical thinking and reflective capacities. Experiential Learning Theory, in turn, foregrounds learning through iterative cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and experimentation, supporting students' ability to apply methodological knowledge to dynamic marketing research contexts. By integrating these theories, Research Methodology 2.0 moves beyond a purely procedural orientation, foregrounding the interplay between conceptual understanding, practical application, and reflective synthesis. The conceptual framework delineates three interrelated components: (1) Knowledge Construction, emphasising theory-practice alignment and learner agency; (2) Experiential Engagement, incorporating real-world, problem-based scenarios and virtual simulations; and (3) Reflective Integration, fostering metacognition and continuous self-directed learning. Relationships between these constructs highlight the recursive, iterative nature of research skill development, wherein engagement with authentic tasks informs conceptual understanding, and reflective practice reinforces experiential learning. The theoretical contribution of this paper lies in reconceptualising research methodology pedagogy for the digital and hybrid era, offering a coherent, integrative model that bridges the divide between constructivist principles and experiential praxis. Practically, the framework provides actionable guidance for curriculum design, instructional strategies, and assessment in postgraduate marketing programmes, promoting deeper engagement, critical reasoning, and transferable research competencies. The framework also offers a foundation for the systematic integration of hybrid and technology-enhanced learning tools without compromising the rigour and reflective depth of methodology education. Finally, Research Methodology 2.0 opens new avenues for scholarly inquiry and pedagogical innovation by providing a theoretically grounded basis for empirical testing, cross-disciplinary application, and further conceptual development. By articulating a structured, theory-driven approach, it enhances the quality and impact of research methodology education, while foregrounding the dynamic tension between theoretical reasoning and methodological practice, and demonstrating how ontological positioning and pedagogy shape epistemological understanding.

Keywords: Research Methodology Pedagogy, Hybrid Learning, Constructivist Learning Theory, Experiential Learning Theory, Postgraduate Marketing Education, Conceptual Framework.

1. Introduction

Research methodology education occupies a foundational role in postgraduate business and marketing programmes by equipping students with the conceptual tools and procedural fluency necessary to undertake independent inquiry. Within these fields, methodological competence underpins not only academic research projects but also evidence-informed managerial decision-making, strategic analysis, and innovation. Contemporary scholarship emphasises that research methods teaching must transcend procedural tutorials to include higher-order cognitive skills, such as critical reflection, epistemological reasoning, and interpretive judgement, to ensure that future marketing leaders can engage robustly with complex, real-world problems. This pedagogical imperative mirrors broader trends in research-informed teaching, where the integration of research and instruction enhances students' analytical capabilities and fosters deeper disciplinary understanding (Matos et al., 2023).

Rigorous training in research methodology is especially significant in postgraduate marketing education because it bridges theoretical concepts with empirical inquiry in contexts characterised by volatility, uncertainty, and

rapid technological change. Marketing scholars and practitioners alike must negotiate multifaceted datasets, shifting consumer behaviours, and globalised competitive environments; robust methodology pedagogy supports these competencies by fostering analytical precision, ethical research practices, and reflective problem-solving. Additionally, postgraduate students with solid methodological grounding are better prepared to contribute to academic knowledge, critique existing studies, and produce research that withstands scholarly scrutiny. Given persistent concerns that traditional, procedural models of instruction may underprepare students for these demands, the call for pedagogical innovation is gaining prominence in the business and management education literature.

Recent developments in higher education have accelerated the adoption of hybrid and technology-enhanced teaching approaches, reshaping how research methodology courses are delivered. Hybrid learning, defined as the deliberate integration of on-campus instruction with online or remote teaching modalities, creates flexible learning environments that combine face-to-face engagement with digital resources and activities (Gudoniene et al., 2025). This approach affords opportunities for asynchronous learning, learner autonomy and access to a broader range of instructional tools, while also presenting challenges related to pedagogical coherence, equity of access and effective engagement across modalities. Contemporary systematic reviews of hybrid teaching emphasise the importance of innovative pedagogical strategies, faculty support, and purposeful integration of technology to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes (Gudoniene et al., 2025). In the context of research methodology education, these trends signal a shift toward more interactive, student-centred designs that leverage digital platforms to support active learning, collaboration, and reflective practice, while maintaining the intellectual rigour expected in postgraduate business and marketing programmes (Gudoniene et al., 2025).

2. Problem Statement and Research Gap

Research methodology is a core component of postgraduate marketing and business education, yet the ways in which it is commonly taught present several persistent challenges. In many programmes, research methods are delivered through highly structured and procedural approaches that focus on teaching students how to follow prescribed steps, techniques, and formats. While this instrumental focus may help students complete assessments, it often reduces research methodology to a technical exercise rather than an intellectual process requiring judgement, interpretation, and critical reasoning (Bryman and Bell, 2023). As a result, students may become competent in applying methods mechanically without fully understanding the theoretical assumptions that underpin methodological choices in marketing and business research.

A key limitation of these conventional approaches is their limited support for the development of critical thinking and epistemological awareness. Postgraduate students are expected to question knowledge claims, justify research decisions, and engage critically with competing methodological perspectives. However, traditional lecture-based or technique-driven teaching often leaves little space for sustained discussion, critique, or reflexive engagement with research philosophy and design (Biggs and Tang, 2022). Consequently, students may struggle to articulate the rationale behind their methodological decisions, particularly when faced with complex or ambiguous research problems common in contemporary marketing contexts.

In addition, opportunities for reflection and self-directed learning are frequently underdeveloped in research methodology teaching. Reflection on one's assumptions, positionality, and learning process is essential for developing advanced research competence, yet it is often treated as an optional or peripheral activity rather than as a central pedagogical objective. This limits students' ability to become independent researchers who can adapt methodological knowledge to new contexts and evolving research challenges (Selwyn, 2020).

From a scholarly perspective, research on research methodology pedagogy remains fragmented. While there is growing literature on teaching research methods and a separate, expanding body of work on hybrid and technology-enhanced learning, these areas are rarely brought together in a theoretically coherent manner. Studies on hybrid learning tend to focus on digital tools, platforms, and delivery modes, often without sufficient attention to how pedagogical theory informs meaningful learning in advanced methodology education (Bond et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020). Similarly, discussions of research methods teaching frequently overlook the implications of hybrid learning environments for how students engage with, apply, and reflect on methodological knowledge.

This fragmentation points to a clear research gap. There is a lack of an integrated, theory-driven conceptual framework that systematically connects pedagogical theory with hybrid learning design in the teaching of research methodology for postgraduate marketing students. Current approaches do not adequately explain how

conceptual understanding, practical application, and reflective learning can be intentionally aligned within hybrid environments. Addressing this gap is necessary to move beyond procedural instruction towards a more coherent, intellectually robust model of research methodology education that better supports both student learning and pedagogical innovation in postgraduate marketing and business programmes. This gap also reflects a deeper tension between theoretical abstraction and methodological application, where existing pedagogies struggle to integrate conceptual reasoning with practical execution in a coherent manner.

3. Aim and Objectives

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to contribute to ongoing scholarly debates on research methodology pedagogy within postgraduate marketing and business education. In response to the limitations of conventional, procedurally focused teaching approaches and the growing adoption of hybrid and technology-enhanced learning environments, the paper adopts a theory-building orientation. It does not report empirical data or findings; rather, it seeks to advance understanding through conceptual analysis and theoretical integration.

The overarching aim of this paper is to develop a theoretically grounded conceptual framework, referred to as Research Methodology 2.0, to support hybrid teaching and learning in postgraduate marketing education. The framework is intended to reconceptualise research methodology education by aligning pedagogical theory with contemporary hybrid learning contexts, thereby offering a coherent foundation for both teaching practice and curriculum design.

Objectives:

1. Critically review dominant teaching approaches in methodology education.
2. Identify theoretical underpinnings suitable for hybrid pedagogy.
3. Develop an integrative framework synthesising Constructivist and Experiential Learning theories.
4. Highlight pedagogical and curriculum implications for business schools.

4. Research Methodology Education in Business and Marketing Studies

In postgraduate business and marketing education, research methodology is traditionally taught through a combination of lectures, skills workshops, and modularised online units. In conventional formats, lectures remain the dominant vehicle for introducing core concepts, procedural steps and technical terminologies associated with research design and analysis (Palak and Walls, 2020). These sessions, typically teacher-centred and content-driven, emphasise the transmission of information from instructor to student. Complementary to lectures are skills-based workshops that focus on discrete methodological techniques such as questionnaire construction, sampling strategies, or statistical software applications. Workshops often provide structured opportunities for hands-on practice but remain bounded by narrowly defined tasks and may not consistently promote deeper understanding of underlying epistemological assumptions. In parallel, modularised online teaching has become increasingly widespread, offering asynchronous learning units and self-paced content that aim to enhance flexibility and scalability in research methods instruction (Bond et al., 2020).

While these traditional and modular approaches serve functional purposes, they exhibit notable limitations. One significant concern is student disengagement and surface learning. When research methodology is presented as a sequence of procedures to memorise and replicate, students may adopt surface strategies that prioritise compliance with assessment formats rather than critical engagement with methodological reasoning (Biggs and Tang, 2022). In such contexts, knowledge becomes transactional rather than transformational, and students may struggle to internalise conceptual foundations or to apply methods meaningfully in complex research scenarios.

A second limitation derives from limited opportunities for real-world application and contextualisation. Conventional workshops and online modules often isolate technical skills from authentic research problems, thereby obscuring the relevance of methodological choices to substantive marketing questions. This separation reinforces an instrumental view of methods as technical tools devoid of theoretical grounding or contextual sensitivity. As a result, students may complete skills exercises without recognising how methodological decision-making interacts with the substantive challenges of marketing research, such as understanding consumer behaviour or evaluating brand equity in culturally diverse markets.

Moreover, there is a weak integration between theory and practice in many existing teaching approaches. Despite the central role of theory in guiding research design and interpretation, classroom activities frequently treat theoretical discussion as secondary to procedural instruction. This disconnect undermines students'

capacity to link abstract methodological principles with practical research tasks, ultimately limiting their ability to design coherent and philosophically informed research projects (Rosário and Dias, 2024).

In response to these limitations, hybrid, blended, and experiential teaching approaches are gaining traction within higher education. Hybrid learning models combine face-to-face interaction with online engagement, creating opportunities for diversified learning pathways that accommodate different student needs and preferences (Gudoniene et al., 2025). Importantly, such models can support active, student-centred learning, where learners participate in inquiry, problem solving and collaborative sense-making rather than passively absorbing content. This shift aligns with broader pedagogical movements that advocate for constructivist, dialogic and reflective forms of teaching capable of fostering deeper conceptual understanding (Selwyn, 2020).

Technology-enhanced and digital learning environments play an increasingly prominent role in this evolution. Digital platforms, virtual simulations and interactive media can scaffold student engagement with research tasks that mirror real-world complexity, such as designing mixed-method studies or interpreting multi-source data sets. These tools not only extend the reach of instructional content but also create spaces for iterative practice, peer collaboration and reflective feedback, elements that are essential for developing methodological competence (Hodges et al., 2020).

Finally, experiential and applied learning approaches foreground learning through doing. By situating methodological learning within authentic contexts, such as live case studies, consulting projects, or community-based research, students can connect theoretical constructs to practice and reflect on the implications of their methodological choices. Such approaches are particularly relevant to research methodology education because they support the integration of abstract principles, practical skills and reflective judgement, thereby addressing many of the shortcomings of conventional teaching practices.

Collectively, these evolving pedagogical trends signal a shift towards more integrated, theory-informed, and learner-centred models of research methodology education. They create the conditions for rethinking how research methods are taught in postgraduate marketing and business studies, laying the groundwork for conceptual frameworks that can bridge the divide between traditional instruction and contemporary learning needs.

5. Theoretical Foundations

A sound conceptual framework for research methodology education must be grounded in robust pedagogical theory. In this paper, Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) are adopted as complementary lenses through which the teaching and learning of research methodology can be reconceptualised, particularly within hybrid and technology-enhanced contexts.

5.1 Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT)

Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive it. Central to this perspective are three interrelated principles: knowledge construction, scaffolding, and learner agency. Knowledge construction emphasises that learners build understanding by integrating new information with prior experiences, engaging actively with concepts rather than memorising procedures (Fosnot, 2020). Scaffolding refers to the instructional support provided by educators to bridge the gap between learners' current capabilities and desired learning outcomes, progressively withdrawn as competence grows (Boud and Molloy, 2021). Learner agency highlights students' role as active agents in their own educational journeys, making choices about how they engage with content and reflect on their learning.

In postgraduate research methodology education, CLT facilitates deeper engagement with conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of research practice. By encouraging students to interrogate assumptions, construct meaning through dialogue and critique, and reflect on their evolving understanding, constructivist approaches promote critical thinking and reflective reasoning, capabilities that are essential for independent research. Studies in business and management education have shown that constructivist pedagogies, when intentionally applied, can enhance students' ability to synthesise methodological theory with practice, especially when learning activities encourage active inquiry and peer collaboration (Kali and Litman, 2020; Meyer and Land, 2022). For example, integrated problem-based discussions and concept mapping exercises grounded in CLT have been reported to strengthen students' epistemological awareness and interpretive skills in research methods courses.

However, CLT is not without limitations. Constructivist approaches can yield superficial engagement if not carefully facilitated; learners may struggle to self-regulate or link isolated activities to broader disciplinary frameworks without structured guidance. Recent scholarship emphasises the need for deliberate pedagogical design, including clear learning outcomes, formative feedback, and scaffolded tasks to ensure that constructivist learning translates into meaningful conceptual growth (Dyke et al., 2023).

5.2 Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)

Experiential Learning Theory foregrounds learning as a cyclical process of experience, reflection, conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Kolb's model, widely referenced in higher education literature, suggests that learners engage with concrete experiences, reflect on those experiences, abstract general principles, and then apply the insights to new situations (Kolb et al., 2015; Kolb, 2021). The emphasis on reflection and application aligns with the iterative demands of research methodology: students must not only understand methodological concepts but also test and adapt them in practice.

In research methodology education, ELT supports the design of learning activities that simulate or engage with real-world research tasks, such as drafting research proposals, critiquing study designs, or analysing datasets in context. Experiential approaches enable learners to connect theoretical constructs to practical challenges, thereby enhancing both competence and confidence in methodological decision-making. Recent studies have documented the effectiveness of experiential and simulation-based activities in postgraduate and hybrid learning contexts, noting improvements in student engagement, problem-solving skills, and the ability to transfer learning to authentic research problems (Smith and Hill, 2022; Oliver et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, ELT presents its own challenges. Designing quality experiential learning opportunities can be resource-intensive, requiring access to real or simulated data, technological platforms, and sustained instructor support. Additionally, without careful scenario design and reflective prompts, experiential activities may become disconnected from theoretical foundations, limiting their pedagogical value (Brown et al., 2023).

5.3 Rationale for Combining CLT and ELT

Although CLT and ELT originate from distinct pedagogical traditions, they are complementary in ways that align with the goals of hybrid research methodology education. CLT emphasises the construction of meaning and critical engagement with disciplinary concepts, while ELT provides a structure for applying these concepts in iterative, reflective cycles. Combined, they offer a coherent theoretical basis for designing activities that not only deepen conceptual understanding but also engage learners in authentic, applied research tasks.

The integration of these theories is particularly relevant in hybrid and technology-mediated learning environments. Digital platforms can facilitate constructivist interactions (such as online discussions and collaborative knowledge construction) while also supporting experiential activities (such as virtual simulations and iterative feedback loops). Scholars have increasingly pointed to the value of theoretically informed hybrid pedagogy that integrates active, reflective, and context-rich learning experiences, arguing that such designs better prepare postgraduate students for the complexities of contemporary research work (Garrison and Vaughan, 2021; Evans and Waite, 2025). Importantly, this integration is not purely pedagogical but philosophical, as it reflects an alignment between ontological assumptions about the nature of knowledge, methodological approaches to inquiry, and epistemological outcomes in terms of how knowledge is constructed and validated.

6. Development of the Research Methodology 2.0 Conceptual Framework

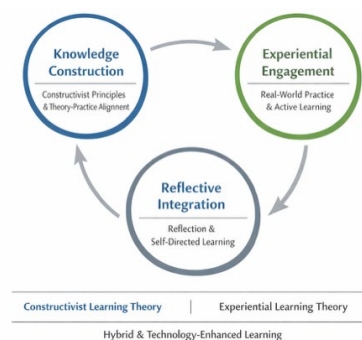


Figure 1: Research Methodology 2.0 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author, 2026

The Research Methodology 2.0 framework in Figure 1.1. synthesises the principles of Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) to provide a comprehensive model for postgraduate research methodology education, particularly within hybrid and technology-enhanced learning environments. This integration seeks to bridge the limitations of conventional methodology teaching, such as procedural focus, superficial engagement, and weak theory-practice integration, by aligning conceptual understanding, applied engagement, and reflective practice in a coherent, iterative structure (Fosnot, 2020; Kolb, 2021).

6.1 Theoretical Synthesis

CLT emphasises knowledge construction, scaffolding, and learner agency, encouraging students to actively interpret and apply methodological concepts rather than passively memorising procedures (Boud and Molloy, 2021). ELT complements this by embedding learning within experiential cycles, whereby students engage in concrete research tasks, reflect on their experiences, conceptualise insights, and apply these in subsequent cycles (Smith and Hill, 2022; Oliver et al., 2024). The synthesis of these theories provides a dual focus: CLT ensures deep conceptual reasoning, while ELT promotes practical competence and iterative skill development. By combining these approaches, the framework supports hybrid pedagogy that integrates digital and face-to-face learning modes, facilitating meaningful engagement even in technology-mediated contexts (Garrison and Vaughan, 2021).

6.2 Description of Framework Components

The diagram illustrates the Research Methodology 2.0 framework, designed to guide hybrid pedagogy in postgraduate marketing education. The framework, as illustrated in Figure 1.1., comprises three interrelated components arranged in a cyclical and iterative sequence.

6.2.1 Knowledge Construction

Positioned as the foundation of the framework, Knowledge Construction operationalises CLT by foregrounding learner agency and scaffolding. Students actively construct methodological understanding by connecting new concepts to prior knowledge, critically evaluating research paradigms, and engaging in guided activities that encourage analytical reasoning. This component develops epistemological awareness and fosters critical thinking, which is central to postgraduate research training (Kali and Litman, 2020; Meyer and Land, 2022).

6.2.2 Experiential Engagement

Building on ELT, Experiential Engagement focuses on real-world research tasks and active learning. Students participate in authentic or simulated activities such as designing studies, analysing datasets, or applying methodological concepts to practical marketing research scenarios. Iterative learning cycles within this component enable students to apply theory in context, reflect on outcomes, and refine strategies, thereby reinforcing conceptual understanding while developing practical skills (Oliver et al., 2024; Brown et al., 2023).

6.2.3 Reflective Integration

Reflective Integration overlays and connects the other two components. Through structured reflection, metacognition, and self-directed learning, students consolidate their insights, critically evaluate methodological choices, and identify areas for ongoing development. This component ensures that learning is transformational rather than transactional, enhancing autonomy, judgement, and lifelong learning capacity (Selwyn, 2020; Evans and Waite, 2025).

6.2.4 Relationships Between Constructs

The framework is iterative, cyclical, and mutually reinforcing, as represented in the conceptual diagram. Knowledge Construction informs Experiential Engagement by providing the conceptual foundation required for meaningful application. Experiences in Experiential Engagement generate insights that feed back into Knowledge Construction, refining conceptual understanding. Reflective Integration spans both processes, ensuring continuous evaluation and consolidation of learning. This cyclical relationship promotes learner autonomy, critical reasoning, and practical skill acquisition, enabling students to navigate complex research challenges with confidence and adaptability (Garrison and Vaughan, 2021; Hodges et al., 2020).

By explicitly integrating constructivist and experiential principles, Research Methodology 2.0 addresses key gaps in conventional methodology pedagogy and is inherently suited to hybrid and technology-enhanced learning environments. The framework provides a conceptually robust and pedagogically informed model that supports postgraduate marketing students in developing both deep understanding and applied research competence, bridging the divide between theory, practice, and reflection.

7. Theoretical Contributions

The paper can therefore be understood not only as a conceptual contribution, but as part of the ongoing development of a broader theoretical thesis on research methodology pedagogy in hybrid learning environments. This paper makes a clear conceptual contribution to scholarship on research methodology pedagogy by reconceptualising how research methods are taught within postgraduate marketing and business education. Through the development of Research Methodology 2.0, the paper advances a theory-driven framework that responds directly to long-standing critiques of procedural, instrumental, and content-heavy approaches to methodology teaching, particularly within hybrid and technology-enhanced learning environments (Tight, 2018; Ashwin et al., 2020).

7.1 Reconceptualising Research Methodology Pedagogy for Hybrid Learning

A central theoretical advance of this paper lies in its reframing of research methodology education as an iterative learning process rather than a linear transmission of technical skills. Existing scholarship has repeatedly noted that research methods are often taught as rule-based procedures or compliance exercises, with limited attention to epistemological reasoning, reflexivity, or methodological judgement (Kilburn et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2021). Research Methodology 2.0 responds to these concerns by positioning methodology learning as a dynamic interaction between knowledge construction, experiential engagement, and reflective integration. This reconceptualisation is particularly significant in hybrid and digitally mediated contexts, where scholars have called for pedagogical models that go beyond content delivery and actively support sense-making, application, and reflection (Bond et al., 2020; Henderson et al., 2023).

7.2 Extending Higher Education and Marketing Education Literature Through Theoretical Integration

The framework extends higher education and marketing education literature by systematically integrating Constructivist Learning Theory (CLT) and Experiential Learning Theory (ELT)—two theories that have frequently been applied in isolation within pedagogy research. Prior studies demonstrate that constructivist approaches support critical thinking and learner agency in postgraduate education but often lack mechanisms for applied skill development if not carefully designed (Fung, 2017; Kember, 2021). Conversely, experiential learning has been widely praised for aligning academic learning with real-world practice, particularly in business and marketing education, yet scholars caution that experiential approaches can become superficial if not grounded in strong conceptual scaffolding and reflective processes (Kolb, 2015; Burch et al., 2019).

Research Methodology 2.0 advances the literature by showing how these theories can be combined into a coherent pedagogical architecture, rather than treated as complementary but separate approaches. Recent calls within methodology education emphasise the need for integrated theoretical models that explicitly connect epistemological understanding, applied research activity, and reflective reasoning (Wagner et al., 2021; Earley, 2023). This framework directly addresses these calls by offering a structured synthesis that aligns conceptual learning with experiential tasks and metacognitive reflection.

7.3 Addressing Fragmentation and Under-Theorisation in Methodology Education

Another key contribution lies in responding to scholarly critiques of fragmentation and under-theorisation in research methodology pedagogy. Studies in higher education and business education literature highlight that methodology teaching is often disconnected from broader pedagogical theory, resulting in inconsistent learning experiences and weak curriculum coherence (Luckett, 2016; Tight, 2018; Ashwin et al., 2020). Research Methodology 2.0 provides a unifying conceptual lens that explicitly links theory, practice, and reflection, thereby strengthening pedagogical alignment across teaching activities, assessment design, and learning outcomes.

Importantly, the framework also contributes to emerging discussions on hybrid learning design by demonstrating how pedagogical theory can inform technology-enhanced teaching without becoming

technology-driven. Scholars increasingly argue that digital and hybrid learning environments require stronger theoretical grounding to avoid replicating traditional didactic practices in online formats (Bond et al., 2020; Henderson et al., 2023). Research Methodology 2.0 addresses this gap by foregrounding learning processes rather than tools, positioning technology as an enabler of constructivist and experiential pedagogy rather than an end in itself.

7.4 Advancing Theoretical Understanding Rather Than Methodological Technique

Finally, the contribution of this paper is explicitly theoretical rather than technical. Rather than proposing new research methods or instructional tools, Research Methodology 2.0 advances understanding of how research methodology education can be conceptualised and structured in contemporary postgraduate contexts. By offering a clear, theory-driven framework that is intelligible to both students and educators, the paper contributes to ongoing debates on curriculum design, pedagogy, and the future of research training in business and marketing education (Wagner et al., 2021; Earley, 2023). In doing so, it provides a robust conceptual foundation for future empirical testing and cross-disciplinary application.

8. Implications for Teaching and Curriculum Design

The Research Methodology 2.0 framework carries important implications for how postgraduate research methodology is designed and taught within marketing and business programmes, particularly in hybrid and technology-enhanced contexts. By foregrounding the interrelated processes of knowledge construction, experiential engagement, and reflective integration, the framework encourages a shift away from fragmented or skills-only curriculum designs towards more coherent, pedagogically aligned learning journeys.

8.1 Implications for Curriculum Design

At the level of curriculum design, Research Methodology 2.0 supports the development of structured hybrid modules in which conceptual instruction, applied research activity, and reflection are intentionally integrated rather than treated as separate components. Existing scholarship in higher education has highlighted that postgraduate methodology curricula often prioritise content coverage and technical competence at the expense of epistemological understanding and reflective learning (Lockett, 2016; Ashwin et al., 2020). The proposed framework responds to these concerns by encouraging curriculum designers to sequence learning activities around iterative cycles of conceptual engagement, application, and reflection.

Within a hybrid module, theoretical concepts such as research paradigms, methodological choices, and ethical reasoning can be introduced through guided conceptual engagement, followed by experiential tasks that simulate authentic research challenges in marketing and business contexts. Reflective activities, embedded throughout the module rather than appended at the end, enable students to critically examine their methodological decisions and assumptions. This design approach aligns with calls for curriculum coherence and constructive alignment in postgraduate education, ensuring that learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment practices are pedagogically consistent (Biggs and Tang, 2011; Kember, 2021).

8.2 Implications for Teaching Practice

For teaching practice, Research Methodology 2.0 positions educators as facilitators of learning rather than transmitters of procedural knowledge. The framework highlights the importance of scaffolded learning, where academic guidance supports students' gradual movement towards methodological autonomy. Scholars working within constructivist and experiential traditions emphasise that without appropriate scaffolding, student-centred approaches may result in surface engagement or confusion, particularly in complex methodological domains (Fung, 2017; Wagner et al., 2021).

In practical terms, teaching strategies informed by the framework may include guided inquiry, structured reflective exercises, and collaborative problem-solving activities. Digital tools and platforms—such as virtual simulations, online discussion forums, collaborative research spaces, and blended workshops—can be strategically employed to extend learning beyond the classroom while maintaining pedagogical coherence. Importantly, the framework encourages educators to view technology as an enabler of learning processes rather than as a substitute for sound pedagogy, echoing recent scholarship that warns against technology-led curriculum design in hybrid education (Bond et al., 2020; Henderson et al., 2023).

8.3 Educational Outcomes and Student Development

From an educational outcomes' perspective, Research Methodology 2.0 offers a theoretically grounded pathway for enhancing postgraduate engagement and capability. By integrating conceptual understanding with experiential application and structured reflection, the framework supports deeper learning and the development of methodological judgement, rather than rote procedural competence. Prior studies in business and marketing education suggest that such integrated pedagogical approaches are particularly effective in fostering critical thinking, reflexivity, and confidence in research decision-making (Burch et al., 2019; Earley, 2023).

Moreover, the framework contributes to the development of transferable research and professional skills, including problem-solving, analytical reasoning, collaboration, and reflective practice. These competencies are increasingly recognised as essential for marketing and business graduates operating in complex, data-rich, and uncertain professional environments (Tight, 2018; Wagner et al., 2021). By explicitly linking theory, practice, and reflection within a hybrid learning design, Research Methodology 2.0 provides curriculum designers and educators with a clear pedagogical blueprint for preparing postgraduate students to engage critically and confidently with research in both academic and applied settings.

9. Directions for Future Research

As a conceptual contribution, Research Methodology 2.0 provides a theoretically grounded foundation for rethinking postgraduate research methodology education; however, it also opens several important avenues for future scholarly inquiry. These directions are essential for deepening theoretical understanding, strengthening pedagogical coherence, and ensuring the framework's relevance across diverse educational contexts.

9.1 Empirical Validation and Theoretical Refinement

A key direction for future research lies in the empirical validation of the Research Methodology 2.0 framework. While the present paper advances a theory-driven model, subsequent studies could examine how the framework operates in practice across different postgraduate settings. Qualitative research designs may explore how students and educators experience the integration of knowledge construction, experiential engagement, and reflective integration, providing insight into learning processes and pedagogical alignment (Wagner et al., 2021; Earley, 2023). Quantitative and mixed-methods studies could further assess relationships between framework components and outcomes such as student engagement, methodological confidence, and reflective capacity. Such empirical work would not only test the internal coherence of the framework but also allow for its refinement in response to contextual and disciplinary variation (Ashwin et al., 2020; Tight, 2018).

9.2 Cross-Disciplinary and International Applications

Future research should also examine the transferability of Research Methodology 2.0 beyond postgraduate marketing education. Scholars have noted that challenges associated with research methodology teaching, such as proceduralism, student anxiety, and limited epistemological engagement, are evident across business, management, and the social sciences more broadly (Kilburn et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 2021). Comparative studies across disciplines could explore how the framework adapts to different epistemological traditions, research cultures, and professional expectations.

In addition, international and cross-cultural research would be particularly valuable. Higher education systems differ significantly in terms of curriculum structure, pedagogical norms, and technological infrastructure, all of which shape how hybrid learning is designed and experienced (Bond et al., 2020; Henderson et al., 2023). Investigating the application of Research Methodology 2.0 across diverse institutional and cultural contexts could extend its theoretical robustness and contribute to global debates on postgraduate research training.

9.3 Advancing Hybrid Pedagogy in Postgraduate Education

A further direction for future research concerns the ongoing refinement of hybrid pedagogy in postgraduate methodology education. As digital technologies continue to evolve, scholars are increasingly calling for research that moves beyond tool-focused evaluations towards deeper pedagogical analysis (Bond et al., 2020; Kember, 2021). Future studies could explore how emerging technologies, such as virtual research simulations, collaborative digital platforms, and learning analytics, can be pedagogically aligned with constructivist and experiential principles embedded in Research Methodology 2.0.

Importantly, future inquiry should also examine how hybrid pedagogies can support inclusion, accessibility, and learner agency in postgraduate education. Research that critically interrogates how different student groups engage with hybrid methodology curricula may offer valuable insights into designing equitable and responsive learning environments (Ashwin et al., 2020; Earley, 2023).

Future research has an important role to play in testing, extending, and contextualising Research Methodology 2.0. By pursuing empirical, cross-disciplinary, and pedagogically focused studies, scholars can build on the conceptual contribution of this paper and further advance understanding of research methodology pedagogy in hybrid and technology-enhanced postgraduate education.

10. Conclusion

This paper set out to advance scholarship on research methodology pedagogy by developing a theoretically grounded conceptual framework, Research Methodology 2.0, tailored to the needs of contemporary postgraduate marketing and business education. In response to persistent critiques of procedural, instrumental, and fragmented approaches to methodology teaching, the paper has argued for a reorientation of research methodology education towards a more integrated, learner-centred, and pedagogically coherent model.

At a conceptual level, the paper has demonstrated how Constructivist Learning Theory and Experiential Learning Theory can be meaningfully synthesised to address long-standing gaps in methodology pedagogy. Through the interconnected components of knowledge construction, experiential engagement, and reflective integration, Research Methodology 2.0 offers a clear theoretical explanation of how postgraduate students can develop not only technical competence, but also epistemological awareness, critical judgement, and reflective research capability. The framework explicitly links theory, practice, and reflection, thereby responding to scholarly calls for stronger theoretical alignment and coherence in research methodology education.

In the context of postgraduate marketing programmes, the framework provides a timely response to the increasing complexity of research environments and the growing prevalence of hybrid and technology-enhanced learning. Marketing postgraduates are expected to navigate diverse methodological paradigms, applied research problems, and data-intensive decision-making contexts. Research Methodology 2.0 reframes methodology education as a developmental process that supports these demands by foregrounding learner agency, real-world application, and metacognitive reflection. In doing so, it moves beyond viewing research methods as a set of tools, instead positioning methodology as a way of thinking, reasoning, and engaging with knowledge.

The paper also contributes to broader debates on innovation in higher education pedagogy by emphasising that effective hybrid learning must be pedagogy-led rather than technology-driven. While digital tools and platforms play an important enabling role, the framework underscores the primacy of educational theory in shaping meaningful learning experiences. This perspective reinforces the need for evidence-based, theoretically informed curriculum design that can adapt to evolving institutional and technological contexts without compromising pedagogical integrity.

In conclusion, research methodology 2.0 represents a conceptual step forward in rethinking how research methodology is taught and learned at postgraduate level. The paper calls for continued innovation in methodology education that is grounded in robust pedagogical theory, responsive to hybrid learning environments, and attentive to the intellectual and professional development of postgraduate students. By doing so, future scholarship and practice can contribute to more engaging, coherent, and impactful research training in marketing, business, and related disciplines. More broadly, the paper positions research methodology education as an evolving conceptual domain, where theory and practice remain in productive tension, continuously informing the development of methodological understanding and epistemological insight.

AI Declaration

The author used an artificial intelligence tool to assist with language editing. All ideas, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions are the author's own, and the author takes full responsibility for the content of this article.

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