

Programme: CertHE Skills for the Workplace

Module: Digital Skills and Research Methods

Module code: BMSW4003

Assignment Title: DSR Assessment 2 Individual Report

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

A virtual learning environment is a platform that facilitates the learning and teaching processes and enhances the traditional education system. Many educational institutions in the UK are presently using VLE in education. The students of these institutions get access to educational materials online (Naamani, 2012). For this, they require internet connections and devices. As they browse the VLE software, the institutions provide the access to their students, so they can use course materials and take part in quizzes and assignments etc. The teachers take classes in the classroom and follow the conventional education process but the use of VLE allows them and the students to reflect and assess their teaching and learning outcomes and be more interactive without limiting the traditional education processes. So, it is said that VLE enhances the educational experience and makes it convenient of getting an education cutting the cost, time, and distance (Petrou, 2010). The exact time of using VLEs in education can not be identified. However, the open university in the UK has been using computer-based learning since the 1970s and in 2000 VLE blackboard was introduced. Another popular VLE named Moodle started its journey in 2001. Since then, the use of VLEs in educational establishments has continuously increased. The author of this report will focus on the effectiveness and the impact of using VLE-Moodle at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus. It is important to analyse whether VLE is fulfilling the purposes it set from its inception and also to bring changes for enhancing the students' educational experience.

2 Background

2.1 Literature Review – Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

A VLE is a platform that helps to collaborate and enable the students to experience enhanced learning. Almost all types of educational establishments are suitable for use of VLE. Students can access their courses from their convenient places. It provides collaborative features to the users that the students can use the virtual classroom for their learning, emails, chats forum for support and interactive services (Polisca, 2013). Teachers create the course outline, provide resources and assign tasks for the students. Students learn from those resources and submit their assignments using various options. This way evaluating students' performance and their progress gets easier and more effective. If they need any help from the teacher, they can interact with the teacher even after the conventional class in the educational establishment is over. VLE provides data analysis of the courses that are provided to the students. This helps to bring improvement and understand the effectiveness of the educator's efforts (Jackson, 2015). It also has a messaging system, unlike the emails that let the users communicate with one to one or one many within the system. Students can do their assignments as a team through collaborative features at the same time. The benefits of using VLE can be noted as it aggregates all study materials and makes it easier for the students to accomplish their degrees. It offers the scope of introducing a blended learning approach. The most significant aspect of using VLE is that it increases the motivation of the students, and they get more confident in their learning (Weller, 2008). Education costs somewhat get reduced since all the course materials are online and do not need to be printed out. Device, internet connection, skills and compatible software are required to have effective use of VLE. But there are some challenges of VLE that need to be overcome. Such challenges are time management, slow internet connection, and inadequate support for the teachers (Prasad Dhakal, 2016).

3 Aim and Objectives of the Research

The aims of this study are illustrated as follows:

- i. To find the impact of the virtual learning environment (VLE) – Moodle on the students' learning experience.
- ii. To find the benefits of usage of VLE.
- iii. To find the challenges students face while using the VLE.

The objective of this research is given below:

- i. Conduct primary and secondary data research and experience research methodologies.
- ii. Analyse various sets of data from different sources to find the appropriate result.
- iii. Provide recommendations and conclude on the result.

4 Research Methodology

4.1 Secondary Research

It is the most crucial factor that has contributed to performing this research. It is also identified as a desk research method. This method incorporates compiling data that already exists in various sources. The sources can be internal or external. Internal sources include data that exist within the organisation and external sources include different publications, government agencies and organisations. Such data are sometimes provided for free, nonetheless, they may require some fees to obtain (Chatfield, 2020). The author of this research has used secondary data for performing secondary research. This research has helped to get an insight into the topic that is the impact of VLE on the students' experience in learning. To collect the data, he has collected many journal publications, academic books, papers etc. These sources have demonstrated the idea of how research practices are performed in real life. So relevant data on VLE's impact on the education experience has been gathered and then they are studied intensively for attaining the detailed concept of this topic. As this research has provided some evidence, this evidence is then further used to compare and analyse with the primary research.

4.2 Primary Research

This research methodology incorporated the researcher to gather data directly from the target sources. So, the author conducted surveys on the focused group providing them with some questionnaires. The focused group responded to the surveys. Thus the overall research was possible to complete. The data from primary sources are very important because data from secondary sources may have partiality and many shortcomings but the data from primary sources are above these limitations (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005). The researcher has put his utmost care and sincerity that these primary data have credibility, so the result of this research becomes acceptable.

4.2.1 Ethical Consideration

There are some essential guidelines which make the research work credible and relevant to the topic. One of the guidelines states that while the participants in the primary data collection give their opinions or feedback, their data or input should be kept confidential (Welman, Kruger and

Mitchell, 2005). This universal guideline helps the researcher to ensure unbiased data. In this study, the researcher provided the questionnaire via email and the respondents provided their feedback by filling out the form in the email. The form did not require any personal details and the opinion they have given were kept confidential so that nobody has the access to them.

4.2.2 Research Result

The primary research has been conducted based on the questionnaires that were provided to 20 students of the University 12 were male and 8 were female. The response to the first question depicts that 60% of the respondents constitute male and 40% of them are female. It suggests that the result of the study will more represent the male's opinions as they are more in several participants.

Question 1. What is your Gender?	Male	Female
Response	12	8
Percentage	60%	40%

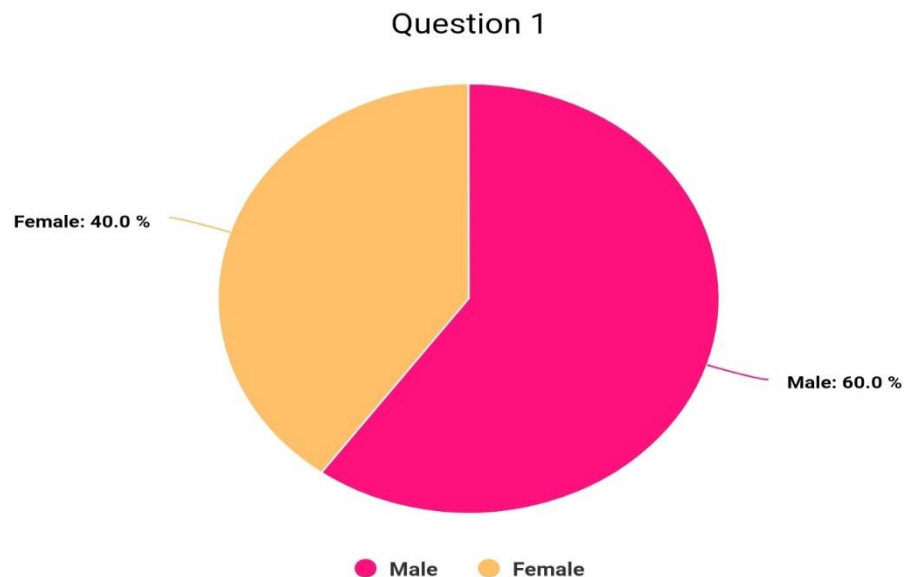


Figure 1: Gender Proportion of the Participants

Source: Student Survey

The second question of the questionnaire was about knowing how many students use Moodle at home and if they face any problems with it. 11 students responded with an excellent experience using it at home and 9 students responded that they use Moodle at home but they face some sort of problems. When the researcher asked them individually which problems they face. They told that they face difficulty using its various features such as group collaboration with classmates, interactions etc. Surprisingly every one of the respondents uses Moodle.

Question 2. Have you attempted to use Moodle at home?	Yes, with excellent experience	Yes, but faced some problems	No
Response	11	9	0

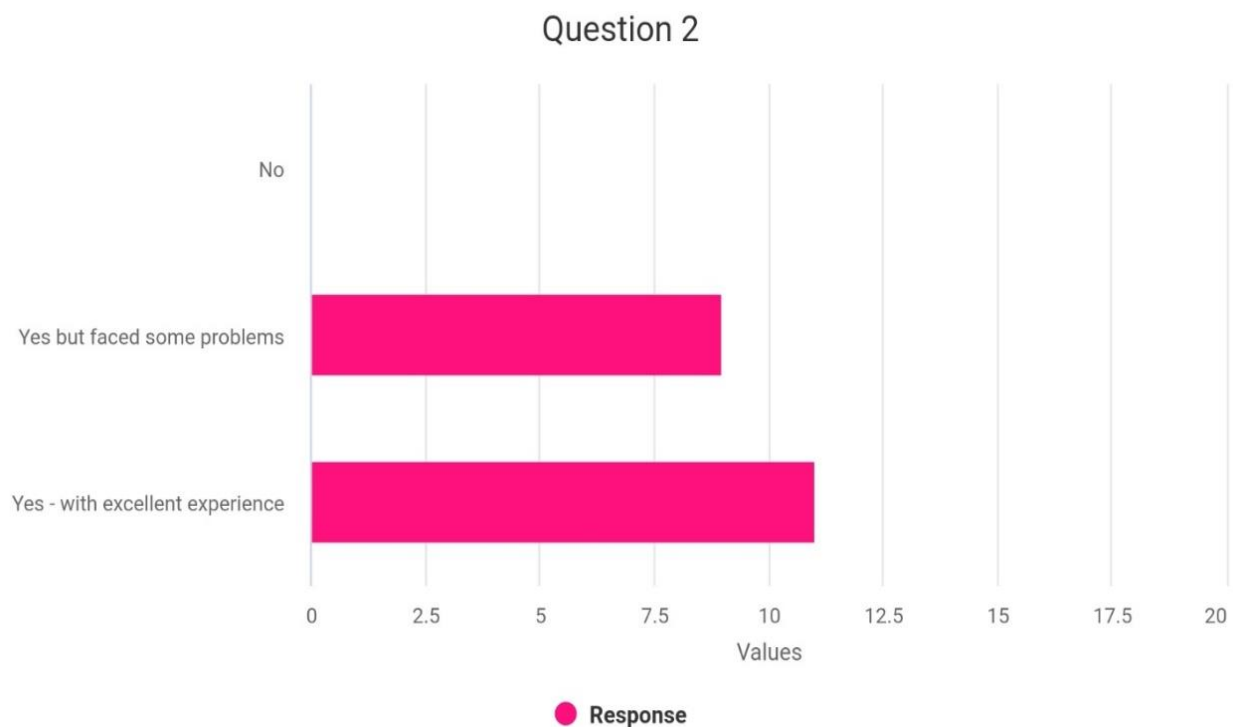


Figure 2: Number of Moodle Users at Home

Source: Student Survey

Since every one of them uses Moodle, the next question identified how often they use this service. 4 students use it once a month, 15 students once a week and only 1 of them uses it regularly.

When he was asked why he prefers it for regular usage whereas his classmates use it for different times. He responded that he can get enough opportunities to utilise his educational potential using it and he feels motivated for the study.

Question 3. How often do you need to use Moodle?	Never	Once a month	Once a week	Everyday
Response	0	4	15	1

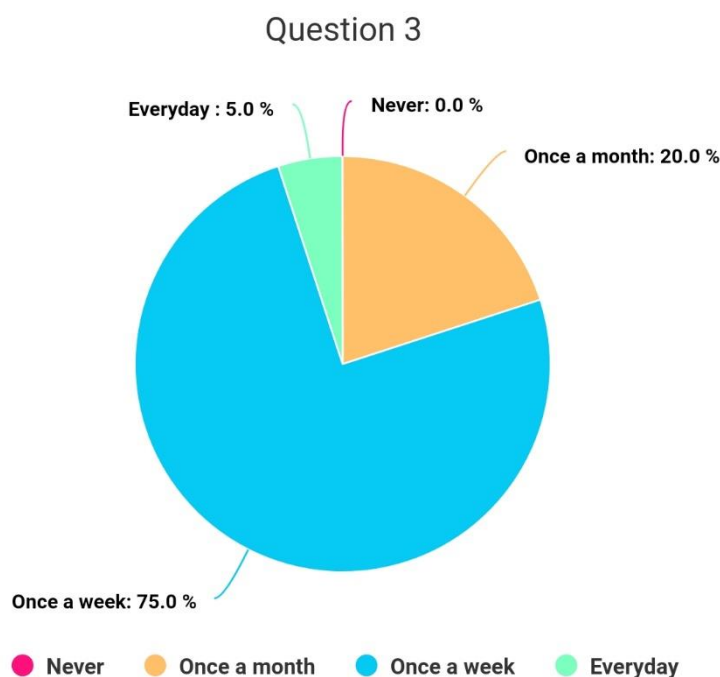


Figure 3: Usage Frequency of Moodle

Source: Student Survey

The response to the last 5 questions shows that students feel more confident in their studies. As some students can not cope with the classes held in classrooms, they get the opportunity to interact with the teachers and students through Moodle. It helps them to be more confident. Its outcome is a good performance in their exams. So the majority of them believe that the education establishment did the right thing to use Moodle. When asked some of the participants expressed the same thought that the universities around the world can do better and achieve more success using VLE – Moodle as theirs. Finally, the overall responses suggest that VLE – Moodle has

positively influenced the students. It can certainly make more contributions to education if properly utilized.

Question No	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Sure
Q 4	6	8	5	1	0
Q 5	8	9	2	0	1
Q6	12	7	1	0	0
Q7	10	9	1	0	0
Q8	0	1	12	7	0

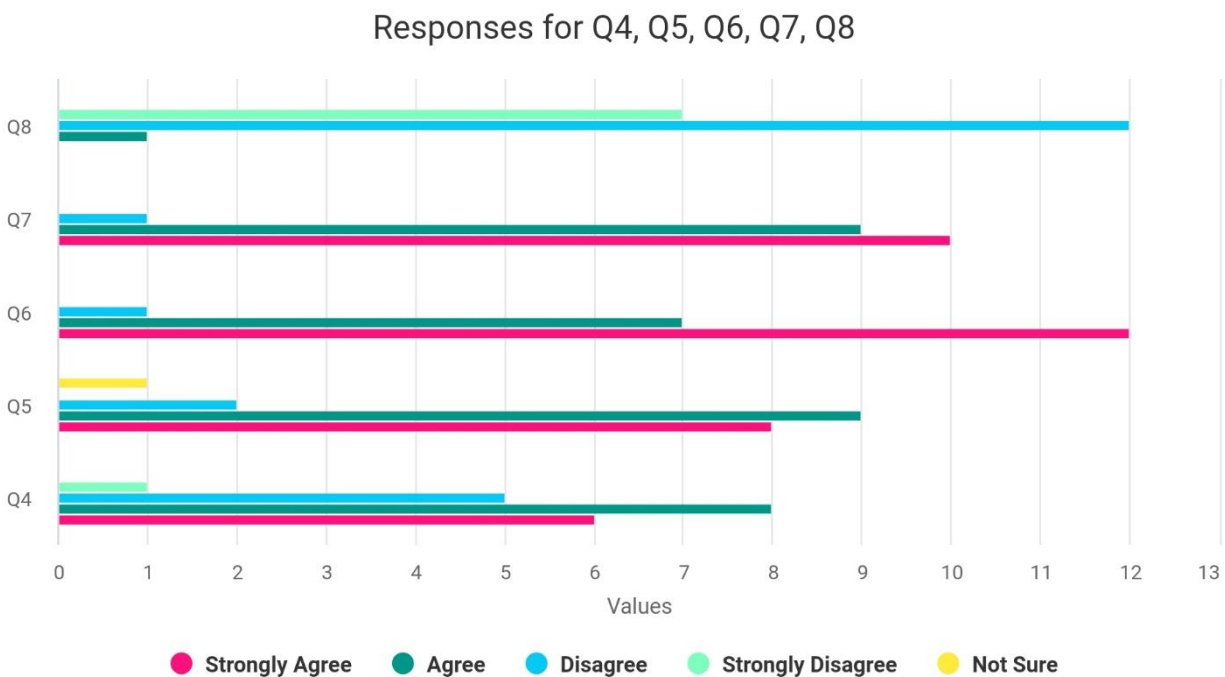


Figure 4: Impact of Moodle on the Students' Learning Experience

Source: Student Survey

4.2.3 Discussion

After the analysis of data that were collected from the questionnaires, it can be said that students prefer VLE – Moodle for their education. Particularly, the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the

acceptance of this learning environment among them (Azieva and Sadulaeva, 2020). Other secondary sources indicate that the effectiveness of the VLE on education is yet to be ascertained and some of them exhibit it has some extent contributed to the modern education of the UK (Petrou, 2010). But after performing this study, it has been more apparent that students get better motivation when they use it. Their results get improved. It then impacts their careers. Thus, Moodle has positive consequences on the students' learning experience. Moreover, Students have a favourable perception of VLE for its benefits. They prefer it more for convenience, as they can participate in the program while staying at their home. Assignments submissions, quizzes and other evaluations are conducted at their selected times. The barriers between students and teachers for getting help and support get eliminated (Giusti Moreira, de Aguiar, Rocha Costa and Tim Hinz, 2018). This is why the responses were positive in the questionnaire. This system, therefore, needs more attention so that it can serve the students more conveniently. Some students and staff may face difficulty using its various features. So they require support and training for improving their skills.

4.2.4 Recommendations

- i. The University should motivate more students for using Moodle regularly because it improves the performance of the students and their learning experience.
- ii. Some students may face difficulty using it. So, they should be given proper support and training. This way all students will come under this system. This way blended teaching techniques will also be possible which will increase the scope of education.
- iii. More courses and programs should be introduced through Moodle which are consistent with the technology.

5 Conclusion

The study has shown that Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) plays a crucial role in providing an effective education. It has positively influenced the students' experiences and so most of the students prefer VLE – Moodle for their education. The advancement of technology may make the system more convenient and easier which will increase its usefulness. Keeping an optimistic belief, the use of VLE needs to be widespread. If other universities follow and maintain their VLE, they can certainly improve their teaching and learning experiences.

6 References

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7 Appendix – Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

Male / Female

2. Have you attempted to use Moodle at home?

Yes- with excellent experience/ Yes – but faced some problems/ No

3. How often do you need to use Moodle?

Never/ Once a month / Once a week / Everyday

4. You feel confident when you use Moodle in your study.

Strongly Agree/ Agree / Disagree/ Strongly Disagree/ Not sure

5. Your exam result has improved for using Moodle.

Strongly Agree/ Agree / Disagree / Strongly Disagree/ Not sure

6. Using Moodle is a good idea in the educational establishment.

Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree/ Not sure

7. I can better interact with my classmates and the teachers using Moodle.

Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree/ Not sure

8. I face challenges using Moodle that make me despair for future usage.

Strongly Agree/ Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly Disagree/ Not sure

9. How much is the benefit of checking the recorded videos of the lecture in VLE?

1/ 2/ 3/ 4/ 5/

10. Can you write how do you feel if your log in VLE is not successfully?

11. Can you write one negative and one positive impact of Moodle for students?