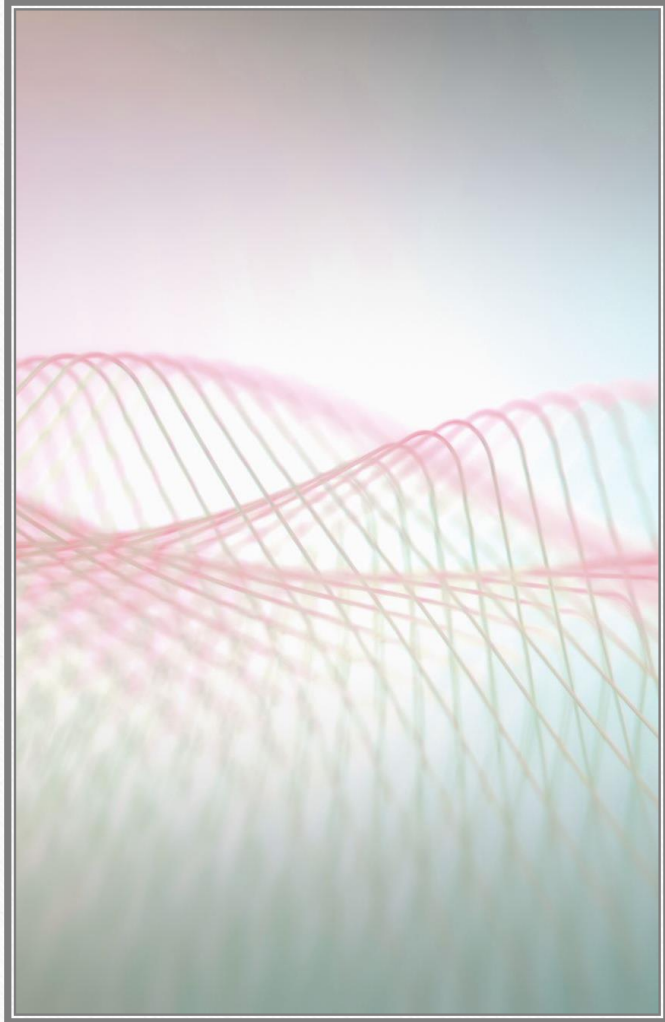


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VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IMPACT ON UWTSD STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

- The paper majorly explores the relationship between the effects of virtual learning environments (VLEs) In UWTSD on the students learning experience. The study adopted a descriptive method to elaborate the results of the VLE Moodle on students studying experience. The data in this research entails information extracted from a sample size of 6400 undergraduate and postgraduate learners and 100 tutors from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London Campus. Virtual learning has been in use for a fairly long period of time but has been propelled to large expanse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the research. The respondents involved students from different faculties, schools and levels of study from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. The data used was sourced from VLE and students' virtual learning registration platform. Findings show positive feedback from the students based on their virtual learning activities and their overall performance.

INTRODUCTION

- Enhancing knowledge through technology has become one of the most recent inventions in education through the adoption of VLEs. Institutions of high studies such as the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) use a variety of communications technology to revamp the learning experience from the classroom tradition experience. The invention of computers, laptops, smart phones and the internet in the 21st Century has made it viable to ingress online learning platforms and virtual learning environments for learners.
- VLEs offers a platform for students to learn, share ideas and do what they could have done in a classroom. Through these platforms tutors and students can learn from anywhere and anytime without being restricted to one physical location which is originally the classrooms. VLEs provide a space that can enhance face-to-face and in-person classes at the (UWTSD) across all levels of BA, MA and Doctorate. Majorly UWTSD adopts in-person class sessions to introduce teaching before incorporating virtual learning; this is occasionally done within the campus and online. The sole purpose of this blend is to have an inclusive learning experience that are not restricted to the classroom. UWTSD explores VLEs such as video or audio lecturers, podcasts and instructional videos which are easily accessible and rewarding to student.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- The exemplary invention and wide range acceptance of the internet has seen the development of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) in university learning. For easier integration of VLEs in higher education, software companies have offered services like Web CT and Blackboard. Learning through technology has been adopted by many an institution of higher learning. VLEs are described as systems designed to enhance learning interactions (Akeroyd, 2005) objects that enable the integration of web-based resources in the virtual classroom (Currier, 2001). The use of computers, laptops and smart phones has largely altered the ways learners are taught and the way tutors deliver knowledge
- Cohen (2001)high points the capacityof Virtual Learning Environments in three areas: the aggregation of content displayed in designed interfaces, the integration of communication and collaboration tools. MacColl (2007) indicates that VLEs began to appear in the second half of the 1990s, not necessarily being web-based. The specific VLEs mentioned in the papers are WebCT

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Courseinfo from blackboard (Saumure and Shiri, 2006). These capabilities of VLEs gives instructors an opportunity to deliver lessons to learners in the web-based environment made possible by the transformation of technology in higher learning institutions.
- Through video chats, interactive videos Virtual learning Environment creates online contents, which can be recorded and shared among students through chats. (Benvenuti et al., 2010) writes that implementing classroom settings in Virtual Learning Environments will have an advantage in better communication and coordination among students over the traditional classroom environment. VLEs also provide an array of other software materials that would allow external repositories to avail revision materials for students.

Objectives of the Study

To investigate the positive outcomes of the virtual learning environment on the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) students learning experiences.

To find out the adverse effects of Virtual Learning Environments on UWSTD students' studies.

To gauge the extent of readiness of the UWSTD students to undertake programmes supported by the VLEs.

Research Questions

What positive impacts does the virtual learning environment expose UWSTD students to?

What are the best and desired effects of VLEs on the University of Wales Trinity Saint David students' learning?

How are the students equipped to undertake the programmes and faculties supported by the VLEs?

Hypotheses

The key rankings of UWTSD students on the positive impacts of VLEs will not be distinguished to a greater degree.

There will be no big distinction based on the students' mean rankings and the efforts needed by the virtual learning environments.

There is no critical distinctions and differences in the students' performances and fields perceived to be areas of enhancement in their VLEs.

METHODOLOGY

- The researcher used study questionnaires to fetch data from students and their trainers. Both the teachers and students responded to survey questions to provide data required in respective study questions. The study utilized a descriptive survey to find out the impacts of virtual learning environments on the University of Wales Trinity Saint David students' results. The design made use of information gathered from respondents in a way that ensured there was objectivity and there was no manipulation of the variables used in the research. The study covered all the all the faculties of UWTSD covering all the students as represented in the sample.
- The total sample used for the research was 6500 as it targeted a total of 100 tutors and 6400 students from both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Simple random and stratified random sampling methods were used to reach a sample of UWTSD students that the study needed to become a success.

METHODOLOGY

- The study made use of questionnaires as tools of data gathering and each questionnaire comprised of different sections. The sections were five and each sought to investigate a distinct component that was vital for the research context. The first category extracted personal data from the respondents and its main purpose was to seek data on the impacts of virtual learning environments. The second category was to provide data on the negative impacts of the virtual learning environments while the last part investigated the extent of student's readiness to accommodate the VLEs. The other two sections required the subjects to mention their extent of disagreement and agreement on every item investigated. The feedback involved strongly disagree 1, disagree 2, agree 3 and strongly agree 4.
- In line with the COVID-19 containment measures, the researcher circulated the questionnaires via emails to all the 6500 subjects in the study. The respondents were allowed to spend a maximum of four days with their study questions before they sent them back for verification and evaluation. After thorough analysis of the survey questions and their responses, mean scores and standard derivations were used to match responses to the questions. The hypotheses assumed an accuracy level of 0.05 for different values obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

•Question 1

- What positive impacts does the virtual learning environment expose UWSTD students to?

Question	Impacts of Positive VLEs	Mean	Standard Deviation
a.	I have mastered digital literacy	3.04	0.78
a.	I have trouble developing problem-solving skills based on VLEs	2.85	0.64
a.	I comfortably learn with other students	3.15	1.20
a.	I access a lot of tools	3.20	0.98
a.	Interact with various experts	3.04	1.34
a.	I study at my own time	2.64	0.86
TOTAL		2.98	0.96

•Question 2

•What are the best and desired effects of VLEs on the University of Wales Trinity Saint David students' learning?

Impacts on Negative Effects of		Standard	
Question	VLEs	Mean	Deviation
a.	I miss physical interactions	3.01	0.23
a.	VLEs are time consuming	2.76	0.36
a.	VLEs interrupt schedules	3.24	1.02
a.	I get interrupted by internet notifications	3.21	0.82
a.	I cannot adhere to my schedule	2.56	1.26
a.	VLEs' maintenance is high	3.40	0.96
TOTAL		3.03	0.76

Question 3

How are the students equipped to undertake the programmes and faculties supported by the VLEs?

Question	Items on Degree of Readiness	Mean	Standard Deviation
a.	I believe I will do well with VLEs	3.88	0.96
a.	I encourage other students to register with virtual classes	2.64	0.72
a.	I'm prepared to continue learning with VLEs	3.03	0.42
a.	I will register more courses virtually	2.98	0.88
a.	Virtual classes will make me more reliant	3.04	1.08
a.	I have more access to virtual learning tools	2.56	1.12
TOTAL		3.02	0.86

CONCLUSION

- When it comes to UWSTD students' learning outcomes based on the virtual learning environments, it can be derived that VLEs make learning fun to these learners. Many students as depicted by the research regarded the use of internet platforms in their studies as significant. The students find virtual learning environments vital and love to use the applications that have been developed and set in place despite the few setbacks that still exist. The UWSTD students have shown that exposure to educational facilities like the VLEs have and can completely transform the learning experience if properly regulated than it has been perceived in the past.

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