

The Level of Student Acceptance towards a Course Notebook in Principles of Management among Diploma in Business Studies Students

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Abstract. This study examines the acceptance level of a course notebook among students in the Principles of Management subject at the Commerce Department, Politeknik Mersing, Johor. The problem addressed was students' inconsistent note-taking and limited engagement, which affected their understanding of management concepts. A quasi-experimental design was employed, comparing Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) across four academic sessions and analyzing student perceptions using a Likert-scale questionnaire. The sample consisted of 66 students from current Semester 2 and Semester 3 in the Diploma in Business Studies (DPM) program. The findings revealed a high level of acceptance of the course notebook, with students perceiving it as useful, well-structured, and aligned with the syllabus. Respondents highlighted its role in enhancing conceptual understanding, practical application, and teamwork, though minor improvements were suggested, particularly regarding language clarity. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that structured and visually supported learning materials, such as course notebooks, are positively accepted by students and contribute to better engagement and enriched learning experiences in higher education.

Keywords: Student acceptance, Course notebook, Principles of Management, Diploma in Business Studies, Learning engagement.

1. INTRODUCTION

Principles of Management is a core subject offered to Semester 1 students in the Diploma in Business Studies program. The course introduces students to fundamental concepts and essential principles that underpin business operations, with the aim of equipping them with a foundational understanding of management functions and the behavior of individuals within an organization.

Starting with the new cohort in Session I 2023/2024, the subject was delivered primarily through presentation slides as the main teaching and learning aid. While these slides covered the entire syllabus, they lacked depth and detailed explanations. Consequently, lecturers were required to provide additional notes to help students grasp the content more effectively. Students relied heavily on these materials for assessments, with some printing the slides as hardcopies and others referring only to the digital versions.

It is important to note that Semester 1 students are in a transitional phase—from a school-based pedagogy to a more adult-centered andragogical approach. Relying solely on slide content may hinder comprehension and adaptability, particularly in theory-rich subjects. This gap in instructional delivery poses a risk to student engagement and learning outcomes.

Moreover, Principles of Management is widely perceived by students as a challenging subject, particularly due to its theory-intensive nature. Feedback from students who failed the subject in previous semesters indicates that many found the material difficult to understand and memorize. This struggle may be attributed to the lack of interactive and varied learning materials, which can make the subject feel abstract and less engaging. The heavy reliance on static slides with limited explanation further compounds these challenges, especially for first-semester students adjusting to the demands of higher education.

In response to these concerns, a comprehensive course notebook for Principles of Management was developed. The notebook includes mind maps that summarize each chapter's subtopics, detailed explanatory notes, engaging visuals, and review questions to reinforce learning. It was introduced and distributed to students starting from Session

I 2024/2025, with the intention of enhancing conceptual understanding, supporting effective revision, and improving academic performance.

This study aims to analyze the acceptance level of the course notebook among students in Principles of Management. Specifically, it seeks to determine whether students perceive the notebook as useful, well-structured, and aligned with the syllabus, as well as whether it supports their learning preferences and enhances engagement with the subject.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Principles of Management is a theory-based subject that requires students to engage with abstract concepts and apply them in practical contexts. For first-semester diploma students transitioning from secondary school, this shift toward more independent learning can be challenging. Recent frameworks such as the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) have been extended in higher education to explain why students adopt or reject learning resources, emphasizing factors such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation, and habit [1]. A course notebook that is easy to use, clearly structured, and socially endorsed by peers and lecturers is therefore more likely to be accepted by students.

In addition, recent refinements of Cognitive Load Theory in digital learning highlight that poorly structured or fragmented materials increase extraneous load and reduce learner satisfaction, which in turn negatively affects acceptance [2], [3]. By contrast, instructional resources that streamline complex information with clear organization and visual elements are perceived as more user-friendly and thus gain higher acceptance. The course notebook incorporates mind maps, summaries, and explanatory visuals to address these concerns, supporting both comprehension and acceptance.

The Cognitive-Affective Engagement Model further suggests that students accept and persist with learning tools when they perceive them as not only cognitively supportive but also engaging and enjoyable [4]. Features such as review questions, diagrams, and real-world examples in the course notebook promote active involvement and align with student preferences for interactive and varied resources.

Empirical evidence also points toward high acceptance of structured learning aids. Li and Wang [5] found that textbooks and structured resources were well received in higher education settings because they provided consistency and reduced ambiguity, especially in theory-heavy subjects. Similarly, recent TAM- and UTAUT2-based studies [6], [7] confirm that ease of use, clarity, and perceived usefulness strongly predict student acceptance of supplementary learning tools.

Taken together, these contemporary theories and studies suggest that a well-designed course notebook is likely to achieve strong acceptance among students. By combining structured content, visual supports, and interactive elements, such resources are not only theoretically aligned with modern acceptance models but also practically perceived as relevant, usable, and beneficial for student learning.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative case study design to evaluate the student acceptance of a course notebook in supporting engagement and the achievement of the intended course learning outcomes (CLOs). Data were collected from two main sources which are the Course Outcome Review Report (CORR) and student responses to a structured questionnaire.

Data Sources

3.1 Course Outcome Review Report (CORR)

The CORR for the Principles of Management course (Session I and II, 2024/2025) was analysed to assess the level of outcome achievement among students. This report included performance data, key performance indicators (KPIs), and, providing quantitative evidence of student attainment for CLO1 (conceptual understanding), CLO2 (practical application), and CLO3 (teamwork and communication).

3.2 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was developed to capture students' perceptions of the course notebook. As no validated instrument existed for this context, the items were designed by the researchers following a systematic process:

i) Item Development

The questionnaire items were developed with reference to the Principles of Management course syllabus and the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The items were designed to evaluate key aspects such as clarity of presentation, alignment of content with the syllabus, simplicity of language, usefulness of visuals and supplementary materials, as well as overall student satisfaction. Responses were measured using a 4-point Likert scale, ensuring a focused assessment of student acceptance levels.

ii) Content Validity

Draft items were reviewed by two subject-matter experts (lecturers teaching management courses) for relevance, clarity, and alignment with learning objectives. Feedback led to minor refinements in wording to ensure student-friendly language.

Sample

The study involved 66 students from current Semester II and Semester III enrolled in the Diploma in Business Studies program. Participants had prior exposure to the newly developed course notebook, ensuring relevant feedback.

Data Analysis

Data from the CORR were analysed descriptively to identify trends in CLO achievement across four sessions. Questionnaire data were analysed using both descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation) and reliability testing. The Likert-scale mean scores were interpreted using standard cut-off points (1.00–1.49 = Very Low, 1.50–2.49 = Low, 2.50–3.49 = Moderate, 3.50–4.00 = High). Together, these methods ensured triangulation and strengthened the validity of the findings.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Course Outcome Review Report (CORR)

Table 1. Course Learning Outcomes Analysis for Four Sessions.

	Session II 2024/2025	Session I 2024/2025	Session II 2023/2024	Session I 2023/2024
CLO1C	63	57.1	54.4	68.4
CLO2P	88	85.3	83.7	100
CLO3A	81.2	88.3	71.9	100

The analysis of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) across four sessions, as presented in Table 1, revealed varying levels of student achievement, with noticeable improvement after the introduction and distribution of the course notebook in Session I 2024/2025. The results indicate a strong level of student acceptance of the course notebook, particularly between Session I 2024/2025 and Session II 2024/2025.

CLO1C (understanding of concepts) improved from 57.1% to 63%, reflecting students' readiness to adopt and utilize the notebook as a structured learning aid, which provided clearer guidance for theoretical understanding. CLO2P (practical application) increased from 85.3% to 88%, suggesting that students accepted the notebook as a valuable reference for applying concepts in practice, especially through guided exercises and real-life examples. Meanwhile, CLO3A (teamwork and communication) showed a slight decrease from 88.3% to 81.2%, yet it remained strong overall, indicating that students continued to recognize the notebook's usefulness in supporting collaborative activities.

When compared with earlier sessions (2023/2024), where CLO1C was as low as 54.4%, the findings highlight not only improved achievement but also an increased level of student acceptance of the notebook as a supportive learning resource. Overall, these findings suggest that students welcomed the course notebook as an effective tool for

bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application. It provided structured guidance, reinforced key concepts, and offered exercises that students perceived as relevant to connecting classroom learning with real-world situations.

In conclusion, the evidence strongly demonstrates that the course notebook was well accepted by students, contributing meaningfully to their learning experience, supporting improved outcomes, and fostering greater engagement with the subject matter. This validates the notebook's acceptance as a valuable instructional resource.

4.2 Questionnaire responses

A total of 66 respondents from two academic sessions participated in the survey. Specifically, 24 students were enrolled in Semester 1 during Session I 2024/2025, while 42 students were enrolled in Semester 1 during Session II 2024/2025.

(i) Descriptive Statistics

A Likert scale was employed as a rating tool in the survey to measure students' perceptions and satisfaction regarding the effectiveness of the course notebook. The mean value, which represents the average score of all Likert-scale responses, was then used to summarize the overall trend of students' opinions. A higher mean score indicates stronger agreement or greater satisfaction, while a lower mean score reflects weaker agreement or dissatisfaction.

The interpretation of mean scores on the 4-point Likert scale is as follows:

1.00 – 1.49 = Very Low / Very Negative

1.50 – 2.49 = Low / Negative

2.50 – 3.49 = Moderate / Neutral / Needs Improvement

3.50 – 4.00 = High / Positive / Strong Agreement

The findings from the analysis are presented as follows:

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Questionnaire Items from Semester 3 students (Session I 2024/2025)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Does this book help you understand the subject?	3.625	.4945	High (Positive)
Is the content of this book aligned with the syllabus/subject content?	3.667	.4815	High (Positive)
Is the language used in the book easy to understand?	3.417	.5836	Moderate (Needs improvement)
Do you feel that the additional content (e.g., graphics and practice questions) in this book helps you to understand the Principles of Management subject?	3.750	.5316	High (Positive)
Overall, how would you rate this book?	3.458	.8836	Moderate (Needs improvement)

Table 3. Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Questionnaire Items from Semester 2 students (Session II 2024/2025)

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Does this book help you understand the subject?	3.786	.4153	High (Positive)
Is the content of this book aligned with the syllabus/subject content?	3.786	.4153	High (Positive)
Is the language used in the book easy to understand?	3.667	.5258	High (Positive)
Do you feel that the additional content (e.g., graphics and practice questions) in this book helps you to understand the Principles of Management subject?	3.762	.4311	High (Positive)
Overall, how would you rate this book?	3.643	.8211	High (Positive)

The analysis of the questionnaire responses presented in Table 2 and Table 3 demonstrates that students generally expressed a positive acceptance level of the course notebook, with notable differences between Semester 3 students (Session I 2024/2025) and Semester 2 students (Session II 2024/2025). For Semester 3 students, most items were rated at a high level, particularly in terms of alignment with the syllabus ($M = 3.667$) and the usefulness of additional content such as graphics and practice questions ($M = 3.750$). These results suggest that students recognized the notebook as a supportive tool in guiding their learning process and connecting theoretical content with practical applications. Nevertheless, two areas—namely the clarity of language used in the notebook ($M = 3.417$) and the overall rating ($M = 3.458$)—were interpreted as moderate, indicating that some students experienced difficulty in fully understanding the terminology or perceived that the notebook required further refinement in its presentation and usability. This feedback provides valuable insight, suggesting that while the notebook was largely accepted, improvements were necessary to enhance student satisfaction and accessibility.

In contrast, the responses from Semester 2 students in Session II 2024/2025 reflected a more consistently positive evaluation across all items. Students reported high acceptance in terms of understanding the subject ($M = 3.786$), alignment with the syllabus ($M = 3.786$), and clarity of language ($M = 3.667$). The additional content, such as graphics and practice questions, was again rated highly ($M = 3.762$), reinforcing the finding that supplementary materials play an important role in supporting comprehension of key concepts. Importantly, the overall rating of the notebook improved to a high level ($M = 3.643$), which suggests that the refinements or increased familiarity with the resource contributed to a stronger level of acceptance compared to the earlier session. This improvement may reflect not only adjustments made to the notebook based on initial feedback but also students' growing recognition of its value as a learning aid.

Taken together, these findings indicate that the course notebook achieved its intended role as a valuable instructional resource, bridging theoretical knowledge with practical learning through structured guidance, relevant examples, and supplementary exercises. The moderate ratings observed in the first group of students highlight the importance of continuous refinement, particularly in simplifying language and enhancing overall presentation to ensure inclusivity for all learners. The improved ratings among the subsequent cohort, however, demonstrate that the notebook was increasingly well received and supported greater student engagement with the Principles of Management subject. Overall, the evidence suggests that the course notebook was not only accepted by students but also contributed meaningfully to their learning experience, underscoring its potential as an effective and sustainable teaching and learning tool for future cohorts.

(ii) Reliability Statistics

Table 4. Reliability Scores for Questionnaire Items from Semester 3 students (Session I 2024/2025)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.674	.730	5

Table 5. Reliability Scores for Questionnaire Items from Semester 2 students (Session II 2024/2025)

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.808	.855	5

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire items, as shown in Table 4 and Table 5, indicates acceptable to strong levels of internal consistency across the two cohorts. For Semester 3 students in Session I 2024/2025, the Cronbach's Alpha score was .674, which is slightly below the conventional threshold of .70. However, when based on standardized items, the reliability improved to .730, demonstrating that the instrument achieved an acceptable level of consistency in measuring student acceptance of the course notebook. This moderate level of reliability may be attributed to the fact that this was the initial group exposed to the course notebook, where responses might have been more varied as students adjusted to the new learning resource.

In contrast, the results from Semester 2 students in Session II 2024/2025 showed stronger internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha values of .808 and .855 based on standardized items. These scores indicate good reliability, reflecting more stable and consistent responses from students in this session. The higher reliability level suggests that the questionnaire was better understood and accepted by students, potentially due to refinements made to the notebook or increased familiarity with its use. Overall, these findings validate the questionnaire as a reliable tool for assessing student acceptance of the course notebook, while also highlighting the importance of iterative improvement in both the instructional resource and the evaluation instrument.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide strong evidence that the course notebook was positively accepted by students and contributed meaningfully to their learning experience in the Principles of Management subject. Both the Course Outcome Review Report (CORR) and the questionnaire responses consistently demonstrated improvements in student outcomes and perceptions, particularly after the introduction of the notebook. This aligns with existing literature emphasizing the value of structured and well-aligned learning materials in enhancing student engagement, comprehension, and academic performance [8], [9].

The CORR analysis revealed an upward trend in CLO achievement, with notable improvements in theoretical understanding (CLO1C) and practical application (CLO2P). These findings suggest that students not only performed better but also demonstrated a stronger acceptance of the notebook as a reliable learning resource. Although teamwork and communication (CLO3A) showed a slight decline, it remained at a strong level, indicating that the notebook continued to support collaborative learning, albeit with some variation across cohorts. This supports Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory [10], which highlights that clear and structured guidance enhances learner focus and task performance.

The questionnaire results further reinforce these outcomes. Semester I students in Session I 2024/2025 (current Semester 3) provided generally positive feedback, though moderate scores were recorded for language clarity and overall usability. This highlights areas for refinement, particularly in simplifying terminology and ensuring the resource is accessible to all learners. By contrast, Semester 1 students in Session II 2024/2025 (current Semester 2) rated the notebook more consistently at a high level across all dimensions, including overall satisfaction. The progression indicates that either the notebook underwent iterative refinements or students became more familiar with its structure over time, resulting in greater acceptance.

Reliability testing of the questionnaire adds further validity to the findings. The Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from acceptable (.674) to strong (.808), with improved reliability observed in the second cohort. This progression indicates that students not only developed a clearer understanding of the notebook but also responded to the survey

more consistently, demonstrating that the instrument itself was robust in capturing student acceptance. The improved reliability in the later cohort suggests that student perceptions of the notebook stabilized as it became a more familiar and integrated learning tool.

Overall, these results underscore the dual value of the course notebook: as an instructional resource that bridges theory and practice, and as a pedagogical tool that is well received by students. The improvement in CLO performance, combined with positive questionnaire responses, validates the effectiveness of the notebook in fostering deeper engagement and supporting student success. At the same time, the moderate feedback on language clarity highlights the need for continuous refinement to ensure inclusivity and ease of use across different student cohorts.

While these findings are promising, the study is not without limitations. The sample was limited to two cohorts

within a single subject and institution, which may restrict generalizability. Additionally, self-reported data from questionnaires may be influenced by personal biases. Future research could extend the study across multiple subjects or institutions, incorporate qualitative feedback to gain deeper insights into student experiences, and track long-term impacts on learning outcomes.

In conclusion, the evidence strongly suggests that the course notebook was not only accepted by students but also contributed to improved learning outcomes and engagement. Its structured design, alignment with CLOs, and inclusion of practical exercises positioned it as a valuable instructional tool. The findings validate its continued use while highlighting opportunities for refinement to further enhance student acceptance and satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the acceptance level of a course notebook in the Principles of Management subject among Diploma in Business Studies students. Drawing on both Course Outcome Review Reports (CORR) and student questionnaire responses, the findings highlight that the notebook was well received and contributed positively to student learning experiences. The analysis of CLOs demonstrated improved achievement, particularly in theoretical understanding and practical application, following the introduction of the notebook. Similarly, questionnaire results revealed high levels of student satisfaction, especially regarding content alignment, usefulness of supplementary materials, and overall contribution to understanding the subject.

Although some areas, such as language clarity and overall usability, were rated moderately in the initial cohort, subsequent cohorts reported stronger and more consistent levels of acceptance. The reliability analysis of the questionnaire further supported the validity of these findings, showing acceptable to strong internal consistency across sessions. Taken together, the results confirm that the course notebook was an effective instructional resource, valued by students for its structured guidance, alignment with the syllabus, and ability to connect theory with practice.

The study underscores the importance of providing structured and student-friendly learning materials to enhance engagement and learning outcomes. At the same time, the moderate feedback received suggests that continuous refinement is essential to ensure clarity and inclusivity. While the study was limited to a single course and sample, its findings have important implications for future curriculum design and teaching strategies. By integrating student feedback and systematically evaluating learning resources, educators can ensure that teaching tools remain effective, relevant, and responsive to students' needs.

In conclusion, the course notebook was not only accepted by students but also played a meaningful role in improving learning outcomes and fostering engagement in the Principles of Management course. Its continued use, alongside ongoing refinement, has strong potential to sustain student success in future cohorts.

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