

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Digital Skills and Research Methods (Research Report Task 2)

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Student Name: Doha Laghlami

Student ID: 2113998

Lecture: Amitave Banik

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Introduction

Covid-19 has become a very big factor regarding health issues and has a major impact on the education sector. Information technology takes a big part in contributing to virtual learning. As seen due to a large pandemic, schools and universities were closed due to lockdown. Classes were done online, this virtual learning played a very vital role during this covid period. A virtual learning environment is mainly a web-based program for the digital aspect of studying and learning usually done within an institution. It is mainly sharing different resources courses and providing different types of assessments.

Virtual learning is mainly made for an educational experience. The most recent technological breakthroughs offer tremendous prospects through the use of virtual learning environments that facilitate simulations and observations of diverse studies (Bogusevski, Muntean and Muntean, 2020). In the virtual learning environment, students can access all information and resources online and also helps students to interact in ways students cannot do in the physical classroom. It is seen that virtual learning helps in increasing the retention of sources and takes less time to share information and also allows students to freely interact with teachers regarding any problems while going through the information.

The purpose of this research report is to see the impact of virtual learning on students and how they are responding while adapting to the virtual learning environment.

Analysis and Discussion

Impact of the virtual learning environment (VLE) process

Positive impact

The preferred learning environment

During the survey, it is seen that out of 100 per cent, 60 per cent of students mainly preferred the online form of classes. The students are preferring online classes over offline because they have been able to attend every single class of the professor and now can get all the information without missing out. The students stated that it has helped them in connecting with everyone including professors.

According to Hamutoglu, Gemikonakli, Duman, Kirksekiz and Kiyici (2020), it stated that virtual learning is also beneficial for the students as it helps them to learn courses online and is easy to access the different courses the students are finding. Due to the pandemic, many students are now more comfortable with the online classes they are now able to communicate and interact with teachers more easily. The online classes have helped the student to be more attentive and present in the classes. The students are now able to be more active and able to meet the deadline of assignments than in offline classes.

A virtual learning environment has been effective in learning and saving time

During the survey, many students reacted positively. Out of 100 per cent, 66.7 per cent of students have stated virtual learning has been very effective. During the physical classroom, it was not possible to attend class unwell. Virtual learning has helped as students can not always be present in classes and can attend every lecture by professors. 60 per cent of the students reacted by stating that due to this pandemic, it has become difficult because they cannot meet without professors and complete the syllabus but due to the virtual learning students can stay connected with professors.

According to Huang, Backman, Backman, McGuire and Moore (2019), the development of virtual learning is seen to be very effective among students. It has been seen that the virtual learning environment has helped in developing different opportunities for the students. With the advancement and assessment of computer technology, virtual environments offer chances to deliver an experiential experience to enhance traditional classroom lectures and create new online learning in the school curriculum and professional training. Knowledge of virtual reality technology and personal contact requires an understanding of psychological demands and hedonic experience. The students are more active and attend the virtual learning as it has helped in developing new skills and techniques for further purposes.

A virtual learning environment helps in skill development

During the survey, many students gave positive answers. Out of 100 per cent, 80 per cent of students have responded that virtual learning environments have helped them develop new skills. It has helped the student in many skills like communication skills as Online students work hard to successfully connect digitally, trade information in unusual ways, tune in and read cautiously, and respond plainly and compactly without the up close and personal opportunity that works out easily in on-ground addresses. There are other skills students learn as time management during the

online assessment submission it helps them to become punctual and submit their assessment on time and meet the deadline.

According to Khlaisang and Songkram (2019), it is stated that the development of an effective virtual learning environment system helps in increasing its effectiveness and which is helping in the development of skills and help the student to enhance the range of twenty-first-century skills which are needed by the students. The researchers have seen that virtual learning has a very big impact on students and helps them to learn new skills. Virtual learning has come up with new types of skills in the new century which are mainly needed for the students in adapting for future purposes.

Virtual learning courses create a different learning opportunity

During the survey, many students reacted positively. Out of 100 per cent, 73.3 per cent of students have responded that the virtual learning courses can be seen as a learning opportunity. Among the positive respondents, some students stated that the Moodle app is mainly used for learning whenever it is needed. It is easy to get access to the app as it provides contests and is easy to access different courses provided by the app. It also helps in creating a learning opportunity for them as it provides all types of information needed for their study purposes. This has helped in creating many different opportunities for students regarding job purposes.

According to Dung (2020), Virtual schooling permits establishments to contact understudies who need to go to classes in good ways. Accordingly, it helps the college in expanding understudy enlistment. Virtual courses additionally permit the college to show countless understudies through internet-based talks and video conferencing. In certain conditions, it could help to limit work costs as well as movement financial plans for representative portability. Because Moodle allows the exchange of information through a variety of tasks that can be monitored, including forums and chat rooms. Moodle is a very easy way to get access to information.

Negative impact

A Virtual Learning Environment can cause social Isolation

In the primary study, open-ended questions for students were asked online to determine the influence of the virtual learning environment, and many feedbacks or responses indicated

negative outcomes. 60 per cent of students believed that online learning causes a sense of isolation. Some children stated that learning at school helps them communicate and interact with instructors and other pupils. However, the virtual learning environment has a negative influence on students and teachers, as evidenced by the details of its actual use (Northenor, 2020). They said that learning gets easier, whereas online contact is limited. Social isolation mixed with a lack of communication usually results in several emotional wellness difficulties such as increased stress, anxiousness, and gloomy thoughts. The E-Learning strategies that are currently being used in education will often cause participating students to experience consideration, distance, and a lack of connection. As a result of the lack of human contact in their life, a great number of understudies and educators who unavoidably spend a significant amount of their time online may begin to experience signs of social confinement.

According to Nambiar (2020), the majority of the understudies referenced issues commonly looked at by them while taking classes online, which were specialised issues like unfortunate availability, power cuts, broadband issue, and unfortunate sound and video quality as the primary issue in the secondary research. Educators also identified a lack of student inclusion and dedication in the classroom as a problem (Sam Thompson, 2021). They declared that understudies in online classes invented several causes and showed a lack of realism. As a result, instructors will generally feel demotivated. They discovered that understudies taking web classes made several excuses and had a lack of sincerity.

Virtual Learning Environment lacks motivation and time management skills for students

In the primary research, when asked an open-ended question on motivation in virtual learning, several students expressed their experiences of not enjoying the virtual class. Students reported that they were able to study more in offline classes, even though they were not on the toppers list, because of the strictness of the teacher in the class and the constant fear of being asked. Web-based learning has grown in popularity because of its ability to provide more customizable access to knowledge and advice anytime and from wherever (Caprara and Caprara, 2021). In online circumstances, however, they are usually muted and toppers are always replying. Because the online class time is restricted, everything is taught again and over again to finish the curriculum. To this, 60% agreed and stated that it impacts their motivation as well as their ability to manage their time to finish the assigned task.

According to secondary research, virtual learning environments cause a lack of self-inspiration and time management abilities. Many students fail to complete online courses because they lack motivation from their peers. Several elements in traditional classrooms constantly drive students toward their learning objectives. Eye to eye communication with professors dispersed exercises, and strict timetables all work together to keep students on track during their investigations. According to Herrera Mosquera (2017), a key proportion of students, 77%, exhibited less interest in Virtual learning environments. However, in a virtual learning environment, there are fewer external pressures that encourage students to get along well. Generally, students are expected to battle for themselves during their learning activities, with no one constantly assisting them in achieving their learning objectives. Students enrolled in E-Learning courses will notice that they are frequently required to acquire difficult things in a comfortable home setting with little of the added strain normally associated with traditional colleges (Sam Thompson, 2021). As a result, maintaining consciousness of conventional cutoff hours amid online studies might be difficult for those students who require great self-inspiration and time management abilities.

Conclusion

To conclude, education is increasingly turning to computerised internet-based gadgets and tools to improve and update classroom instruction. Centring entails expanding the accessibility of opportunities for growth for students, gathering and disseminating educational content more cost-effectively, or empowering educators to deal with more understudies while maintaining learning result quality that is comparable to that of the similar eye to eye guidance. These repercussions comprise how innovation is not generally proficient, how it is more serious for understudies to accept concepts being taught, how web-based learning might produce social separation, and how understudies may fail to cultivate necessary relational abilities.

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Appendix

Survey Questions

Number of respondents=15

1. Age of the students

	Number of students	Percentage
18-28 Years	11	73.3
29 and above	4	26.7

2. What is their preferred learning environment?

	Number of students	Percentage
Online classes	10	66.7
Offline classes	5	33.3

3. How effective has the Virtual learning environment been?

	Number of students	Percentage
Very effective	10	66.7
Somewhat effective	4	26.7
Not effective	1	6.6

4. Does a Virtual learning environment help in skill development?

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	12	80
Neutral	1	6.6
No	2	13.4

5. Can a Virtual learning course be a learning opportunity?

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	11	73.3
No	4	26.7

6. Do you think online classes create Isolation from the students?

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	9	60
No	6	40

7. Do you think online classes demotivate you?

	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	9	60
No	6	40

