

## FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

**A PROPOSED THEORETICAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT  
FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF BLENDED LEARNING****AT HANOI UNIVERSITY OF INDUSTRY****DANG THI MINH TAM\* - HOANG NGOC TUE\*\* -****DO THI HUYEN THANH\*\*\* -****CAO THI HAI HANG\*\*\*\* - PHAM THUY QUYNH\*\*\*\*\* -****LE THI HONG NHUNG\*\*\*\*\***

**ABSTRACT:** Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online components, has become an increasingly popular pedagogical approach in higher education worldwide. In Vietnam, this model presents an opportunity to modernize educational practices and meet the evolving needs of students. However, successfully implementing blended learning requires more than just integrating technology into curricula; it involves navigating the complexities of change management. By analyzing key factors influencing the adoption of blended learning, the challenges faced, and effective strategies for managing change, this review aims to provide insights into how institutions can overcome resistance and limited resources. The findings highlight the critical role of change management in facilitating the integration of blended learning, ultimately contributing to improved teaching and learning outcomes in higher education. More importantly, this paper introduces a theoretical framework designed to assess the implementation of blended learning at Hanoi University of Industry from a change management perspective, which will serve as the next phase of a larger research project.

**KEYWORDS:** blended learning; change management; higher education; stakeholder engagement; continuous improvement

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**1. Introduction**

In recent years, the landscape of higher education has undergone significant transformation, driven by technological advancements and the increasing demand for flexible learning environments. Blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components, has emerged as a prominent pedagogical approach in universities worldwide. According to Graham, Allen, and Ure (2005), blended learning is primarily adopted in higher education for three major reasons: improved pedagogy, increased access and flexibility, and cost-effectiveness and resource use. Firstly, blended learning provides pedagogical benefits that enhance learning outcomes and student satisfaction (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Graham, 2013). Secondly, it meets the demand for greater accessibility and flexibility, as blended courses reduce the need for face-to-face sessions, offering more flexibility compared to traditional courses (Stein & Graham, 2020). Many students favor the ease and flexibility of blended learning, as they can study anywhere, anytime, and at their own pace (Bouilheres et al., 2020; Pardede, 2019). Thirdly, economic goals such as cost-effectiveness and resource use drive HEIs toward adopting blended learning approaches (Graham, 2013; Graham & Allen, 2009; Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013). In Vietnam, where higher education institutions are striving to modernize and enhance educational quality, the adoption of blended learning presents an opportunity to address these challenges and meet the diverse needs of students.

Implementing blended learning is not merely a matter of integrating technology into existing

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curricula; it requires a comprehensive understanding of change management principles. Change management involves navigating the complexities of transitioning from traditional educational practices to innovative models, necessitating a shift in institutional culture, teaching methodologies, and stakeholder engagement. In the context of a public university in Vietnam, where resistance to change and limited resources may hinder progress, effective change management strategies are essential for the successful implementation of blended learning.

Blended learning was introduced at Hanoi University of Industry in 2020, marking a significant shift that required careful management. After four years of adopting this approach, it is now crucial to assess the implementation process. This paper will review literature on change and change management, particularly within educational settings. The synthesis will contribute to a deeper understanding of how change management can facilitate the integration of blended learning in higher education, ultimately leading to improved teaching and learning outcomes. By exploring the existing literature, this paper aims to propose a theoretical framework that can be used to evaluate the implementation of blended learning at Hanoi University of Industry through the lens of change management, which will be the next stage of a broader research study.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Blended learning in higher education**

Blended learning has been known as a transformative educational approach that integrates face-to-face instruction with online learning components. According to Graham (2006), blended learning comprises a variety of instructional methods and delivery modes, making the learning environment more flexible and personalized. This approach enhances student engagement and fosters collaborative learning, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes (So & Bonk, 2010). Research indicates that blended learning can effectively accommodate diverse learning styles and preferences, making it particularly suitable for the dynamic nature of higher education (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).

In Vietnam, the application of blended learning has been supported by the government aimed at renewing the education system and boosting the quality of higher education. As institutions strive to integrate technology into their curricula, understanding the unique cultural and institutional contexts of Vietnamese universities becomes essential for successful implementation (Le et al., 2022).

### **2.2. Theoretical frameworks for change management**

Change management provides a critical framework for understanding the complexities associated with implementing blended learning in higher education settings (Quinn et al., 2012). The implementation of blended learning in educational institutions requires a deep insight into change management principles. Various models have emerged to guide organizations through the complexities of change. In this section, three prominent models are presented: Kurt Lewin's Change Model, the ADKAR Model by Prosci, and Kotter's 8-Step Change Model, particularly their frameworks, applications, and critical evaluations.

#### ***Kurt Lewin's change model***

Kurt Lewin's model, developed in the 1940s, is one of the earliest frameworks for managing organizational change. It consists of three key phases: Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze.

- *Unfreeze*: This phase involves identifying the need for change and creating a desire for it among stakeholders. For instance, this process may involve analyzing the problems associated with traditional teaching methods and highlighting the benefits of blended learning.

- *Change*: During this phase, the actual transition occurs, where new practices and technologies are introduced into the educational framework. In the context of shifting to blended learning, this might include integrating online learning platforms, training faculty on new pedagogies, and reshaping the curriculum to accommodate blended learning.

- *Refreeze*: The final stage focuses on consolidating the changes made. This could involve providing ongoing support, evaluating the effectiveness of the new model, and ensuring that blended learning practices become ingrained in the institution's culture.

While Lewin's model is straightforward and easy to understand, its linearity can be a limitation in complex educational environments. Change is often not a straightforward process, and educational institutions may face repetitions that this model does not fully account for. Additionally, the model assumes that all stakeholders are equally open to change, which may not be the case in reality. Resistance can occur in various forms, and without proper strategies to address it, the change process may be hindered.

#### ***ADKAR model by Prosci***

The ADKAR model focuses on individual change and is structured around five key components:

*Awareness:* Recognizing the need for change and understanding its implications. In educational contexts, this could involve communicating the shortcomings of traditional methods and the advantages of blended learning.

*Desire:* Fostering a willingness among stakeholders to be active in the change. This may involve highlighting how the proposed direction benefits students and faculty alike, thereby stakeholders are more likely to be involved.

*Knowledge:* Providing the necessary information, skills, and training to enable effective participation in the change. For instance, faculty might require training on new teaching technologies and methodologies.

*Ability:* Ensuring that individuals have the capabilities to implement the change successfully. This might involve practical workshops and ongoing technical support during the shift to blended learning.

*Reinforcement:* Implementing strategies to sustain the change over time, such as identifying early successes and coping with challenges as they arise.

One strength of the ADKAR model is its emphasis on individual transitions, which is crucial in educational settings where faculty and students are key to the implementation of new teaching methods. However, a potential weakness is that it can be overly focused on the individual level, neglecting the broader organizational dynamics that influence change. Change in educational institutions often requires modifications in policies, resources, and institutional culture, which may not be adequately addressed through an individual-centric lens. Additionally, the model assumes a sequential process, which might not always occur in real-world applications where multiple changes happen simultaneously.

#### ***Kotter's 8-Step change model***

John Kotter's model, developed in the 1990s, is a comprehensive approach that outlines eight steps for successful organizational change:

*Establishing a Sense of Urgency:* Highlighting the need for change can attract stakeholders. For example, information on student engagement or outcomes can drive the need for blended learning.

*Forming a Guiding Coalition:* Creating a team of influential leaders and stakeholders to accelerate the change process. This coalition can include administrators, faculty, and student representatives, promoting the objectivity of the change process.

*Creating a Vision and Strategy:* Developing a clear vision for blended learning implementation helps align efforts and resources.

*Communicating the Change Vision:* Effectively communicating the vision and strategy to all stakeholders is crucial for building support and addressing concerns.

*Empowering Broad-Based Action:* Removing barriers to change and empowering individuals to act fosters a supportive environment for the transition.

*Generating Short-Term Wins:* Celebrating early successes can build momentum and reinforce commitment to the change process.

*Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change:* Ensuring that initial successes lead to further improvements helps sustain momentum.

*Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture:* Institutionalizing new practices ensures they become part of the educational framework.

Kotter's model is known for its comprehensive nature and its focus on both organizational and individual aspects of change. The emphasis on communication and building a coalition is highly appreciated in educational settings, where collaboration is essential. However, critics argue that the model can be overly prescriptive, leading to a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Educational institutions often have diverse contexts, cultures, and challenges that may require more flexibility and adaptation than the model allows. Furthermore, the model's linear progression may not adequately reflect the iterative nature of change in higher education.

Understanding these change management models is crucial for successfully implementing blended learning in educational institutions. Each model offers valuable insights and strategies, yet they also come with limitations that must be addressed. By critically evaluating these frameworks, educational leaders can adapt their approaches to meet the specific needs and contexts of their institutions, ultimately fostering a more effective transition to blended learning.

### **2.3. Factors influencing the implementation of blended**

The success of implementing blended learning lies in various factors, including institutional, technological, pedagogical, and student-related elements.

- *Institutional Factors*: Leadership commitment and organizational culture play a crucial role in fostering a favorable environment for change. Bates (2015) revealed that effective leadership, characterized by clear communication and support for faculty and students, significantly enhances the likelihood of successful blended learning adoption.

- *Technological Factors*: Accessing and enhancing the quality of technology infrastructure are critical for implementing blended learning. Research indicates that institutions with robust technological support are better equipped to facilitate online learning components; therefore, improving the overall effectiveness of blended courses (Pegrum et al., 2018).

- *Pedagogical Factors*: Curriculum design and faculty training are essential for aligning blended learning with educational goals. Faculty development initiatives that focus on instructional design and integrating technology have been proven to enhance faculty readiness and confidence in applying blended learning approaches (Gedik et al., 2013).

- *Student-Related Factors*: The success of blended learning programs relies on student readiness and engagement. Studies indicate that students' perceptions of blended learning, along with their motivation and prior experience with technology, play a significant role in shaping their level of engagement in blended courses (Previtali & Scaroza, 2019).

### **2.4. Challenges and barriers to implementation**

Despite the potential benefits, several challenges and barriers can impede the successful implementation of blended learning. Resistance to change is a common obstacle, often stemming from a lack of understanding of blended learning's advantages or fear of the unknown (Pappas & Jerman, 2015). Additionally, insufficient training and support for faculty can lead to inconsistent implementation and diminished effectiveness (Elliott et al., 2016). Resource constraints, including financial limitations and inadequate technological infrastructure, further exacerbate these challenges, particularly in developing countries like Vietnam (Le et al., 2022).

### **2.5. Successful strategies for implementing blended learning**

Institutions can address these challenges by implementing various effective strategies. According to Mirriahi et al. (2015), promoting a collaborative culture among faculty encourages the exchange of knowledge and support for innovative teaching methods. Involving key stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrators, in both the planning and implementation phases helps strengthen engagement and commitment to blended learning initiatives (Bates, 2015). Additionally, offering continuous professional development and technical support is crucial for ensuring that faculty are equipped with the skills needed to manage the complexities of blended learning (Carbonell et al., 2013).

### 3. Discussion

#### 3.1. *Synthesis of findings*

The integration of blended learning in higher education represents a significant shift in educational practice, necessitating a multi-faceted approach to change management. By analyzing and synthesizing different well-known frameworks, it is evident that while blended learning offers numerous advantages such as personalized learning environments, increased engagement, and collaborative opportunities, it also poses several challenges, particularly in terms of implementation.

As indicated by Kotter's change management model (Appelbaum et al., 2012), establishing a sense of urgency and fostering a shared vision among stakeholders are essential first steps in the transition to blended learning. The studies reviewed emphasize that without strong leadership and clear communication, efforts to adopt blended learning are likely to encounter resistance, leading to implementation challenges.

Additionally, the technological infrastructure of institutions plays a significant role in facilitating or hindering the implementation of blended learning. Access to reliable technology and resources has been identified as a barrier, particularly in the Vietnamese context, where many public universities face financial constraints. The findings align with Le et al.'s (2022) assertion that inadequate technological support can lead to inconsistencies in course delivery and diminish the overall effectiveness of blended learning initiatives.

Moreover, pedagogical factors, including faculty training and curriculum design, emerge as critical components of successful implementation. The literature indicates that ongoing professional development programs tailored to equip faculty with the necessary skills and knowledge are crucial for enhancing their confidence in adopting blended learning practices. Research suggests that when faculty members feel supported and well-prepared, they are more likely to embrace innovative teaching methods, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes (Gedik et al., 2013).

#### 3.2. *Implications for practice*

The findings from this literature review hold significant implications for practice in the context of Vietnamese public universities. First and foremost, university administrators must prioritize the establishment of a supportive institutional culture that embraces change. This can be achieved by fostering collaboration among faculty members, promoting knowledge sharing, and recognizing the importance of faculty development in the successful implementation of blended learning. Additionally, engaging stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrators in the planning process can enhance buy-in and facilitate a smoother transition to blended learning models.

Investment in technological infrastructure is crucial. Public universities in Vietnam should explore partnerships with private sectors or seek government support to enhance their technological capabilities. This includes not only improving access to digital tools and platforms but also ensuring that faculty and students are trained to utilize these resources effectively.

The literature emphasizes the need for a tailored approach to change management in the implementation of blended learning. By adapting change management strategies to fit the unique context of each institution, educational leaders can navigate challenges more effectively and leverage opportunities for successful integration.

### ***3.3. Proposed theoretical change management framework for assessing Blended learning at Hanoi University of Industry***

Successfully implementing blended learning at Hanoi University of Industry necessitates a well-structured change management approach, which takes into account the distinct dynamics of higher education. The following framework outlines the essential steps involved in this process, each of which includes specific objectives, activities, and participants for every stage. By tackling the common problems which arise when implementing a new model of instruction, this strategy hopes to facilitate a smooth transition.

#### ***3.3.1. Identify the need for change***

The primary goal at this stage is to recognise the limitations of traditional teaching methods in meeting the evolving educational needs of students and to understand the potential benefits of blended learning.

To achieve this, a comprehensive assessment of current teaching practices will be conducted, which may include:

- Gathering Input: Surveys, focus groups, and interviews with key stakeholders, such as faculty members, students, and administrators, will be utilised to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, which will help identify existing gaps, challenges, and opportunities related to student engagement, learning outcomes, and instructional efficiency.
- Analyzing Challenges: Existing feedback and performance metrics will be reviewed to determine specific areas in which traditional methods may prove insufficient, such as student engagement levels, academic performance, and the integration of technology.
- Identifying Benefits: Workshops or discussions will be conducted, which will inform stakeholders about the potential advantages of blended learning, including greater flexibility, personalized learning experiences, and improved access to educational resources.

This phase involves university officials, academic departments, and professors. Their participation is crucial to understanding the institutional context and finding chances to change.

#### ***3.3.2. Develop a Change Plan***

These phases focus on a full plan for the transition from regular teaching to an online platform.

Key activities in this phase could include:

- Technology Identification - Evaluating & procuring relevant technologies like Learning Management Systems (LMS) for blended learning; Such examination could involve consideration of how to offer online content, the appropriate assessment mechanism and forums for communication.
- Training Plans: Designing detailed training plans of faculty and students who can be supported from a skillful perspective to be successful in the new learning environment.
- Timeline Creation: Develop a timeline with key benchmarks for the delivery of blended learning, such as piloting and full launch by year.

Participants will be drawn from the IT department, training office personnel, faculty & educational consultants who can provide insight on both technology and pedagogy.

#### ***3.3.3. Communicate the Change***

Effective communication is essential to ensure that all stakeholders comprehend the reason for the transition to blended learning and its accompanying advantages.

Activities will encompass:

- Scheduling Meetings: Facilitating periodic meetings and workshops to elucidate the blended learning paradigm, disseminate success narratives, and resolve any apprehensions or misunderstandings among professors and students.
- Formulating a Communication Strategy: Formulating a multi-channel communication plan that encompasses emails, newsletters, and specialized websites to ensure stakeholders are informed throughout the transition process.

- The communication office, project management team, staff, and students will all contribute to distributing information and promoting an open discourse around the changes.

#### *3.3.4. Implement the Change*

This phase implements the blended learning strategy to provide a smooth transition.

Important steps include:

- Pilot Programs: Testing the blended learning framework in certain courses or departments to get feedback. This trial phase allows for tweaks before widespread adoption.

- Technical assistance: Strong technical assistance for early rollout difficulties. This includes LMS troubleshooting and on-demand instructor and student help.

- Training: Intensive faculty training in blended learning and online teaching.

- Faculty, students, IT support personnel, and training office officials will collaborate to guarantee effective implementation.

#### *3.3.5. Monitor and evaluate the change*

The aim of this step is to evaluate the effectiveness of the blended learning implementation, with a focus on the significance of monitoring and evaluation.

The activities will encompass:

- Collecting Feedback: Continuously gathering feedback from faculty and students after each phase of implementation to identify areas of success and opportunities for improvement. This can be accomplished via surveys, interviews, or casual conversations.

- Assessing Learning Outcomes: Examining student performance data and learning outcomes to gauge the impact of blended learning on improving educational experiences.

- The evaluation process will involve university leadership, the training office, the IT department, faculty, and students, providing a comprehensive perspective on the impact of the change.

#### *3.3.6. Support and Sustain the Change*

The objective of this phase is to guarantee the long-term support and sustainability of the blended learning paradigm, which is essential for its success.

Measures to sustain momentum may include:

- Continuing Support Initiatives: Implementing sustained support initiatives for faculty, including periodic workshops and refresher courses to maintain skill currency and tackle emerging difficulties.

- Communities of Practice: Establishing communities of practice for academics to exchange experiences, techniques, and resources, therefore promoting cooperation and information sharing.

Participants will include faculty members, IT department personnel, and the training office, all dedicated to maintaining the transformation.

#### *3.3.7. Feedback and Continuous Improvement*

The third step tries to use feedback to continuously adapt and improve the blended learning strategy.

Key actions in this period might include:

- Conducting regular surveys: Conducting quarterly surveys to get input from staff and students on their experiences with blended learning, recognizing both advantages and potential for growth.

- Process modifications: Analyzing feedback findings to make appropriate modifications and improve procedures, ensuring that the blended learning model continues to meet the demands of the university community.

The training office, teachers, students, and quality assurance teams will work together to ensure that feedback is properly gathered, evaluated, and acted upon.

This suggested theoretical framework for change management at Hanoi University of Industry provides an extensive path for successfully adopting blended learning. The university can navigate the complexities of this transition by systematically addressing each phase—identifying the need for change, developing a strong change plan, communicating effectively, implementing the change, monitoring and evaluating outcomes, maintaining the initiative, and cultivating a culture of feedback and continuous improvement. The active participation of stakeholders at all levels is critical for creating

a collaborative atmosphere that encourages innovation and improves educational experiences. As the university embraces blended learning, this structured approach not only seeks to overcome the challenges of traditional teaching methodologies, but also to create a dynamic, engaging, and effective learning environment that meets students' changing needs and prepares them for success in a rapidly changing world.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the proposed theoretical framework for change management at Hanoi University of Industry encompasses a structured and participatory approach to implementing blended learning. By carefully navigating each step, from identifying the need for change to sustaining and improving the new model, the university can create an engaging and effective curriculum change that meets the demands of modern education.

While this literature review provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The review is primarily based on existing studies, which may not fully capture the complexities of blended learning implementation and change management procedures in all Vietnamese contexts.

Future research could address these limitations by conducting empirical studies that explore the practical implementation of blended learning and change management in diverse Vietnamese educational institutions. Additionally, comparative research across different universities, would offer deeper insights into how local contexts, resources, and stakeholder engagement influence the success of change management processes. This future work would not only validate the proposed theoretical framework but also provide more comprehensive guidance for universities across Vietnam embarking on similar educational reforms.

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### **Đề xuất khung lý thuyết quản trị sự thay đổi để đánh giá quá trình triển khai dạy học kết hợp tại Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội**

**Tóm tắt:** Dạy học kết hợp, một hình thức kết hợp giữa giảng dạy trực tiếp truyền thống và các phương pháp học trực tuyến, đã trở thành một phương pháp giảng dạy ngày càng phổ biến trong giáo dục đại học trên toàn thế giới. Tại Việt Nam, mô hình này mang lại cơ hội đổi mới phương pháp giảng dạy và đáp ứng nhu cầu ngày càng đa dạng của sinh viên. Tuy nhiên, việc triển khai học tập kết hợp thành công không chỉ đơn thuần là tích hợp công nghệ vào chương trình giảng dạy; mà còn đòi hỏi phải xử lý các vấn đề phức tạp của quản lý sự thay đổi. Thông qua việc phân tích các yếu tố chính ảnh hưởng đến việc áp dụng học tập kết hợp, những thách thức gặp phải và các chiến lược hiệu quả để quản lý sự thay đổi, bài báo này nhằm cung cấp các luận điểm về cách khắc phục sự phản kháng và hạn chế về nguồn lực. Nghiên cứu tổng quan này cho thấy vai trò quan trọng của quản lý sự thay đổi trong quá trình tổ chức hoạt động học tập kết hợp, từ đó góp phần cải thiện chất lượng giảng dạy và học tập trong giáo dục đại học. Quan trọng hơn, bài viết này đề xuất một khung lý thuyết để đánh giá việc triển khai học tập kết hợp tại Đại học Công nghiệp Hà Nội dưới góc nhìn quản lý sự thay đổi, và đây sẽ là giai đoạn tiếp theo của một nghiên cứu quy mô lớn hơn.

**Từ khoá:** dạy học kết hợp; quản trị sự thay đổi; giáo dục đại học; sự tham gia của các bên liên quan; liên tục cải tiến.