Digital skills and Research Methods

Report

Veronica-Daniela Floria

Student ID:2115140

BMSW4003

Lecturer Amitave Banik

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION 3

PRIMARY RESEARCH 3

SECONDARY RESEARCH 7

POSITIVE IMPACT OF VLE 8

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF VLE 9

CONCLUSION 10

REFERENCE LIST 11

INTRODUCTION

Virtual learning environments (VLEs) were developed to help students transition from passive to active learners. Active learning fosters critical thinking abilities, which are necessary for transferring and applying classroom knowledge in clinical situations. A VLE is becoming an increasingly important component of clinical skill development across a variety of specialities. The virtual learning environment has a very big impact on the students helping them to be able to recall their studies. Virtual reality technology allows for immersive and interactive experiences to enhance traditional classroom lectures (Huang et al., 2019). Virtual learning can help in reducing the impact of negative learning such as not being able to attend physically regarding sickness or other problems. Virtual learning helps the students be connected with their mentor regardless of the location they live in and help the students connect. The primary goal of this research is to collect indicators that will aid in understanding the relationships between VLE use and student achievement (Alves, Miranda and Morais, 2017). This helps the students learn and helps them to recall what they learned in the class while looking used on the virtual learning. During this pandemic, virtual learning helped a lot for the students and teachers, allowing them to complete the syllabus and being able to meet each other daily virtually. This report mainly discusses the impact of the virtual learning environment and how the students are working under the virtual learning and how the students can cope with this learning system.

PRIMARY RESEARCH

The primary research involved forming a questionnaire where students and parents who have resorted to online learning had been questioned:

How many platforms are there for online education? Which one do you mainly use?

Student: Many different platforms can be used for online education. My school mainly used Google Meet and Zoom for online education.

Do teachers teach daily like in the school?

Students: Yes, our teachers take to class every day like in our school but the time of the classes is now reduced and the teachers take classes both in the morning and evening to fill up the time like in the school.

Does the internet play a vital role in your life?

Students: Yes, it is a very important thing in my life and others too. This pandemic has become a very big burden not being able to ask for help regarding studies or personal help. Due to this internet, I'm able to keep track of my studies and be able to connect with the teachers and be able to doubt. It helps in connecting to different learning sites too for future knowledge. In light of the current situations of emergency, several nations have changed from traditional face-to-face techniques to e-Learning (Affouneh, Salha and Khlaif, 2020). The Internet has helped in connecting with friends and being able to interact with them daily.

Do you miss attending your school?

Students: Yes, during this pandemic was a very hard day for me. Before the lockdown, I used to go to school and be around with my friends. I used to enjoy my time in the class and chat with my friend. Due to this pandemic, the school is in class. As active learning aids, virtual learning environments are underutilised (Ersoy-Babula and Babula, 2018). I miss attending the school assembly and different events in the student and sports class. I also miss my friends who are not able to meet due to this pandemic. We are somewhat connected via chat and calls but I miss being around them and attending school together and playing with them on school grounds and also going to sports practice with them.

Is teaching online easy and suitable?

Teacher: It is not at all easy. It is very hard to adjust to this method of teaching. as teaching students in the classroom in front of us. The idea of online teaching did not come to mind. never thought that this will now become the only way of interacting with the students in this method. This is a bit hard to adjust to. In the classroom, we can check where the students are paying attention or not. and being able to question and write away. Virtual reality applications offer to give on-site training in a safe and regulated setting due to their compelling sensation of presence and excellent immersion (Carruth, 2017). In the online form of teaching, it is very hard to check every student is paying attention to the class. The habit of teaching face to face is hard during online classes. But it is easy for the students to be able to recall the meeting as the meeting can be recorded helping the students to keep up with the notes.

What are the issues faced in teaching online?

Teacher: there are many different issues including connectivity or disturbance on the platform which is being used. connectivity problem. For these reasons, students seem to lose their interest in the chapter and feel bored while attending the class. This type of issue happens often

but it's still minor. the main issues when students are not cooperating with teachers. Existing resources in Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), which are utilised in distant education and blended learning courses, are displayed in the same way to all students (Bremgartner, de Magalhães Netto and Menezes, 2017). While the teacher is teaching in the class the majority of the students switch off their cameras and still. While questions randomly students are not answered and students leave the meeting in the middle of the class. It is found that the students even sleep while attending the class, creating chaos in the class meeting. the students give their attendance and leave the class.

Is this learning environment also creating problems for the parents?

Parents: Tes it is a very difficult method for us too. As seen, the students are not always able to clear doubt and the majority of the students face problems for not understanding the notes provided. We parents have to look for our children whether they are fully concentrating on the class or not. We have to check on them after to see whether they understand the full notes taught in the class or not.

Is the online fee the same as the school fees?

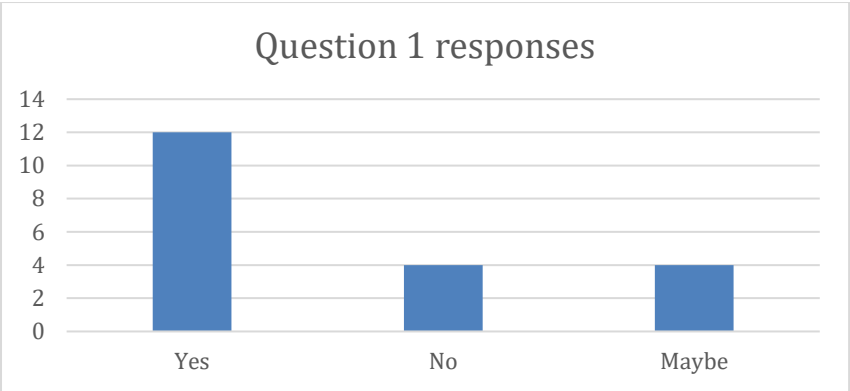
Parents: it can be said it is less. The maintenance charge of the internet is less than the school maintenance fee. This article discusses the challenges that were faced in adapting the multi-user online game genre for educational virtual environments (Bani-Salameh et al., 2017). but the school is still charging the same amount which they used to charge when schools were open. Our parents are hoping the school can reduce its fees. As in this pandemic, many people like us are facing difficulties in matters of expenses. As we are undergoing no work during the lockdown situation.

Apart from this a survey is conducted among 20 students with the help following 3 questions.

Q1. Do you think that virtual learning environment has eased your method of learning?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Maybe

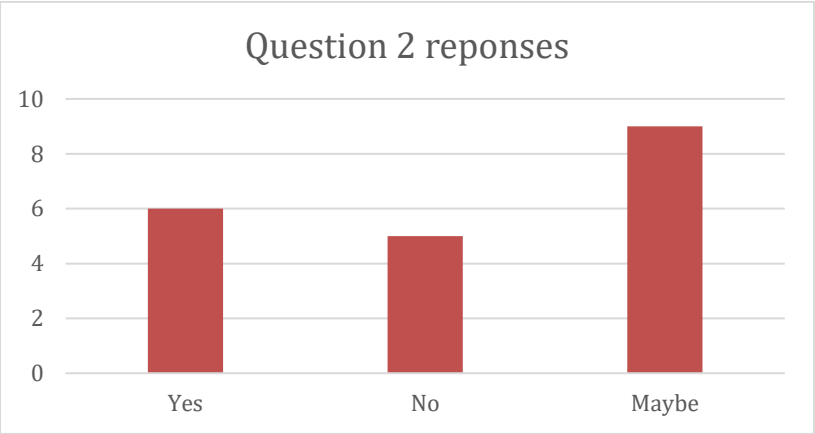
Yes	No	Maybe
12	4	4



Q2. Do you think using moodle as an online learning platform would restrict the communication among students?

a) Yes
b) No
c) Maybe

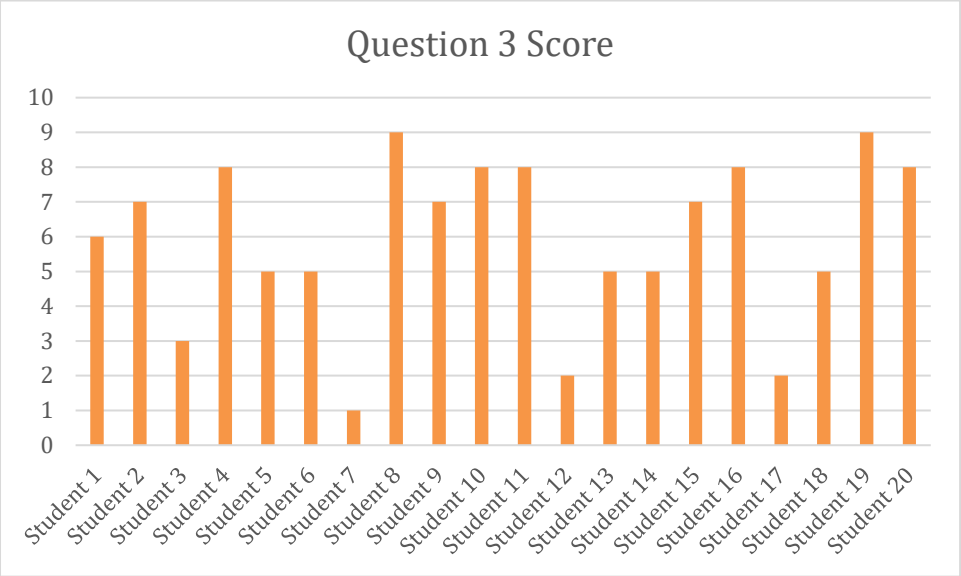
Yes	No	Maybe
6	5	9



Q3. How would you rate moodle out of 10?

Student	Score
Student 1	6
Student 2	7
Student 3	3
Student 4	8
Student 5	5
Student 6	5
Student 7	1
Student 8	9
Student 9	7
Student 10	8
Student 11	8

Student 12	2
Student 13	5
Student 14	5
Student 15	7
Student 16	8
Student 17	2
Student 18	5
Student 19	9
Student 20	8



SECONDARY RESEARCH

The growth, as well as the spread of communication and information technology, has resulted in the development of how computers along with other devices and the internet can bring about improvement in the process of education (Herrera, 2017). Ever since the virtual environment has become popular, it has faced quite a several impacts. These impacts have been both good as well as bad. It has been seen that virtual learning has made the academic career of students significantly better while for some of the students, it has turned out to be disastrous. The virtual learning environment has grown to popularity after the breakout of the covid-19 pandemic when schools and colleges had shut down for a temporary period. There is a discussion on the

various positive and negative impacts of the virtual learning environment on the learning and academic experience of students.

POSITIVE IMPACT OF VLE

Following are the positive impacts of a virtual learning environment:

- Increase in inclusivity: Many students have an introverted nature and find it difficult to gel or cope up with their peers. For such students, the VLE serves as a comfortable platform where they can learn and acquire knowledge about their syllabus. Those students can participate better and easily in virtual classes. As a result, they remain free from the anxiety of having to ask a question amidst a large number of students in case of any doubt.
- Improvements in accessibility: Any student can have access to a virtual learning environment provided they have a working electronic device like a phone or computer and a stable internet connection. Students can even attend classes when they are in mobility.
- Building of relationship: According to Domingo and Bradley (2018), from past research, it has been found that the sector of higher education has produced different varieties of reactions to the usage of virtual learning environments. Through the advent of the concept of virtual learning, students are learning to build relationships with other students quite easily. Moreover, the terms of the relationship between students and teachers are also improving due to the VLE. Students can very easily interact with their teachers on the learning platform through chats and messages and get their doubts cleared.
- Cost-effective model of learning: It is undoubtedly true that education these days are costly. However, the virtual learning mode can be cost-effective in several ways. Students are not having to commute to the campus and hence costs of transportation get saved. Moreover, costs of educational resources and tuition costs can also be saved. Resources are provided in the form of soft copy in the case of virtual learning. Hence, cost-cutting is a huge advantage in the case of virtual learning.
- Opportunities of career advancement: The engagement of students are found to come out differently when learning is shifted to an online environment in contrast to brick and mortar means of learning (Any new virtual initiative gives rise to technical issues but these can be easily handled where the users become used to the interface and the

platform (Boulton, Kent and Williams, 2018). Unlike the setting of traditional classroom learning, there are a lot of career advancement opportunities with VLE. This is because students can collaborate with international academic institutions. Students also get to set their schedule and hence they are better prepared to pursue the credentials of their academics.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF VLE

Any new virtual initiative gives rise to technical issues but these can be easily handled where the users become used to the interface and the platform (Almarzooq, Lopes and Kochar, 2020). There are several negative impacts of virtual learning environments that are seen to hamper the student academic life as well as demotivate them. Following are some of the disadvantages of the VLE:

- There is a limitation of feedback from teachers: In traditional classroom learning, teachers give immediate feedback to students face-to-face. Personalised feedback has some extent of a positive impact on the students by making the process of learning very easy. However, students somehow struggle with e-learning as they often do not get teacher feedback properly. This is the reason why providers of online education tend to look for alternative methods of obtaining feedback from teachers.
- Social Isolation: As a result of the outbreak of the pandemic of Covid-19, students who used to love going to schools and colleges are found to undergo contemplation. It is very important to how learners process their learning in a VLE and hence their emotional responses need to be considered (Makransky and Lilleholt, 2018). They also suffer from remoteness and are eventually isolated socially due to the absence of interaction with peers. Along with lack of communication, social isolation is found to result in mental disbalances among students such as increased levels of stress, anxiety and depression.
- Requirement of self-motivation and skills of time management: There is a lack of proper motivation. In an online setting, there is barely any motivational factor that pushes students to perform properly. Students often are not able to abide by the time given for classes and submit tasks on deadlines. Hence it becomes very difficult to carry out such classes.
- Lack of structure: Indeed, students do not always enjoy going to school and waking up early. However, the structure of a traditional classroom is always beneficial for students

and the concept of VLE lacks a proper structure. Attending online classes requires significant dedication and discipline which is not always possible in virtual learning.

CONCLUSION

It can thus be concluded that a virtual learning environment has grown quite popular these days among students who have almost coped with the platform. The report deduced the answers of various teachers and students which were collected through the open-ended questions asked in the questionnaire. It was found that students quite prefer education through online mode and teachers are conducting classes in their flexible timings. This often becomes problematic for parents and students because of the uncertainty. The report has also discussed the various positive and negative impacts of VLE and how it affects the health and academic career of students. Hence, it can be said that the VLE is both a boon as well as a curse for students, teachers and parents.

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