

The Impact of Virtual Learning Environment on the Learning Experience of the Students at University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus.

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Abstract

Virtual learning environments (VLEs) are web-based systems for delivering learning or instructional materials to students. These systems include communication, collaboration, tracking and assessment tools. They support students learning outside of the classroom, enabling schools to beat geographical barriers and conventional school-time constraint.

This article reports on an online survey into the use of VLE by students at University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus.

The survey looks into the impact of using the University's VLE (Moodle) on learning, which was based on twelve research questions which was summarily analyse: whether students find Moodle helpful in their learning; whether they have reservations and challenges about navigation Moodle and students like Moodle; whether they

understand how to get information from Moodle; and whether or not they have recommendations to make Moodle better.

Introduction

This report focuses on the impact of Virtual Learning Environment on the students at University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus. It presents student's views on the use of the VLE, an online system that allows teachers and trainers to share educational materials and communicate with learners via the web, usually with built in tools to create engaging learning content. A questionnaire was used to conduct the survey, and feedback is analysed. We will also, discuss the objectives of this research and the Methodology used. I discuss previous Literature Reviews by five powerful researchers. The essay will conclude by analysing the survey reports completed by students.

Rationale

To learn whether students at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus find the University's VLE (Moodle) effective in delivering education and are satisfied with its overall experience.

Research Objectives

- To present the findings of the survey on impact of VLE in the University
- To understand difference between primary and secondary data
- To get insight into previous Literature reviews on VLE
- To evaluate the results of the survey findings
- To arrive at a conclusion on whether or not Moodle have positive impact on learning and make recommendations.

Literature Review

The use of VLE in the UK can be traced back in the 1970s when UK Open University used computers for learning according to Blackboard, (2011). Upon the advent of commercial computer based VLE known as Blackboard in the year 2000 more schools

adopted VLE for educational purposes. The popular VLE today is Moodle, introduced in 2001 to help educators produce online courses with a focus on interaction and participation, creation of content and has become pervasive across many Western countries of the world.

In an article by Barker & Gossman, (2013) in a research that inspects the learning impact of VLE concluded that the use of VLE encourages autonomous learning with the unique advantage for students to learn at their own pace, place, and time, thereby affording flexibility for them to fit studies around busy lives.

As discussed by Lyndon & Beverley, (2014) who carried out a study that examined how the use of Moodle impacted on an individual module, using online forums as a substitute for learners to discuss issues relating to the viewing of DVDs during the sessions and enhance student learning. It was reported that students were very positive about the usefulness of online forums, suggesting multiple perceived benefits with regards to the flexibility of use, increased sense of community and enhanced learning skills. The research also revealed that online forums create interest, commitment, active participation and that in comparison of average student performance on the module improved significantly than the traditional classrooms.

According to Stockwell & Hubbard, (2013, p. 2) proposed that, although evidence abounds on the potential positive impact of Mobile-learning devices may have on education, there are physical, pedagogical, and psycho-social issues involved in successful implementation of Mobile-assisted language learning.

It was observed by Herrera (2017) that students displayed interest in technological resources and activities due to perhaps the interactivity and availability of learning tasks while using VLE. It was reported also that students opined that VLE activities promote the development of autonomous learning as well as effective teacher-student communication.

Research Methodology

This study was carried out using combined research, qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative Research according to Creswell (2009) is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Qualitative data refers to non-numeric information such as interview transcripts, notes, video and audio recordings, images, and text documents.

According to Muijs, (2010) Quantitative research focuses on objective measurement and statistical analysis of data collected through public opinion surveys, questionnaire surveys and surveys. Hence, it focuses on numerically constant data and detailed convergent reasoning instead of divergent reasoning.

Combined Research Method advances the systematic integration of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. (Wisdom et al, 2013).

A questionnaire was used to conduct the survey on the impact of VLE on students at UWTSD London Campus. The data for this survey can be grouped into two: primary data and secondary data.

The primary data was gathered from an e-questionnaire distributed to course mates at the university via emails and social media platforms and were collected via the same channel after they were filled. This first-hand information was analysed with Excel. A total of ten research questions were asked and were organised and grouped into two parts: closed-ended and open-ended questions. Questions 1-7 are closed-ended questions with a minimum of two choices while questions 8-10 are essay questions. An average of thirteen respondents was targeted for this survey.

Survey completion was taken as informed consent for data to be used in the study. The survey was open for completion for two weeks and the group tutors were to encourage completion to ensure a sufficiently large sample was obtained.

The Secondary data was gathered from findings from a previous survey carried out on the impact of VLE Moodle in UWTSD London Campus. The survey used the questionnaire in primary data but excluding questions 7-10.

Results/Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Primary Data

In an article of Form plus (2020) primary data collection are collected by the researchers from the main sources through interviews, questionnaires, and surveys.

The survey reveals that 75% of respondents like VLE at UWTS; 83% understand how to get information from Moodle; 83% find the web-based learning platform useful; 58% spend 5-15hrs on Moodle weekly; 42% say it is easy to get materials on Moodle; 50% are satisfied using Moodle as VLE and 58% are likely to recommend Moodle.

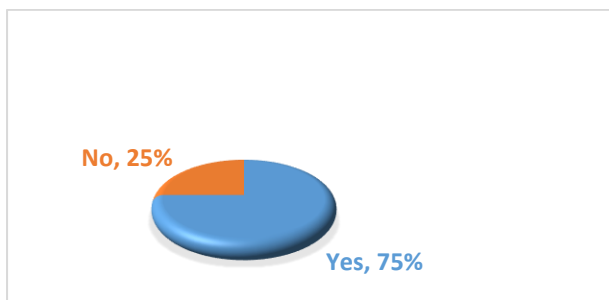


Figure 1: Do you like VLE at UWTS?

25% of students at UTWSD dislike Moodle. Responses from question eight of this research paper revealed factors such as technical challenges are responsible for this outcome. In line with student's level of fondness with Moodle, 17% of respondent do not understand how to get materials from the VLE platform.

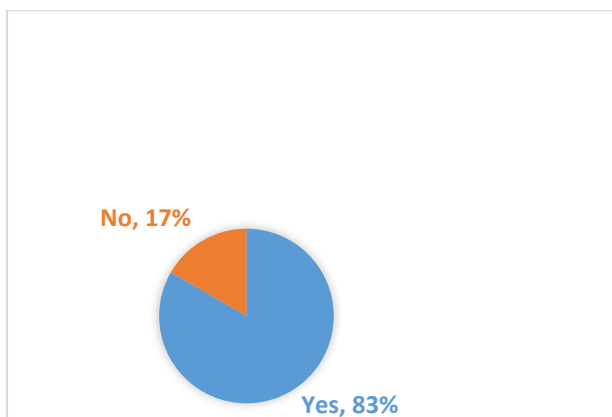


Figure 2: Do you understand how to get information from Moodle?

Once it proceeds to whether or not students grasp how to get information on Moodle to help them learn at their convenient time, a large percentage of respondents, 83% responded with a yes, while 17% said no.

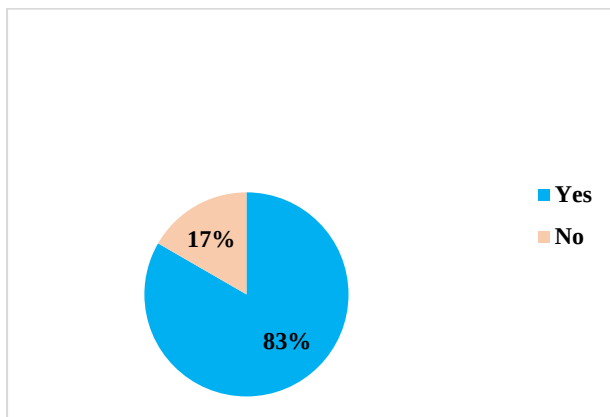


Figure 3: Does Moodle Help You Learn at Your Convenient Time?

When it comes to whether or not students think Moodle help them learn at their convenient time, a similar trend was observed with the first two questions above; a large percentage of respondents, 83% responded with a yes, while 17% said no.

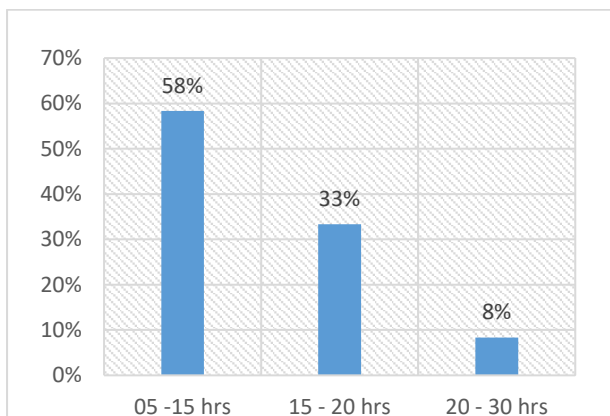


Figure 4: How Many Hours Do You Spend on Moodle Weekly?

58% Students spend an average of 05-15 hours on Moodle weekly. Some 33% spend up to 20 hours and 8% spend up to 30 hours on the platform per week.

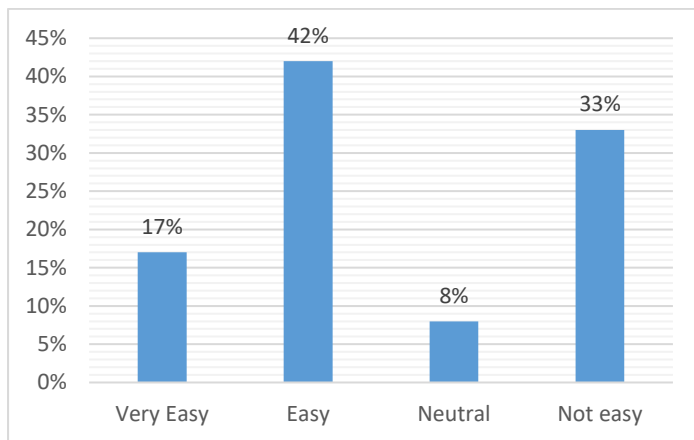


Figure 5: How Easy Is It Getting Material from Moodle?

Although significant percentage of students say they understand how to get materials from Moodle, most of them do not find it easy to do so. 42% says it is easy, 33% says it is not. Both percentages are below average. While 17% find Moodle very easy, 8% are neutral about the subject.

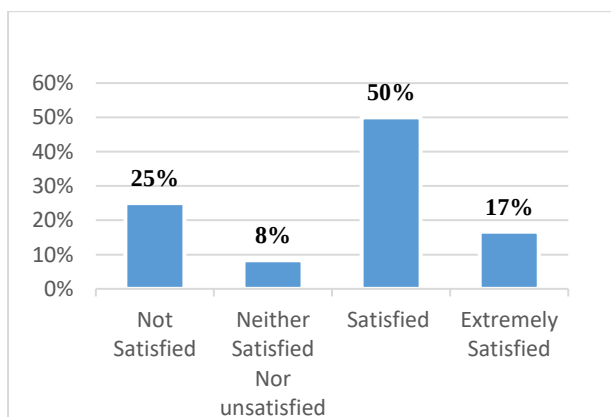


Figure 6: How satisfied are students at London Campus using Moodle VLE?

50% of respondents are satisfied with using Moodle and 17 per cent are extremely satisfied. Yet, a staggering 25% per cent of them are not satisfied with the VLE platform.

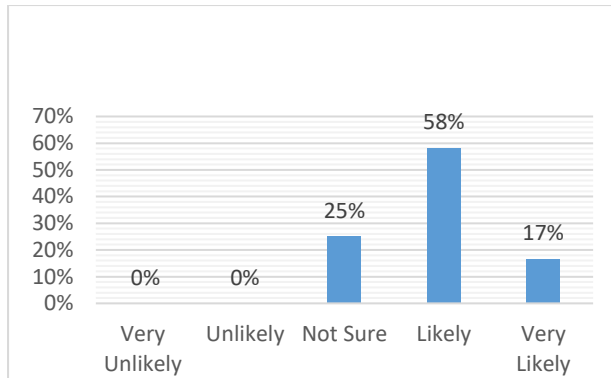


Figure 7: How likely would you recommend Moodle to your friends?

When it comes to how likely it is that students at UWTSD would recommend Moodle to their friend, 58% of respondents chose 'likely,' 17% of them chose very likely. While no respondent chose unlikely or very unlikely, 25% of them chose that they are not sure. This is particularly interesting because it shows that an average student at UWTSD is likely to be ambivalent about their overall experience with Moodle.

The trend in the survey response for questions 1-7 has seen significant percentage of respondent being somewhat negative or unsure about the questions. Survey response on questions 8-10 hint why this is so.

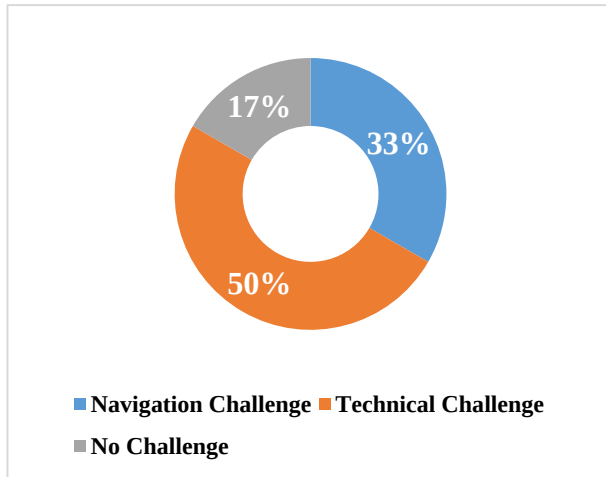


Figure 8: What Challenges Do you face using Moodle?

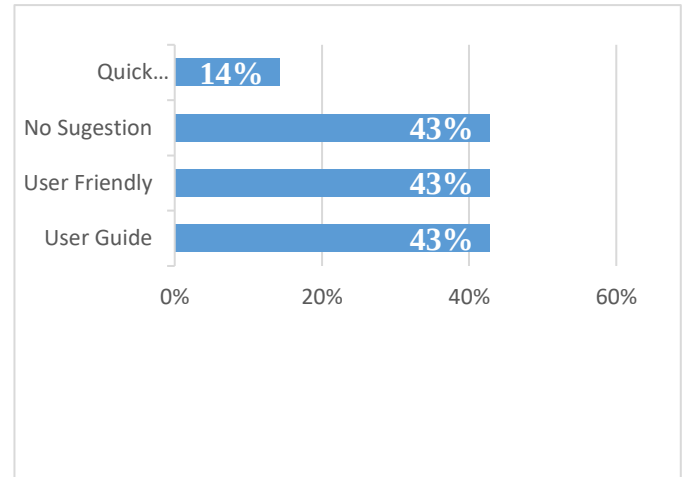


Figure 9: What would You Like to Change on Moodle

When asked about the challenges faced using Moodle, 50% of respondents claimed that they experience technical issues, although, 33% voted for navigation problems while 17% do not face any challenge using the VLE platform. 43% ticked for 'User Friendly' and 'User Guide', for areas they would like Moodle to improve on. The same percentage ticked no suggestion and 14% claimed they would like the platform to improve on response time.

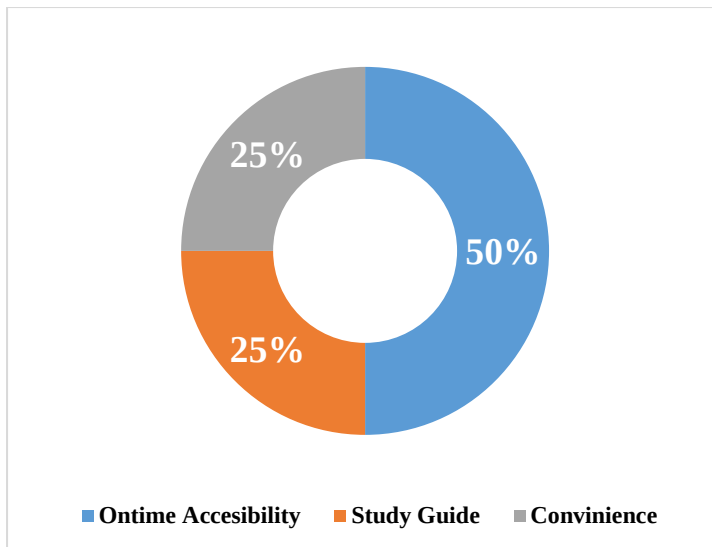


Figure 10: What Do You Like About Moodle?

The survey's last question asked respondent what they liked about Moodle. 50% like Accessibility, 25% like Study Guide and 25% like Convenience.

Secondary Data

The secondary data maintain a trend with the primary data. While the survey reveals that 80% like the VLE at UWTSD and 20% does not, the data only has 5% disparity with primary data.

90% of respondents understand how to get information on Moodle, however, in primary data only 83% know how to get information on Moodle.

Moodle helps 90% of the participants learn at their convenient time. Meanwhile, 83% of participant responded this way in primary data.

89% of respondents spend between 05-15 hours weekly on Moodle, 11% spend 12-20hrs, 0% spend 20-30hrs on Moodle per week. Meanwhile, primary data revealed that 58% of students spend 05-15 hours on Moodle per week.

33% of respondent find Moodle not easy to get materials from; interestingly, 33% find it easy to get materials from Moodle. 22% were neutral on the subject while 11% find it very easy. Comparing this with primary data, 42% find it easy to get materials from Moodle.

80% of students are satisfied using Moodle at UWTSD, 40% are not satisfied. Comparing this against primary data, only 50% are satisfied with using Moodle.

The secondary data reveals that 56% of the students are likely to recommend Moodle to their friends, 11% are very likely and 33% are not sure. In primary data, 58% are likely to same in primary data.

Summary of the findings

This survey reveals that although the primary and secondary data are not exactly the same, they tend towards similar results. Also, a significant number of respondents are not satisfied with Moodle due to the technical and navigational challenges they face assessing and are likely to recommend it.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Moodle is an effective tool for learning with a focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content, however, it is not easy enough to navigate. Many students find it hard to access Moodle because the platform is not self-explanatory enough. They also complain about poor feedback time. It is therefore recommended that Moodle be made more user friendly and self-explaining enough to allow easy navigation and eliminate technical challenges.

Population: the article of Bhandari, (2020) defines populations as the entire objects or people that took part in the research. Thus, the population used for this research were the Digital Skills and Research Methods Students at University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London Campus.

Samples size: according to Qualtrics (2021) Samples Size are the people or object who was used in the research. Only twelve out of the thirteen students from the UWTSD London Campus completed and returned their questionnaire. Therefore, one samples was not received.

Data Protection: in an article of Titchener, (2019) states, that personal data are any information that could be used to identify a person or people. These could include a person's name, address, Identity number, ethnicity, and sexual orientation and much more. The Data Protection Regulation Act 2018 states that organisations are to handle personal data Lawfully, hence, no information should be kept longer than required. Individuals have the right to know how their information are used. Therefore, all personal data collected for purpose of this research are protected by GDPR regulations 2018.

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