

BMSW4003

Digital Skills and Research Methods

The impact of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle on students' learning experience at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus.

Assessment 2

Individual Report

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Rationale	4
Research objectives.....	4
Literature Review	4
Research methodology	5
Data Analysis	6
Conclusion	9
References.....	10
Appendices	15
Survey questionnaire	15

Introduction

Virtual learning environment (VLE) is an online-based software used by educational institutions globally to enhance the learning experiences of the learners for enhanced outcomes (Herrera, 2017). This research paper will focus on how the experiences of the learners at the University of Wales Trinity have been impacted by the use of one of the VLE platforms – Moodle. The paper will explain various aspects of the research. How the research will be conducted, what will be the hypothesis of the research, how the data will be collected and analysed, how the conclusion will be drawn what are the tools and techniques will be used while conducting the research and various other issues will be discussed in this paper. The paper will conclude and provide the University authority with some recommendations which they can follow for better education and learning experience.

Rationale

Virtual learning environment (VLE) is primarily used to enhance the learning experiences of the students at different educational institutions (Phungsuk, 2017). Moodle VLE platform is used in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus to conduct their academic and learning activities online. The efficiency and effectiveness of the platform should be analysed and measured. This research has been conducted to identify the satisfaction level of the students in their experience of learning through the platform. The University might consider the recommendations provided by this research project which has been conducted to explore the students' learning experience on this virtual learning platform.

Research objectives

The objectives of the research project are primarily to identify the impact of the use of Moodle as a virtual learning platform on the learning experiences of the learners at the University of Wales Trinity. The other important and secondary objectives of the research project are:

- To analyse the impact of the use of Moodle as a virtual learning environment on the learning environment of the university
- To get to know whether the students of the university are aware of the use of various functions and features of virtual learning environment
- To identify whether the students are satisfied using the VLE
- To provide some recommendations to the university for consideration to improve the learning experiences of the students
- To examine whether some of the components of virtual learning platforms are having proper balance.

Literature Review

Virtual learning environment (VLE) is a technology in education that uses various internet platforms for conducting educational operations related to the contents and learning experiences in educational institutions (Thamarana, 2016). VLEs are online-based software designed to facilitate internet-based learning. All of the platforms of VLE have the focus to enhance the learning experiences of the students at different stages of learning. VLEs are getting increasingly popular in different parts of the globe enhancing learning and teaching experiences (Keppell, 2021). It has been predicted that online courses offered by the

universities will be increased drastically. More than 95% of the universities in the United Kingdom are using at least one virtual learning environment platform (Alves, 2017).

Moodle as a platform of virtual learning environment was launched in 2002. Since then, it has been continuously and actively developed to enhance the learning experiences of the learners (Rashid, 2021). The platform has tried to be more and more interactive and collaborative with the learners. The objective was to provide both the learners and the instructors with user-friendly user experiences to ensure smooth learning experiences. Creation of learning resources, their storage and access to those contents and ensuring easy use of those contents have been some of the primary objectives of this platform (Rashid, 2021).

Virtual learning platforms have also played roles in planning and mapping the academic curriculum in different educational institutions, especially in higher educational institutions. Customisation of the learning experiences has been in VLE platforms by ensuring assessment of the learners and extensive planning of the contents and curriculum (Annetta, 2021). By keeping track of the learning progress of the students and motivating them to achieve the targets and objectives have been enhanced by ensuring effective administration and engagement of the students.

However, there have been some controversies over the use of those platforms. Coordination of collaboration and communication is not always as smooth as expected. Many languages are facing challenges in contact in their group activities while collaborative and physical presence in a particular place would have been more effective. During the covid-19 pandemic, many of the students had to go through stress in holding their concentration in online classes and engagement in the virtual learning environment. Some students are facing difficulties in interesting the core concepts of various quantitative and mathematical courses online (Rashid, 2021). Some of the students are not that technically sound enough to use all of the functions and features of those advanced platforms (Huang, 2019). In this way, some of the learners are lagging behind their peer groups.

Research methodology

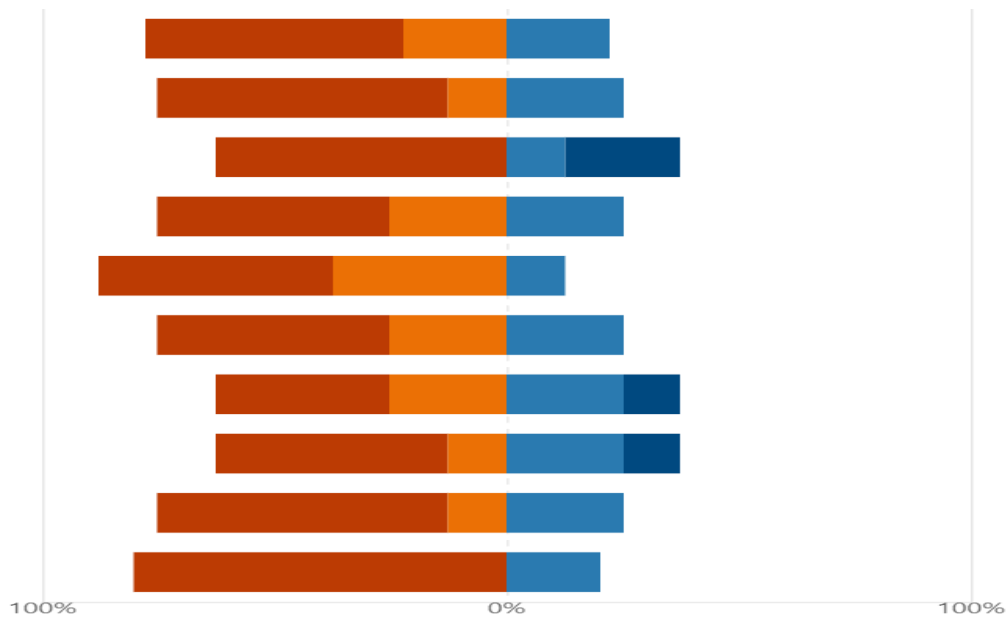
How the research will be conducted has been discussed in this section of this project paper using the research onion model. The research will be conducted by following **positivism philosophy** as research where it has been assumed that the knowledge is objective in measuring the experiences of the learners. **A deductive approach** will be followed in conducting the research where the researchers will start with a hypothesis and will collect data to determine the validity of the hypothesis. The research will hypothesise that the virtual

learning platform has a strong impact on the learning experiences of the students at the University of Wales Trinity. **A survey strategy** will be followed while researching a tool to collect primary data. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be collected while conducting the research. With supporting **secondary** sources of data, the **primary** data will be analysed and interpreted to conclude. The sampling method will be used while conducting the survey. A stratified random sampling technique will be used while sampling the population. The sample size will be 20. The data will be analysed using different data visualisation tools and techniques. Microsoft Excel will be used to conduct the graphical presentation of the information collected using the survey. Office forms have been used to conduct the survey online. References have been provided of the secondary sources that have been used while conducting this research.

While collecting data, the participants to the survey should be ensured that their participation will be kept anonymous and confidential. The specific purpose of the data collection should be shared with those participants. How the researchers will ensure confidentiality have to be shared with those participants. The opinions of those participants should be respected so that the sentiments of those participants are not hurt in any means.

Data Analysis

The primary source of information in this research was the survey questionnaire designed to collect online responses from the students of the University of Wales Trinity. The following responses have been received from the participants of the survey questionnaire research. Each of the responses has been analysed to understand the learning experiences which have been impacted by the virtual learning environment platform - Moodle.



agree

Strongly agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

During pandemic, the entire learner support infrastructure at my institution had to pivot from mostly face-to face to completely digital

In my perspective online learning requires students to get online in the first place which is not possible for many families due to internet access.

How difficult or easy is it to use the distance learning technology computer, tablet, video call, learning was.

the library was head to use.

The university website sometime is head to used.

Learning online I believe that helped, me to learning more about technology.

Sometimes can be hard to communicate with teachers.

As an online student. I am satisfied with the instructors' abilities to communicate ideas and concepts clearly in online classes.

My online instructors present clear concise instructions for assignments and project

Around (5%) of the students have agreed that the University has completely shifted from face to face learning environments to online-based learning environments during the pandemic. It indicates that the University has focused more on online education to continue the education and learning process image the global pandemic.

The University has provided the students with necessary learning and education resources on time as more than 95% of the students have agreed on such ground. None of the students provided an opinion that the university rarely or never provides educational resources to its students.

Almost 70% of the students of the university was satisfied with the virtual learning platform Moodle. 20% of the students and neutral regarding their learning experience through the platform. 10% of students are either disappointed or very disappointed regarding the learning experience through the platform. Those students are the students who are not enough technologically sound. The authority of the university should take proper care of those students so that equality and inclusion can be ensured in online education.

Only 25% of the students have strongly agreed that the virtual learning environment helped them learn more about educational technology. 30% of restaurants have agreed on the ground and 30% of the students are natural about the opinion. 15% of the students have either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the platform has provided them with the opportunity to learn about more educational technologies.

Before initiating a virtual learning environment on the campus, the University has not provided enough training facilities to the students. Around 30% of the students have agreed that they were not provided with enough training facilities. 30% of the students are neutral and 40% of the students have disagreed that they were provided with enough training opportunities. Therefore the authority of the university should provide attention on the ground.

However, almost of the students are satisfied with their learning experiences online. 20% of them are neutral and 20% of them are disappointed about the learning experience on the platform. One of the reasons behind the disappointment was that they were not used to the technology in mathematical and quantitative courses and group discussions and group works.

Most of the students (have suggested that collaboration and communication of the virtual learning environment should be the major area for development considerations. 20% of the

students have focused that administration and engagement of learners should be provided with consideration for development. Curriculum strategy & planning and content development & management should be given the least focus while considering the development of the learning platform.

Conclusion

The research has provided the readers with some conclusions. The learners are quite satisfied with the learning experiences through the virtual learning environment platform. Resource sharing and user-friendliness of the platform have been recognised by the learners. However, the training and development should be focused on by the University authority. Collaboration and communication should be given the most specific focus while considering the development of the platform. The global pandemic has made the relevance and significance of the virtual learning environment more prevalent than ever. The effectiveness of the learning experiences of the students should be given the most priority while designing and managing any virtual learning environment platform.

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