

# Bridging the Gap: Experiential Learning's Role in Transitioning from Hybrid to Full-Time Entrepreneurship

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**Abstract:-** The transition from hybrid entrepreneurship—where individuals maintain part-time employment while nurturing their business ventures—to full-time entrepreneurship presents unique challenges and opportunities. This conceptual paper examines the critical factors that influence the possibility of making the transition from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship. To develop a more sophisticated knowledge of the dynamic entrepreneurial journey, it is imperative to assess the experience learning that occurs throughout the hybrid phase. To present a conceptual model and related claims, this conceptual paper used secondary data analysis of previously published academic literature, specifically utilizing a thematic analysis. Three elements are identified in the proposed conceptual model as being likely to affect the decision to transition: fear of failure, entrepreneurial competency development and self-efficacy. In this study, hybrid entrepreneurship is demonstrated to be a useful training ground and a route for full-time entrepreneurship.

There are three main sources of value in the paper. First, applying an established theory to a novel setting in order to provide a transdisciplinary approach. Secondly, a conceptual model is established, providing statements that are easily connected to theories for further empirical analysis. Third, raising the profile of hybrid entrepreneurship in the literature to promote support and involvement from the public policy sphere.

**Keywords:-** Hybrid Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Transition, Experiential Learning, Skills Development.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Due to the dynamic nature of the labor market, which is known to initiate non-traditional work arrangements and create temporary jobs (Fayard, 2019), a new employment phenomenon known as hybrid entrepreneurship (Folta et al., 2010) or, less frequently, part-time business (Smallbone & Welter, 2001; Petrova, 2012) or second job entrepreneurship (Gruenert, 1999) has caught the attention of researchers. The idea that people must bravely venture into the unknown is the foundation of our conventional view of becoming entrepreneurs. The modern definition of entrepreneurship is evolving. Recent research has revealed that many people start their businesses while employed by an organization, which

has compelled us to reevaluate the theory that entrepreneurship is an "all-or-nothing" phenomenon (Raffiee and Feng, 2014). Analyzing the many levels of involvement that an individual can have in entrepreneurship can be accomplished by taking a non-traditional approach to the concept. Folta et al. (2010) are credited with coining the phrase "hybrid entrepreneurship," which describes the practice of fusing wage labor with self-employment. The contemporary economic climate, which is marked by disruptive forces including globalization, changes in career routes, non-standard working arrangements, limited access to money, and lack of employment stability, is probably linked to this problem, which appears to be on the rise. In recent times, there has been an increase in the popularity of hybrid entrepreneurship, which is the practice of an individual choosing to start an entrepreneurial endeavor while maintaining a salaried job (Folta et al. 2010).

Up until recently, this intermediate ground—between full-time entrepreneurship and compensated employment—was mainly disregarded in the entrepreneurship literature, even though it is a very prevalent practice (Thorgren et al., 2014). Although hybrid entrepreneurship is commonly linked to the initial phases of entrepreneurial venture growth, it is important to remember that starting a part-time firm does not always mean that you want to pursue full-time entrepreneurship. While the topic of hybrid entrepreneurship is still in its infancy, it has challenged our existing understanding of the entrepreneurial process and created new opportunities for thought. As people launch their businesses while holding down a salary job, a new phenomenon has emerged: a simultaneous blend of self-employment and salary employment. Consequently, it allows a person to reach their full potential as an entrepreneur while still having the financial and social security of an employer (and a low level of personal risk).

The emerging field of hybrid entrepreneurship has given rise to a plethora of publications that primarily aim to investigate the reasons or goals behind this career path (Dzomonda & Masocha, 2018), the practical mechanisms that underlie it (Burmeister-Lamp et al., 2012), the enthusiasm surrounding it (Nordström et al., 2016), the shift towards hybrid entrepreneurship (Ferreira et al., 2018), or the risk attitudes of hybrid entrepreneurs (Raffiee & Feng, 2014). It is crucial to remember that making the move to full-time entrepreneurship could be the first in a sequence of actions

that lead to a cyclical relationship between full-time and hybrid entrepreneurship. Learning theories illustrate the cyclical character of this process because learned competencies can only be evaluated in practice (Folta et al., 2010; Petrova, 2011; Morris et al., 2013). The lessons that one learns during their time as a hybrid entrepreneur seem to be quite important when deciding whether to go full-time with entrepreneurship or to stay in this state. To create a more complex picture of the dynamic entrepreneurial journey, it is imperative to assess the experience learning that occurs throughout the hybrid phase. Given that hybrid entrepreneurs often construct robust enterprises with great prospects of survival, policy implications of a better understanding of this transition could lead to the development of support systems aimed at better nurturing hybrid entrepreneurship (Raffiee and Feng, 2014). Although research has been conducted on the motivations for engaging in hybrid (Solesvik, 2017) and full-time (Segal, Borgia, and Schoenfeld, 2005) entrepreneurship, there doesn't seem to be much literature on the state of transition—that is, the "tipping point" at which a hybrid entrepreneur chooses to either stay in a hybrid state, move back towards full-time entrepreneurship, or return to salaried employment. Therefore, this work aims to shed light on this transitional phase by identifying the factors that increase the possibility of switching from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship, directly answering the need for further research (Block and Landgraf, 2016; Solesvik, 2017). The following research question served as the basis for this paper's development: What are the variables that influence the possibility of making the switch from part-time to full-time entrepreneurship?

This research suggests applying learning theory to hybrid entrepreneurship. Specifically, it suggests that experiential learning theory can explain both the transition and its drivers (Folta et al., 2010; Raffiee and Feng, 2014). The theoretical framework that serves as a lens through which hybrid entrepreneurship is examined is described in the part that follows, and then the literature on hybrid entrepreneurship is summarized. The conceptual model is presented after the introduction of the influencing factors—fear of failure, Entrepreneurial competency development and self-efficacy. After that, the paper's discussion, implications, and limitations are presented. Lastly, suggestions for additional research are given.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### ➤ *Experiential Learning Theory*

This study is guided by the experiential learning theory, which also serves as the foundation for research on entrepreneurial learning (Ferreira, 2020). According to Kolb (2015), experiential learning is the process of learning by experience and cognition, whereby a person's knowledge is changed either through the experience itself or through action. Learning theories are explanations of what takes place during the process of learning (Byrne and Toutain, 2012). In an effort to comprehend the complex reality of learning, several learning theories have been established. Belanger (2011) highlights the emergence of three prominent ideas, namely the constructivist, cognitivist, and behaviorist

theories. The experiential learning theory was most appropriate for this study, despite the fact that there are many useful learning theories (e.g., humanistic, cognitivist, and constructivist learning). Concrete experience, thoughtful observation, abstract conceptualization, and active exploration within a specific environment are what make experiential learning strong and rich (Kolb, 2015). Therefore, the central claim is that experience is necessary for learning (Kolb, 2015) and that practical behaviors are dependent on prior experience (Bélanger, 2011). According to the literature, experience-based learning like this is essential for hybrid entrepreneurship (Ferreira, 2020). One well-known example of an often-mentioned learning theory with humanistic foundations that is presented in the entrepreneurship literature is Kolb's experiential learning theory (Merriam et al., 2007). According to Kolb et al. (2000), experiential learning theory addresses both the cognitive and subjective components of learning. It defines learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984). According to this idea, after having an experience, a person reflects on it. It is during this reflexive process that the person turns the experience into knowledge, which then affects the person's future behaviors (Bélanger, 2011). Based on existing knowledge and experience, this particular form of learning is action-oriented (Bélanger, 2011). According to Karami and Tang (2019), experiential learning is the process of turning experiences into applied knowledge, with a conscious emphasis on the reflective aspect of learning (Bélanger, 2011).

Many applications of learning theory in the context of entrepreneurship show that learning is experiential (Politis, 2005) and Petrova (2015) suggests that hybrid entrepreneurship has the potential to serve as a major learning opportunity. The application of the experiential learning theory to the stage of hybrid entrepreneurship, and specifically to the shift from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship, is the idea put out in this study.

### ➤ *Hybrid Entrepreneurship*

Traditional entrepreneurship, which emphasizes people taking full-time advantage of business possibilities, is not the same as hybrid entrepreneurship (Ferreira, 2020). Furthermore, hybrid entrepreneurship is distinct from part-time entrepreneurship, which is centered around "people who work part-time at their own businesses and at regular wage jobs the rest of the time" (Demir et al., 2022). This study uses the term "hybrid entrepreneurship" to describe the practice of fusing wage work with self-employment. According to Folta et al. (2010), "individuals who engage in self-employment activity while simultaneously holding a primary job in wage work" are considered hybrid entrepreneurs. In addition to being a unique process that facilitates learning via the development of entrepreneurial competencies, hybrid entrepreneurship is frequently a starting point for full-time entrepreneurship (Pollack et al., 2019). Furthermore, those who want to test their entrepreneurial prowess before committing to full-time entrepreneurship will find hybrid entrepreneurship appealing (Folta et al., 2010). Three reasons were advanced by Folta et al. (2010) for people to pursue

hybrid entrepreneurship. The first is a way to supplement income, where people start working for themselves to make extra money. The second is a route to non-financial gains, which offers people the freedom to pursue their interests or hobbies. The third option provides a route to transition, acting as a bridge of preparation for those who want to pursue full-time entrepreneurship. The third reason advanced by Folta et al. (2010) is focus of this research. According to Raffiee and Feng (2014), hybrid entrepreneurship enables business owners to test the feasibility of their venture and acquire new skills. But when the proverbial tipping point comes, once skills are built and the business venture's feasibility is assessed, some may decide to stay hybrid entrepreneurs while others make the move to full-time entrepreneurship. In this research, it is suggested that an analysis of some unique variables influencing this transition can help explain the choice to become a full-time entrepreneur or to stay in the hybrid condition.

#### ➤ *Factors Influencing Transition to Full-Time Entrepreneurship*

According to Ferreira's (2020) theoretical argument, entrepreneurs who possess entrepreneurial abilities, eliminated fear of failure, reduced risk perception, and greater self-efficacy, will be able to make the shift to full-time entrepreneurship.

The construction of the conceptual model was aided by a secondary data analysis of the body of academic literature already in existence. Through a thematic analysis of literature on entrepreneurship and hybrid entrepreneurship, particular elements that impact entrepreneurial intention were discovered for this qualitative study. Three major factors emerged from the analysis: fear of failure, Entrepreneurial competency development, and self-efficacy. These variables were found to have a significant impact on the decision to pursue full-time entrepreneurship in the entrepreneurship literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine whether these variables would have a comparable impact on the shift from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship. Although these elements have been separately recognized in the literature, it is unclear how much of an impact they have on the learning that occurs during the hybrid phase that leads to the shift from part-time to full-time entrepreneurship.

#### ➤ *Fear of Failure*

Fear of failure in entrepreneurship research has been considered as the inhibitor of entrepreneurial activity. Since uncertainty and entrepreneurship go hand in hand, fear of failure is a valid concern when launching a new business (Wennberg, Pathak, and Autio, 2013). Similar to skydivers, entrepreneurs take a leap into an uncertain profession, which is why pursuing entrepreneurship as a career is an act of courage. According to earlier researches on the subject, fear of failure is a negative element that makes it more difficult to decide to launch a business and prevents people from developing an entrepreneurial mindset (Cacciotti and Hayton, 2015). Though the definition of "fear of failure" and its dimensions are a constant source of disagreement in the literature on entrepreneurship. The fear of failing in entrepreneurship has been conceptualized in a variety of ways

by different authors. Nonetheless, both authors concurred that people who experience fear of failure tend to act less entrepreneurially and view it as a bad emotion. According to Cacciotti et al. (2020), EFOF is defined as a negative affective response that is based on cognitive evaluations of the probability of failure in the uncertain and ambiguous context of entrepreneurship. This article suggests that because of the experiential learning that occurs during the hybrid phase, a hybrid entrepreneur's fear of failure gradually diminishes. By using the hybrid phase as a learning opportunity, hybrid entrepreneurs can eventually broaden their skill sets and industry knowledge, gain more insight into their own ventures, and ease the transition to full-time entrepreneurship (Raffiee and Feng, 2014; Folta et al., 2010; Raffiee and Feng, 2014; Solesvik, 2017). According to Hayton and Cacciotti (2018), learning reduces uncertainty by enhancing capacities, which makes it a potent counterbalance to the dread of failing. The dread of the unknown that comes with being an entrepreneur fades when one learns more about the market for their product, how well they perform, and how entrepreneurial they are. If someone has learned enough in the hybrid phase which will lessen their fear of failure, they are more likely to make the transition when they reach the figurative tipping point at which there may be a potential entry into full-time entrepreneurship.

This study suggests that an entrepreneur's fear of failure can be gradually reduced by using a hybrid entrance strategy, based on the previously mentioned information. It is suggested that there is a negative correlation between this fear of failure and the chance of turning to full-time entrepreneurship.

Thus, the following hypothesis is put forth: **H1** The probability of a transition to full-time entrepreneurship rises as the hybrid entrepreneur's fear of failure diminishes as a result of the learning that occurs during the hybrid phase.

#### ➤ *Entrepreneurial Competency Development*

The importance of entrepreneurial competency development to entrepreneurial action is well established in the literature. According to research, competency is a reflection of one's capacity for productive interaction with the outside world. According to Morris et al. (2013), researchers have attempted to distinguish between particular entrepreneurial abilities or competencies and more generic business skills in both the literature and entrepreneurship education. According to Morris et al. (2013), success of an entrepreneur is contingent upon a unique set of thirteen competencies. Identifying opportunities, reducing risks, perseverance, innovative problem solving, utilizing resources, guerilla skills, creating value, resilience, and creating and utilizing networks are amongst these qualities. Because they may be acquired via experience, these competencies should be distinguished from innate, personal qualities. Nonetheless, it is challenging for a prospective business owner to assess their level of entrepreneurial competency before starting a business (Petrova, 2011). In line with this, Rasmussen, Mosey, and Wright (2011) contend that many entrepreneurial skills must be learned or honed throughout the early phases of entrepreneurship because they

are not naturally developed. In order to assess these competencies before venturing into full-time entrepreneurship, this research proposes that hybrid entrepreneurship offers a suitable avenue. The hybrid entrepreneurship enables one to identify and develop their entrepreneurial competencies through experience and the learning that follows in a venture that is thought to be lower risk than a full-time venture (Solesvik, 2017).

This study suggests that there is a favorable correlation between the chance of shifting and an individual's assessment of their entrepreneurial competencies. In view of the aforementioned, the following hypothesis is put forth: **H2** Transitioning to full-time entrepreneurship is more likely when entrepreneurial competencies are believed to have been developed through learning that occurs during the hybrid phase.

#### ➤ Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can overcome obstacles and consistently complete challenging and unfamiliar tasks. One's self-efficacy in their capacity to launch and successfully manage their venture is impacted when they develop their entrepreneurial competencies during the hybrid phase. "An individual's own belief about his/her skills and abilities linked to entrepreneurial activity" is the definition of entrepreneurial self-efficacy given by Barakat et al. (2014). According to Zhao et al. (2005), entrepreneurial self-efficacy is seen as a necessary precondition for taking entrepreneurial action, and as such, it has been found in the research to be significant in the formation of new businesses. The self-efficacy of an entrepreneur rises as their competency and self-assurance in their abilities both develop. Experience as a hybrid entrepreneur has given rise to information that has changed these perceptions of competence and, in turn, confidence. According to Folta et al. (2010), "less confident" people might assess their level of entrepreneurial commitment through hybrid entrepreneurship. Learning experiences have an impact on an individual's self-efficacy views, as proposed by Bloemen-Bekx et al. (2019). One's

self-efficacy changes as a result of experiential learning, which occurs as one builds their entrepreneurial enterprise and gains information about the venture and themselves through time. The relationships suggested by Folta et al. (2010), Raffiee and Feng (2014) are all in line with this one. Therefore, this article suggests that there is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the possibility of moving towards full-time entrepreneurship. Taking this into consideration, the following hypothesis is put forth: **(H3)** The possibility of switching to full-time entrepreneurship is raised by the learning that occurs during the hybrid period, which boosts self-efficacy. Despite being reviewed separately, each variable may really have an impact on the others. Self-efficacy, in particular, is proposed to function as a mediator among the variables discovered in the current study.

#### ➤ The Function of Self-Efficacy as a Moderator

It is suggested that the association between the development of entrepreneurial competency and the chance of moving into full-time entrepreneurship is moderated by the moderating function of self-efficacy, another perceptual aspect in the model. Research has previously shown that there appears to be a connection between self-efficacy and competence. Entrepreneurs with strong self-efficacy are likely to feel competent in other entrepreneurial endeavors (Drnovšek et al., 2010). Although hybrid entrepreneurs may not have high levels of self-efficacy at first, as they grow in experience and acquire entrepreneurial competencies, the chances of them transitioning rise. This study suggests that self-efficacy has a moderating role in the relationship between an individual's perceived learning about developing entrepreneurial competencies and the possibility of moving towards full-time entrepreneurship. Consequently, the following hypothesis is put forth: **(H4)** The relationship between the growth of entrepreneurial competency and the probability of switching from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship is mediated by self-efficacy. The above propositions **(H1–H3)** and the moderating effect **(H4)** are graphically represented in Figure 1.

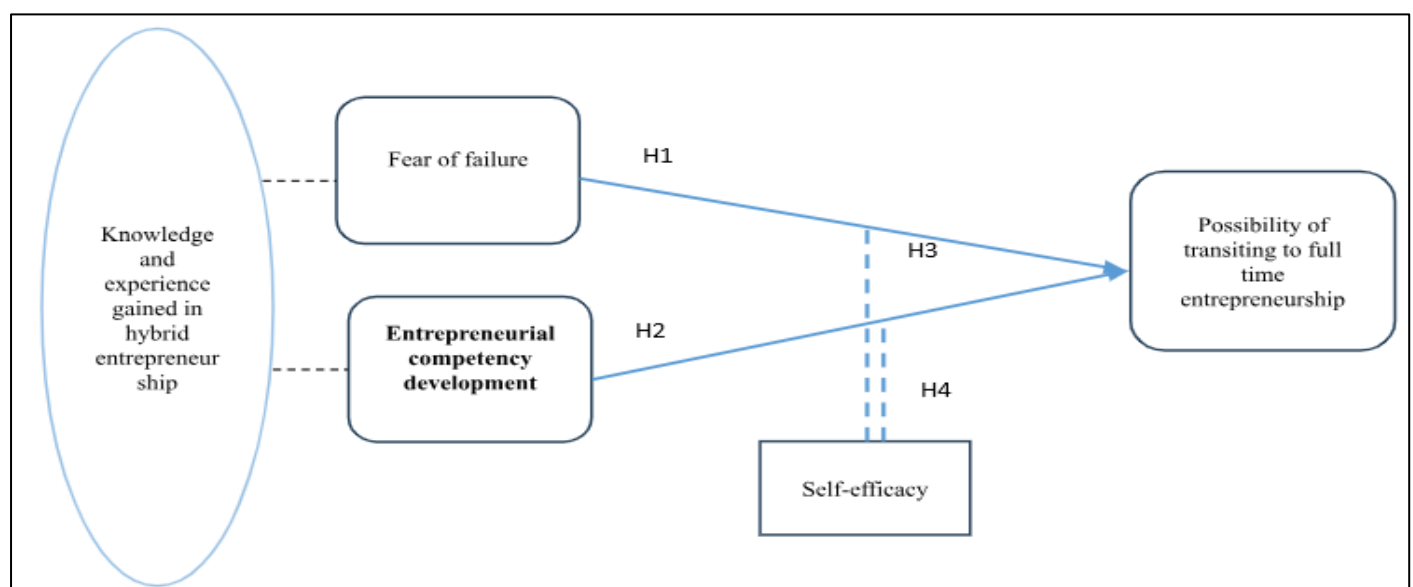


Fig 1 Conceptual Framework - Variables Impacting the Shift from Hybrid to Full-Time Entrepreneurship



### III. DISCUSSION

The phenomena of hybrid entrepreneurship is widespread and has attracted significant research efforts in the last ten years to help understand it better. Based on the principle of experience learning, this study investigated the figurative tipping point that hybrid entrepreneurs reach while determining whether to go full-time into entrepreneurship, stay in the hybrid state, or go back to full-time salaried work. According to the findings, there is a higher chance of moving from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship because of the learning that occurs during the hybrid phase, which also leads to a decrease in fear of failure and an increase in self-efficacy and the development of entrepreneurial competencies. It is suggested that the association between the development of entrepreneurial competency and the probability of shifting is moderated by self-efficacy. Early studies made it abundantly evident how important learning was throughout the hybrid period, but it usually did not focus on the method or results of learning (Petrova, 2011). Therefore, this article provided additional insight into the particular aspects that may affect the decision to transition. The learning that occurs during the hybrid phase, which is converted into a variety of skills and competences necessary for entrepreneurial success, is what propels the shift from part-time to full-time entrepreneurship. After gaining the necessary skills and gaining enough experience, the hybrid entrepreneur has three options: continue in a hybrid condition, start a full-time business, or perhaps close the business (Folta et al., 2010). Many writers support the idea that hybrid entrepreneurship is an essential learning experience (Viljamaa and Varamäki, 2015; Raffiee and Feng, 2014). Though prior studies have recognized the significance of "learning-by-doing" (Marshall et al., 2019) for hybrid entrepreneurs, none have yet employed this method of learning to elucidate how it can impact the potential shift towards full-time entrepreneurship. The study has addressed several requests for additional research by Block and Landgraf (2016) and Solesvik (2017) as well as several recommendations by other academics to broaden the field of hybrid entrepreneurship literature by looking at the shift towards full-time entrepreneurship. This conceptual paper's main strength is its multidisciplinary approach, which uses an existing theory in a new setting to expand the field of thought (Gilson and Goldberg, 2015). It also creates a conceptual model that is clearly connected to theories that will be empirically evaluated in the future.

### IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIA AND MANAGEMENT

According to Petrova (2010), Block and Landgraf (2016), Nordström et al. (2016), Solesvik (2017), and other scholars, there is currently a dearth of research that recognizes and comprehends hybrid entrepreneurship and its complexity. The factors that might persuade someone to leave paid work and pursue full-time entrepreneurship cannot be assumed to have the same impact on someone making the switch from a hybrid situation. This paper's primary academic implication is how future scholars should approach the suggested conceptual model and related claims in order to evaluate them empirically. By delving deeper into the complexity and

heterogeneity of this set of people and their entrepreneurial goals, this research adds to the expanding corpus of scholarly work on hybrid entrepreneurship. This research includes management and employer implications related to hybrid entrepreneurs. Employees are more likely to work part-time, take on many jobs, or be employed temporarily or under contract (Kalleberg, 2000). Employment instability and job uncertainty have become the norm (Popiel, 2017). The best people to build, hone, and transfer inventive qualities from their entrepreneurial endeavor to their salaried work, according to Marshall et al. (2019), are hybrid entrepreneurs. This shows that employers might actually gain from hybrid entrepreneurs acquired innovative skills in an indirect way.

### V. LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

There are two limitations to this paper that are listed below. Firstly, as a starting point for conceptual inquiry, it is important to note that the criteria listed below do not constitute a comprehensive list of all the variables that could influence the shift from part-time to full-time entrepreneurship. Secondly, as hybrid entrepreneurship continues to acquire traction in the literature, it is feasible that the conceptual model that has been proposed will change to take into account more variables as the area develops.

### VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY

The transition from hybrid to full-time entrepreneurship is a pivotal moment for many aspiring business owners, marked by both opportunities and challenges. This research underscores the profound impact of experiential learning in facilitating this transition, providing a robust framework for understanding how practical experiences can bridge the often fraught gap between theory and practice. The simple fact that hybrid entrepreneurship exists puts conventional dichotomous conceptions of entrepreneurship to the test. This study looked at the turning point for a hybrid entrepreneur to become a full-time entrepreneur, identifying three variables that may affect this choice. It is the researcher's intention that this conceptual model act as a catalyst for future research into hybrid entrepreneurship and the proverbial tipping point at which one decides whether to enter full time entrepreneurship or not. Taking into account the experience learning that occurs during the hybrid phase, the impact of each variable in relation to the chance of transitioning into full time entrepreneurship was investigated. This learning theory guided the development of a conceptual model and related premises that will direct the model's future empirical testing. There are three suggestions for additional research. First, more investigation is needed to evaluate the suggested model empirically. This could reveal other factors that affect the probability of moving toward full-time entrepreneurship. Second, future research should examine experiential learning within various contexts of entrepreneurship, such as technology startups, small businesses, and social enterprises. By investigating how experiential learning differs across industries, researchers can identify best practices that are tailored to specific contexts. For instance, technology entrepreneurs may benefit from hackathons and coding boot

camps, while those in the food industry might find value in culinary workshops and food fairs. Third, to more fully assess hybrid entrepreneurship's place in the entrepreneurship field, it is also suggested to establish measurements designed exclusively for it, in keeping with a previous recommendation made by Thorgren et al. (2014). To advance our understanding and stay up to date with the phenomenon's evolution within the framework of the entrepreneurial process, research delving into the myriad subtleties of hybrid entrepreneurship is necessary.

Future scholars should keep pushing for the inclusion of hybrid entrepreneurship in the literature, refuting conventional views of the field and demonstrating that hybrid entrepreneurship may exist as a separate entity and a feasible route to full-time entrepreneurship.

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