

DIGITAL SKILLS AND RESEARCH METHOD

[BMSW4003]

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Research Report

Impact of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle on student's learning experience at University of Wales and Trinity Saint David

Introduction

In past few years, significant interest has been observed in the use of information technologies (IT) in dealing with academic challenges, specifically in Asian countries and in African countries (Unwin, 2008).

However, these platforms have many features if they are used in their fullness. For instance, some of the benefits of these platforms are interaction, feedback, conversation and networking. Furthermore, such platforms also provide a lots of chances to discover new ways of teaching and learning (Ahmad & Al-Khanjari, 2011). Particularly, the Moodle platform adopted by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David integrates several modules which allow creation, organization, delivery, communication, collaboration and assessment activities. The process of adopting Moodle as LMS at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David attempts to solve specific problems including, excessive teaching hours, crowded classes, lack of good and professional lecturers , coordination difficulties, and lags in studies for lack of teachers, among others.

The below research report aims to research on the learning experience of the students at University of Wales and Trinity Saint David. In this regard, the paper aims to conduct both primary and secondary research to reach the right conclusion. The primary research was done by questionnaire and secondary research was done through research journals and reports available on internet.

Background

Educational computer applications are described by the different expressions such as Learning Management System (LMS), Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and Course Management System (CMS). Students can access contents of courses through these systems. Further, content is shared in the form of text, images, sounds etc., the students can communicate and interact with other students and teachers via forums, message boards, chats and video conferencing etc. These platforms offer many configurable features which allows the development of online courses, learning communities, and pages of multiple subjects. In addition to the academic dimension, these systems have a set of features for registration, monitoring and evaluation activities of pupil and teachers. This effectively enables the content management via web.

There are six different activities, according to Piotrowski, which are represented by an e-learning system. These activities are: creation, delivery, communication, collaboration, assessment, and organization (Garcia & Somé, 2012).

From the technical perspective, there are Learning Management System that represents commercial solutions and other represent open source solution such as Moodle. The research suggests that Moodle, among other open source platforms, is the highest used platform and also the most user friendly.

Moodle can be defined as, in the Moodle creators' own words, "Moodle can be defined as an Open Source Course Management System (CMS). It is also regarded as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or a Learning Management System (LMS). The portal has become quite famous among universities and educational institutes across the globe. It serves as a tool for development of dynamic and innovative web sites for their students. Many educational institutes utilize it as their portal for conducting complete online web based courses. Many institutions also use it for augmenting face-to-face courses." Moodle is regarded as a very effective and beneficial platform for E-learning (Filippidi, Tselios, & Komis, 2010). Moodle enables the institutions in controlling and management of all components of course content and delivery by using only one combined system

Moodle enables the establishment of course website and ensures that access is only provided to enrolled students.

The Moodle provides the feature of information exchange among students and teachers who are geographically dispersed. This is done through mechanisms of chats and discussion forums. From the functional point of view, Moodle has easily configurable structure which allows the development of student assessment processes, for instance, online tests, quizzes, and surveys. Further, it manages students' tasks with their timetable and offers a huge variety of matching tools for supporting the teaching and learning process (Estacio & Jr, 2017).

Aims and objectives

The primary aim of this study is to receive student's feedback on the usage of Moodle and its impact on the learning of the students. The main aim was to analyze the impact of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle on the learning experience of the students of University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus.

Method

Both secondary research and primary research was conducted for the purpose of this study. Primary research is the one which the researcher collects the data directly rather than relying on the data collected previously by other researchers. Example of primary research includes interviews, observations, surveys, and ethnographic research. On the other hand, secondary research is the one in which already existing data is used by the researcher. It includes research

materials published in research reports, published journals, public libraries, websites, and forums etc (Filippidi, Tselios, & Komis, 2010).

For the purpose of this study, Moodle was examined through analysis of the content done via secondary research and a non-structured interview done as a primary research. After the interview was conducted, the use of tools of Moodle by students of University of Wales Trinity Saint David were analyzed. The primary data was collected with the use of questionnaire using survey monkey. The questionnaire included the following questions:

1. Would you recommend Moodle to a friend?
2. Are you satisfied with using Moodle?
3. Do you like using Moodle?
4. Do you think that Moodle needs more content?
5. How often do you use Moodle?
6. Does using Moodle help impact your knowledge?
7. From where do you access your Moodle?
8. Are you able to access your Moodle easily?
9. Do you have any ideas on how to improve Moodle?

Results and Discussion

The research conducted contributed towards the understanding of the features of an e-learning course and their importance for performance in learning of students. The e-learning platform can be seen as a portrayal of students expressed behaviors and suggest on how to develop academic e-learning courses. The results of the research can benefit both the developers of LMS system and as well as institutions that aims to introduce these systems in their course.

The analysis of the primary research reveals that majority of the students used the Moodle at least twice a week. Questionnaire also revealed the considerable variation related to the number of students accesses to the Moodle website. 89% of the participants were of the view that they will recommend Moodle to the friend or family. This indicates that ease of learning through Virtual Learning System is found to be suitable by the students and they find it preferable. 89% of the students were satisfied with the content and user friendliness of the Moodle and were satisfied with the way it operates. Further detailed questions revealed that students were satisfied with the characteristics such as that it can be used through a local network. Furthermore, Moodle incorporates a large number of components. Among those components and functionalities, only a few number of them are considered in achieving the objectives of this research. These were also the reasons due to which 33% of the students said that they liked using Moodle. However, 56% of the students were not sure and were of the view that it can be more creative and user friendly. This response also correlated with the response for content requirement on the Moodle. 67% of the students said that Moodle should have more content. These were almost the same students who gave neutral answer for liking the use of Moodle. Almost more than half of the students, i.e. 56% of the view that Moodle has helped in impacting their knowledge.

Though the use of android phones has become so common in the past few years, surprisingly, 56% of the students still used laptops and computers to access Moodle and only 22% used phones. 11% used iPad and while other 11% used other equipment's to access the portal. No matter what equipment was used, almost every student was of the view that Moodle was easy to access. Only 22% of the students were of the view that it's not easily accessible. This was maybe due to the fact that they were using some other equipment or gadget to access which was creating difficulty for them.

Finally, regarding the ideas on how to improve Moodle, 22% of the students had some ideas on how to improve the site while around 44% of them were not sure. This indicated that if given the chance, they may come up with some ideas for improvement. It is suggested that these ideas should be listened to and University Board should send these ideas to Moodle creators for consideration. This will not only encourage student's initiative but will also enhance the interest of pupil in the e-learning portal.

Since the use of Moodle is vital feature that impacts the students' performance, specific consideration should be given to the design and development of educational and academic courses with the efficient use of learning management system. It is recommended that further research should be conducted so that the diverse range of factors could be explored that are affecting students expressed practices while interacting with an LMS. Further research would also benefit in facilitating usability of the system and usefulness. Finally, it will also assist and encourage the learners to achieve deeper understanding.

Conclusion

The paper observed and analyzed the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Moodle learning experience of the students at university of Wales Trinity Saint David for the purpose of research, both secondary and primary researches were conducted.

The results of the primary research and discussion with the students revealed that Moodle provides different activity modules. These modules include forums, wikis, quizzes, tracking and assignments etc. therefore, Moodle can be applied in many different ways. For instance, it can be used as a tool for the delivery of the content to students assess learning using assignments or quizzes.

It was also discovered in this study that the effectiveness and benefits of ease of use are factors that are positively align with the students' attitudes toward using Moodle. On the other hand, usefulness is the most considerable factor behind students' behavior toward using Moodle. This indicates that teachers and students prefer to use e-learning platform if they are comfortable about the usefulness of it in achieving better grades and deeper knowledge. Several existing studies have also pointed out towards the fact that usefulness can play vital role in impacting attitudes of students towards using an e-learning system.

Appendix: Results of primary research

ACTIVE SURVEY

Impact of moodle in student learning experience at london compus of uwtsd

9

Total
Responses

9

Completed
Responses

Completion Rate

100%

Last Entry

05/03/2020

Created

05/03/2020

[VIEW DETAILS](#)

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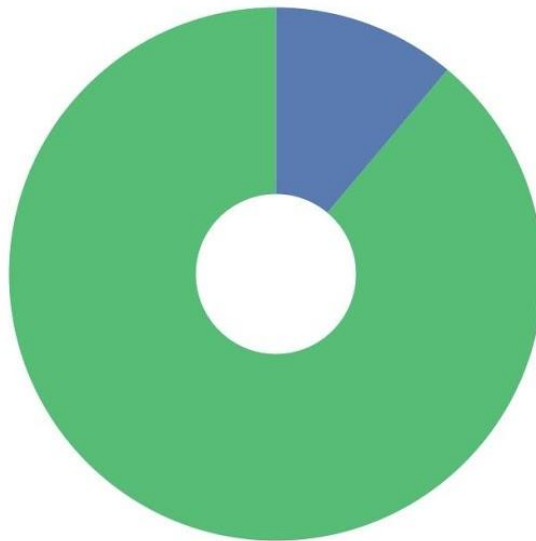


SHOWING: 9 of 9 Responses

PAGE: 1 of 4



1. Would you recommend moodle to a friend?



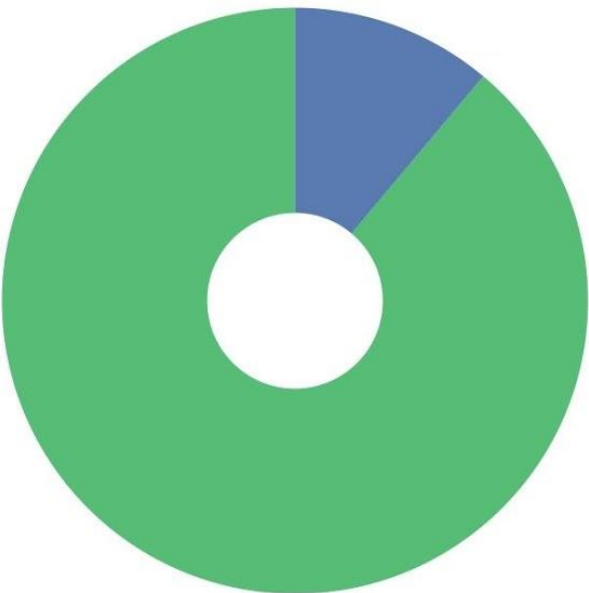
Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

	Yes	89%	8
	No	11%	1

[VIEW RESPONDENTS](#)

[MORE OPTIONS](#)

2. Are you satisfied with using moodle?



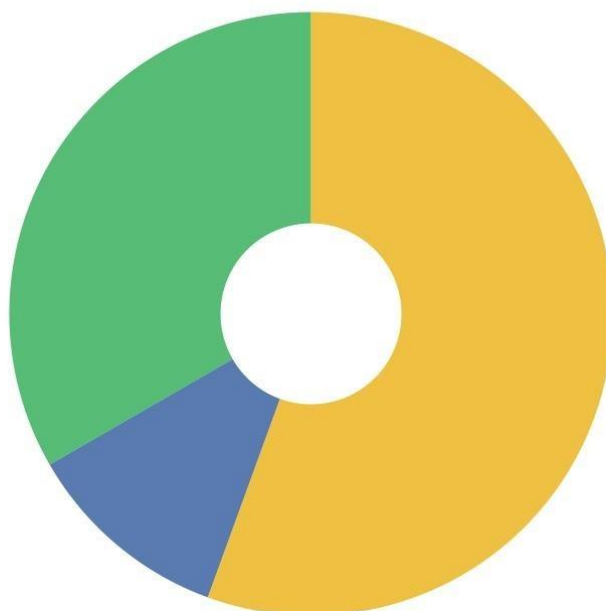
Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

Yes	89%	8
No	11%	1

VIEW RESPONDENTS

MORE OPTIONS

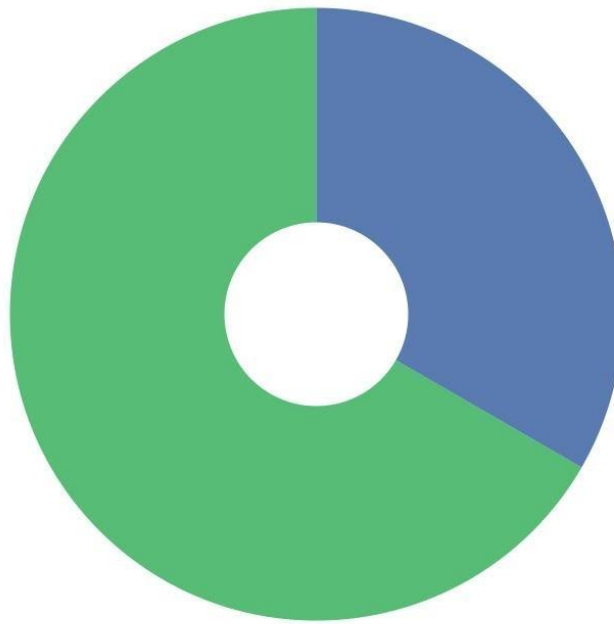
4. Do you like using moodle ?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

Yes	33%	3
No	11%	1
Maybe	56%	5
Not sure	0%	0

5. Do you think that moodle needs more content?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

Yes	67%	6
No	33%	3
Don't care	0%	0

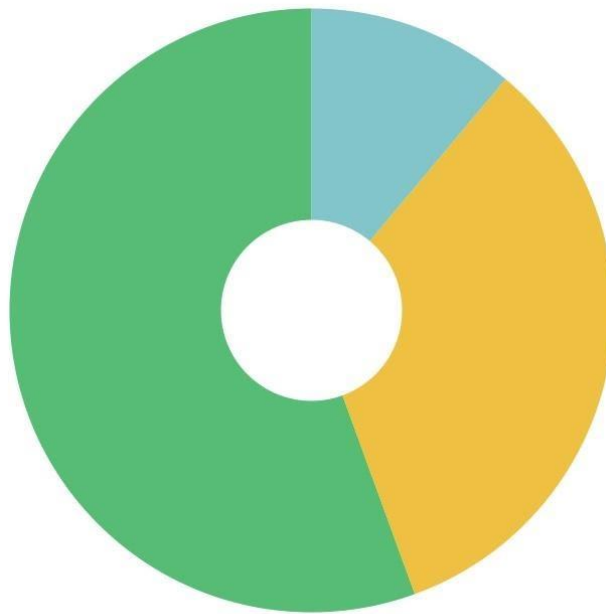
6. How often do you use moodle?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

Once a day	11%	1
Twice a week	56%	5
Everyday	0%	0
More than once a week	33%	3
More than once a day	0%	0

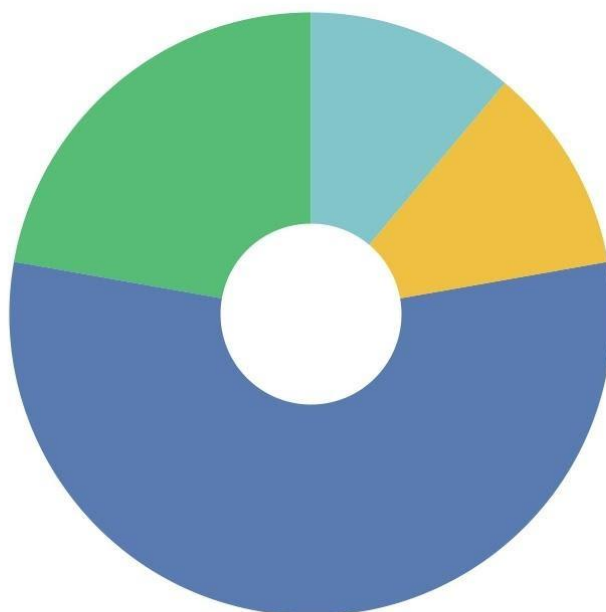
7. Does using moodle help impact your knowledge?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

	Yes	56%	5
	No	0%	0
	Not sure	33%	3
	Maybe	11%	1

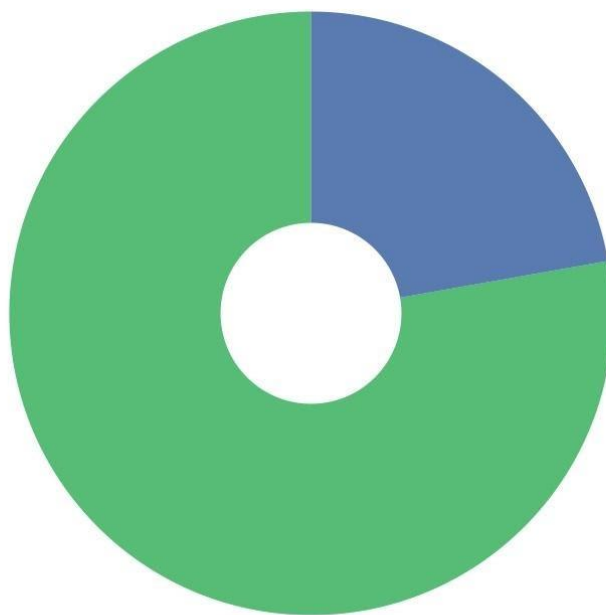
8. From where do you access your moodle ?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

	Phone	22%	2
	Computer	56%	5
	iPad	11%	1
	Others	11%	1

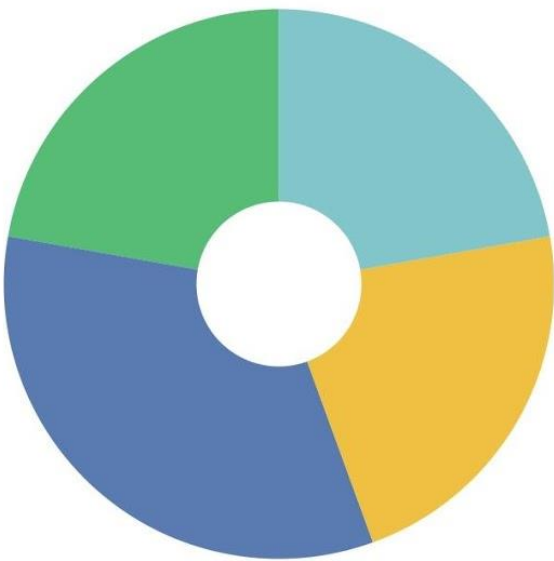
9. Are you able to access moodle easily ?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

		Skipped: 0 Answered: 9	
	Yes	78%	7
	No	22%	2
Not sure		0%	0

10. Do you have any ideas on how to improve moodle?



Skipped: 0 Answered: 9

Yes	22%	2
No	33%	3
Maybe	22%	2
Not sure	22%	2

VIEW RESPONDENTS

MORE OPTIONS

- Ahmad, N., & Al-Khanjari, Z. A. (2011). Effect of Moodle on learning: An Oman perception. *International Journal of Digital Information and Wireless Communications*.
- Estacio, R. R., & Jr, R. C. (2017). Analyzing students online learning behavior in blended courses using Moodle.
- Filippidi, A., Tselios, N., & Komis, V. (2010). Impact of Moodle usage practices on students' performance in the context of a blended learning environment.
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- Šumak, B., Heričko, M., Pušnik, M., & Polančič, G. (2011). Factors Affecting Acceptance and Use of Moodle: An Empirical Study Based on TAM.