

Title

**Research on the impact of virtual learning environment on learning
experience of students from university of wales Trinity Saint David
London Campus.**

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Rationale of the research:

In this modern age, through digitization, several processes and aspects of our lives are being automated. Education has also been digitized through ventures like virtual learning environment. In this system, all the lectures, presentations, relevant literature etc. are uploaded online which can be access by the students. As a result, they can access the information at their convenience. But the impacts of Virtual learning experience may vary on learning experiences on individuals. It is necessary to understand the impact as it would provide insight on the shortcomings and the advantages of the process which would permit greater degree of knowledge for further modification.

Research aims and objectives:

The aim of the research is to identify the impacts of virtual learning experience (moodle), on the learning experience of students of University of Wales.

Base on this aim, some objectives can be formulated. These are:

- i) To determine the advantages of virtual learning environment.
- ii) To determine the shortcomings of VLE
- iii) To determine the resources requirements for VLE
- iv) To assess the effectiveness of VLE in terms of facilitating learning experience.

Literature review:

A study under the University of MInho in Portugal suggests that that universities where VLE is accessed more, the passing rate is higher. It was also found that the university whose students. But it was also found that, the mean course marks are not manipulated by VLE access. This suggests that, the students who get access to VLE, tend to pass more in the taken courses. And the lack of access to such an environment increases the number of failures. The research suggested that, most student can get the main aspects of the lesson and are not really subjected to the actual environment of the class (Alves et al., 2017). This attributes to the marking disparities. Moreover, the students who are irregular in class, if they don't get access to VLE, their success rate decreases significantly because they acquire secondary information form students which might reflect an interpreted version of the actual aspects discussed in class.

Another study done with the collaboration of three British Universities, suggested that lecture notes, announcements and other tools were most influential on the perception of the students regarding VLE. The research found that, in most cases, the students work in part time employments. For this they are not able to attend classes all the time. and the ones who don't work but miss classes, most of the cases are caused due to involuntary causes like disabilities, responsibilities, sickness. Most of the students felt like VLE can be used to catch up to the contents of the class but is not enough to replace the physical class itself as it lacks the element of interaction. But a significant number of students were reluctant to participate in the interaction of the class (Wells et al., 2005). This was because, there was no accountability for this interaction. In other words, no marks were associated with the attendance and the students were not compelled to attend class unless the lesson was of interest to them. As a result, majority of the hits on VLE by students were due to lecture notes. Significant issues regarding accessing the VLE sites were observed. The issues revolved internet and computer literacy and lack of mechanisms for staying connected at all times. But the students were very satisfied with the facilities provided by VLE and had a strong inclination towards the incorporation of VLE in all courses. The students were not interested in engaging in two-way activities in on-line platforms. this inhibited the ability of the educators to maximize the contribution of VLE.

Barker & Gossman (2013) suggested that most students thought VLE's such as Moodle to have a positive impact on their own effectiveness as students in class performance. Students also agreed that VLE had effect on the quality of learning as well as the volume of the contents they get access to and learn. The most intriguing factor for using Moodle, was the ability of students to access the site at their convenience. Moreover, the setup was thought to be quite intriguing. Individuals could access Moodle and the resources at any time from multiple platforms. students could also use Moodle with their phones which made the process much more convenient. The researcher also suggested that the motivation to learn was increased for both directed and non-directed use of moodle. This suggests that students always have a tendency to learn given that they have adequate exposure to relevant resources. Even if the students have to submit reports and do class related activity utilizing those resources, the motivation to learn increases.

A study conducted under Pearson FE college suggested that there are several benefits of using VLE (Pearsonschoolsandfecolleges, 2019). First of all, it opens up several forums for

communication where people can engage in debates and clear their confusions regarding lessons and courses. Moreover, students can gain instant feedback on their work. Students can also produce and submit their work online. Not only does this allow the students to submit their work at convenient times, but also it removes the obligation of physically handing in the assignments to their teachers. VLE also serves as a resource hub here both students and teachers can store and share their resources with each other. VLE's can also be modified for each class which opens up the opportunity of intriguing a significant number of students (Land & Bayne, 2011). The lessons can also use popular contents on the internet, embedded with other relevant material for learning so that the students can get an exhaustive experience. VLE also serves as a hub for sharing podcasts (Russell, 2010).

Research methodology:

Research approach:

The research has undertaken an inductive approach rather than a deductive approach to interpretation and analysis. This will help to observe the collected data and provide a generalized perspective to the issue under study. It will also shed light upon the dynamic factors that are involved.

Research method:

This is a qualitative research which incorporates quantitative data to provide increased validity to the drawn inferences. The qualitative method is utilized so that exhaustive description and analysis can be provided from different perspectives for the issue under concern.

Sources of information:

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this research. The primary data have been collected from the students and the secondary data has been collected from existing literature like documents, articles, research papers etc. The secondary data provides the premise and direction to work towards. The primary data portray the real scenario based on which the final inference will be drawn. Both of these sources add validity to the data collected as each of them validates the other in terms of accuracy and applicability.

Research strategy:

The research has adopted a survey strategy to collect the required information. The survey will be conducted through a questionnaire which will be distributed to the students for their feedback. The students would have to open ended questions which would also provide significant amount of numeric data to add to the analysis.

Sampling:

The theoretical population for the study is about 10, 000 individuals as it represents the total number of students of University of Wales. Among these 50 individuals will be chosen as respondents. These 50 students will be selected through a stratified random sampling process. This is to ensure that 25 male and 25 female students are ensured in the sample. This will not only provide a more generalized information but will also help to determine if gender has any effect on the relationship between VLE and learning experience.

Data collection and analysis:

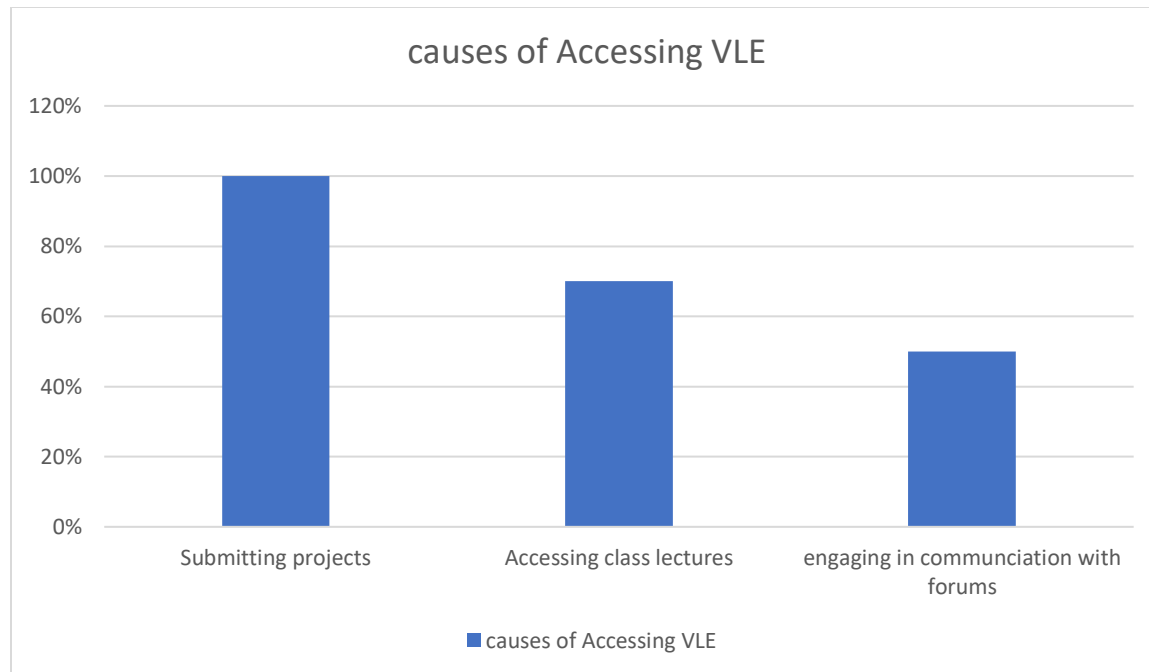
The data will be collected through a questionnaire and rigorous study of existing literature. The analysis will be done using Microsoft excel and perspective of the researcher. SPSS will also be used to present the quantitative data in tables and figures.

Ethical issues:

The questionnaire has been prepared ethically devoid of any leading or double-barreled questions. The respondents will also be asked for permission prior to initiating the data collection process. Proper citation has been provided for the authors and publishers whose work has been used in the final report.

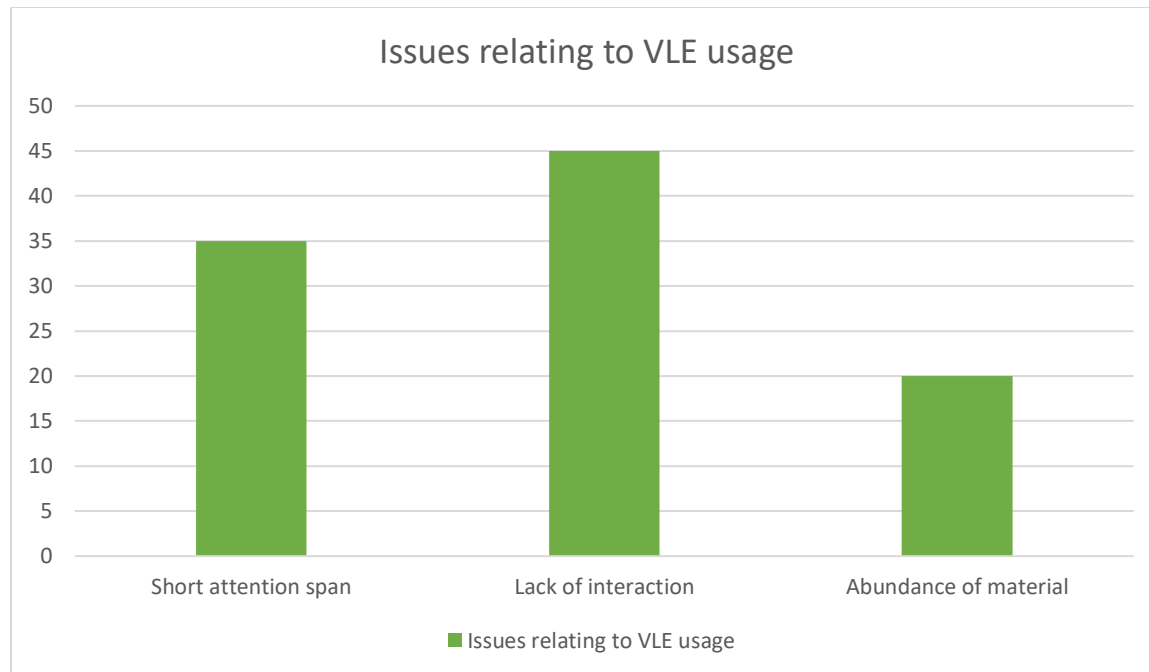
Primary and secondary data Analysis and discussion:

The research found that most students of University of Wales, accessed Moodle for mainly submitting assignments, accessing class lectures and communicating with different forums for clearing up conceptions on respective topics.



It is evident that most students are not able to attend classes physically. Even if they do attend these classes, most of them are not able to understand the lesson completely. As a result, majority of the students needs to go over the lectures over and over again through Moodle. All of the students submit reports through Moodle as it is an obligation by the university authority (Bates-Brkljac, 2012). A significant number of students also opt for engaging in community forums for talking about different study related issues. This does not only provide various perspectives on different lessons but also produces a rapport for individuals.

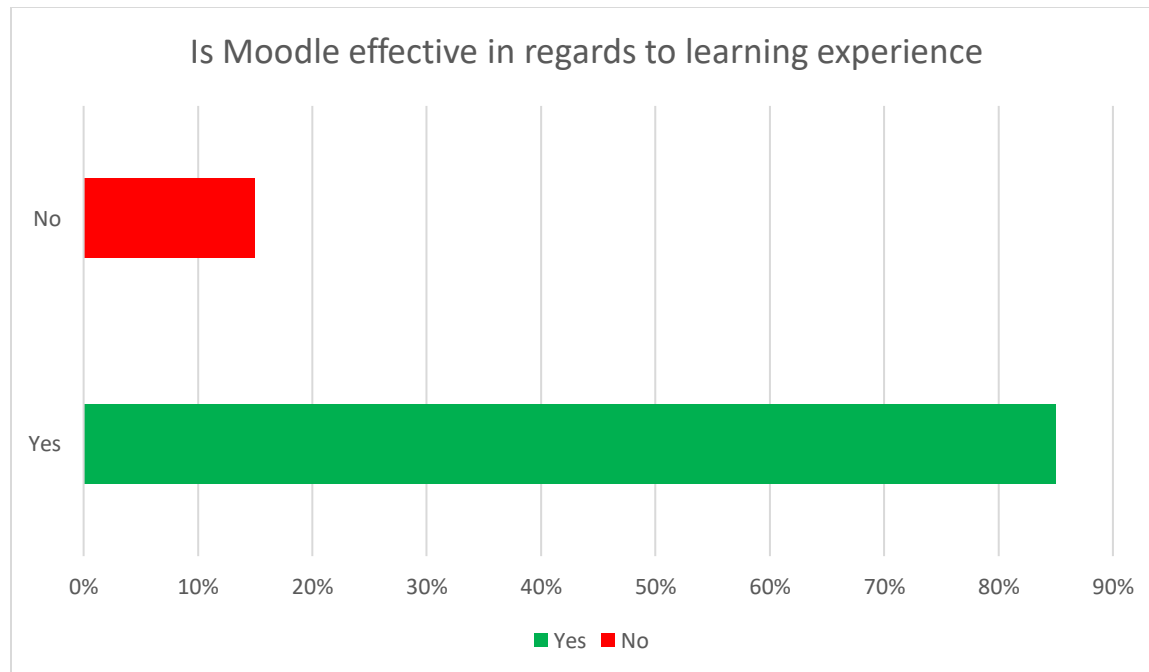
Some significant issues have also been identified associated with the usage of VLE. These are discussed as follows.



35% of the students reported that they are not able to focus on the lectures more than 20 minutes at a stretch when they are accessing them via Moodle. They attribute such behavior with the lack of accountability. Majority of the students complained that Moodle does not provide opportunity for interaction which can often keep conceptions unclear. The questions that arise while going through the material cannot be answered at that exact moment. This disrupts the flow of learning. Thirdly, one of the major issues was abundance of material. There were significant number of materials for each course available at Moodle. Such an abundance, often confuses the students (Haletky, 2009).

In most cases, the students accessed Moodle through their laptop or handheld smart device. The university provided free Wi-Fi, which could be utilized by the student to access the sites. Most of the students access Moodle with university wi-fi (Prensky, 2007). So, they had the means available to them which facilitate the process of engaging with the VLE.

Majority of the students reported that VLE has enhanced their learning experience. Only a handful of students reported that Moodle didn't have a significant effect on their learning experience.



It is evident that VLE has positive impact on learning. Moreover, the effectiveness of Moodle in regards to facilitating learning experience is independent of gender. Moreover, the students who have a 100% pass rate consists of about 95% of the users who access Moodle on a daily basis (Watanabe et al., 2012).

Conclusion and recommendation:

The research has identified the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning environment and has also determined the degree of effectiveness in regards to learning experience. the research has found that there are significant advantages in regards to accessing materials and engaging in conversations with forums. And as the means of accessing the VLE are quite convenient, non one is deprived of the service. Lastly it was found that significant majority of the students found Moodle to be effective in enhancing their learning experience.

The shortcomings can be minimized by appointing relevant teachers to actively provide solutions in real time. moreover, upon mass request, detailed explanation on respective topics should be provided. Finally, to maintain focus, various interactive methods should be developed.

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Appendix:

Questionnaire:

Gender

- ✓a) Female
- b) Male

2) i am aged

- ✓a) 10 - 19
- b) 20 - 29
- c) 30 - 39
- d) 40 - 49
- e) 50+

3) How do you find moodle in facilities terms?

- ✓a) Easy
- b) Normal
- c) Dificult

4) in the moodle graphic environment(system interface, icon buttons, screen, navigation structure) you find:

- a) Clear
- ✓b) Regular
- c) Unclear

5) Do you learn new aspects in moodle that you considere to be a real value?

- a) Yes

✓b) Doubtful

c) Not

6) How often do you use moodle a week ?

a) 1 hour

✓b) More than 1 hour

7)What is your level of technological stress when you using the platform?

✓a) Nothing

b) Little

c) Much

8) Which of theses advantages is for you more important . List them 1 to 5

a) Report submissions

b) Class lectures

c) Notices and announcements

d) Real time assessment

e) Forums

9) What do you use Moodle for in most cases?

10) What is the main that you face while using Moodle?

11) How do you access Moodle?

12) What are the resources required for accessing Moodle?

13) Do you have access to all the resources?

14) Do you think Moodle is effective in enhancing your learning experience?

