

Digital Skills and Research Methods

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Introduction

There are a growing number of experts who believe that virtual learning environments need to be incorporated into all educational programs because of their enormous significance. To help students improve their active abilities, educationalists are constantly exploring VLE study strategies to introduce a better system to educational institutions so they can assist students with their wounds and attempt them halfway inside this virtual environment proficiently and subsequently (Cuthell, 2017). However, this type of study strategy helps students become more proficient with their acting abilities.

The rationale of the Study

Today's educational system is heavily reliant on cutting-edge technologies. The way students learn is evolving right now, too, thanks to new technologies. The VLE or Virtual Learning Environment is a prominent method and practical illustration of this. VLE is an online stage that gives students and instructors computerised arrangements that enhance the learning experience. Rather than mimicking and replacing the real study hall atmosphere, a virtual learning environment (VLE) utilises technology to promote in-class understanding, such as computerised communication, collaboration, and examinations or surveys that are administered via the VLE (Information Resources Management Association, 2012). The VLE is now being emphasised by modern education specialists and academicians to make it more accessible to every student. As a result, students can learn their active skills more effectively through this method of learning, and educationalists are constantly looking for new ways to help students learn their lessons and practice them in a virtual environment, thus creating a better and more enjoyable learning experience for them. Since the present pandemic crisis has opened up a widening gulf between the two sides of the country in terms of the number of people who have been affected, this topic has become even more intriguing (Lewis and Allan, 2004). To ensure that this VLE is on the right road, people need to know how this system is affecting the overall learning experience in the real world now. There are several reasons why this topic has been deemed worthy of investigation, including the ones listed above.

Aim and Objectives

Aim

Aims are the goals that a report or any other endeavour aims to accomplish over time. The primary goal of this study is to determine the genuine influence of the VLE on student learning experiences in today's contexts.

Objectives

There are a lot of similarities between the objectives and the mission statement. If the small objectives are satisfied, this report will be able to address all of the concerns and achieve the fundamental objectives of the research. So, let's talk about the report's objectives.

1. To understand more about the virtual learning environment.
2. Students at the University of Wales - London Campus will be able to gain a better understanding of the virtual learning environment by looking at it from their perspective.
3. A virtual learning environment's true value or advantages in terms of students' education must be understood.
4. To observe the effects of the online learning environment on students' learning
5. How can the virtual learning environment system be improved practically is also determined.

To achieve the stated goal of this thoroughly analysed report, these are the most important goals.

Methodology

Research Type

In terms of research approaches, primary research is the more direct approach, and secondary research is the more indirect one. This study makes good use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A look at the reasons for and characteristics of these two forms of study is provided in this article. The primal investigation is a philosophy used by specialists to gain information directly, rather than depending on the information obtained through a recently completed study by others. In this sort of study, the analyst takes the lead in conducting their investigation. Directly approaching an individual or group to ask questions and gather information is an example of this type of research. This type of investigation gives a more accurate picture of the existing state of affairs and aids in the development of unbiased conclusions based on the study of the facts. A different approach is known as secondary research, which relies on knowledge gleaned from other people's previous work and is used by specialists to obtain data indirectly. There are many different ways to conduct research, but this method is based on going to the sources rather than leading an individual researcher through the process. This study aids in the completion of the investigation within a specific period, as well as allows researchers to see how things were back then and what the investigations have discovered about previous events.

Data Type

For a research study, the data type relates to how the data is organised. For example, there is quantitative data as well as qualitative data. Both of these pieces of information will be mixed and matched according to the needs of the study. Qualitative data are concerned with the quality of the data, hence they prefer descriptive data to numerical ones (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003). Quantitative data can be quantified, however, qualitative data can only be detected through perception. Many accounts use illustrative phrases to convey information on the appearance, shading, and surface of a product. When it comes to the other hand, quantitative information refers to data that can be quantified. Because of this, they are usually expressed numerically, such as length, size, amount, cost, or even span. Using measurements to establish and then break down

this type of data lends credibility or validity to it, making quantitative data more trustworthy and accurate.

Data Source

Surveys can be used as the source of primary data, while the library, journals, books, bots, and other automated methods can be used as the sources of secondary data (Pickett, 2014). Because of this, it is not possible to employ various data collection tools interchangeably. Researchers are on the hunt for a tool that is easy to use and can collect trustworthy data when collecting primary data. Online surveys are an excellent primary data gathering method since they meet this criterion. Researchers can use online surveys to assist them to obtain quality data while boosting the number of responses from respondents.

Sampling

Sample selection is a crucial part of the research, and the random sampling method that will be employed in this report is a way of randomly selecting samples. A total of 20 participants and more than four secondary resources will be utilised in this study.

Data analysis

Primary Data

Question 1:

Do you have an experience concerning the usage of a Virtual Learning Environment?	
Yes	20
No	0
Total	20

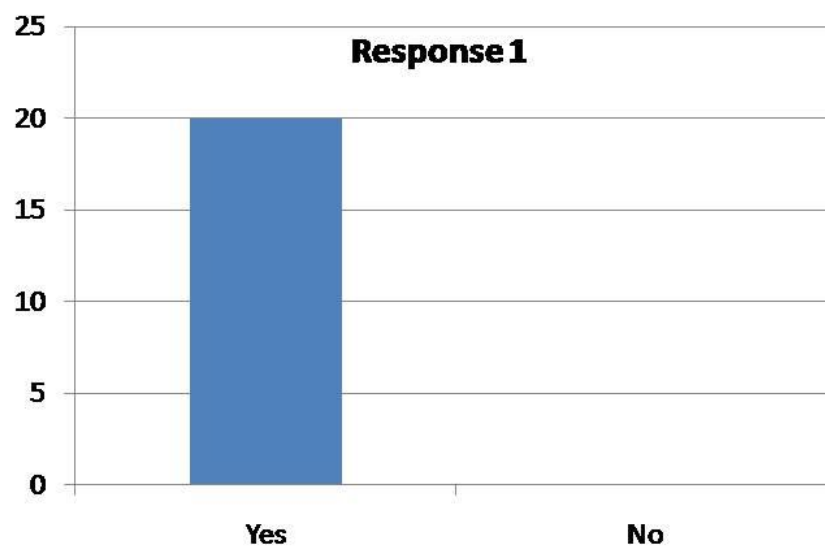


Fig: Response to question 1

Question 2:

Do you prefer to use VLE for your higher studies?	
Yes	15
No	5
Total	20

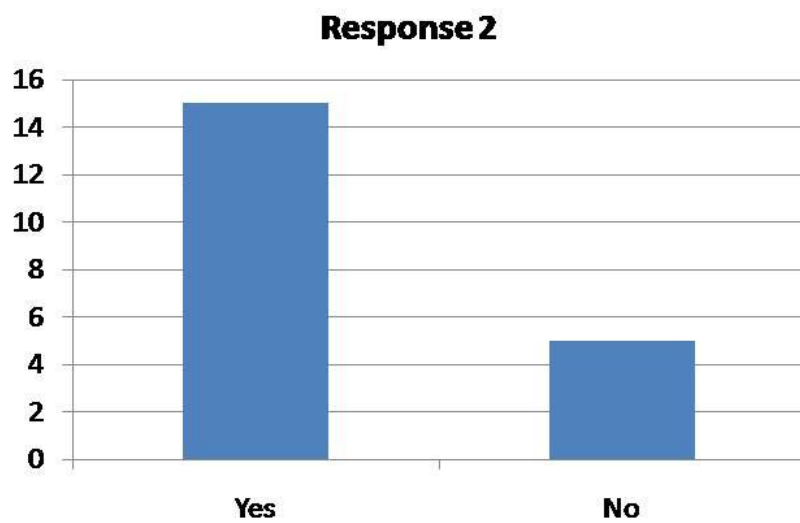


Fig: Response to question 2

Question 3:

Do you have the proper training to use University VLE for your studies?	
Yes	10
No	10
Total	20

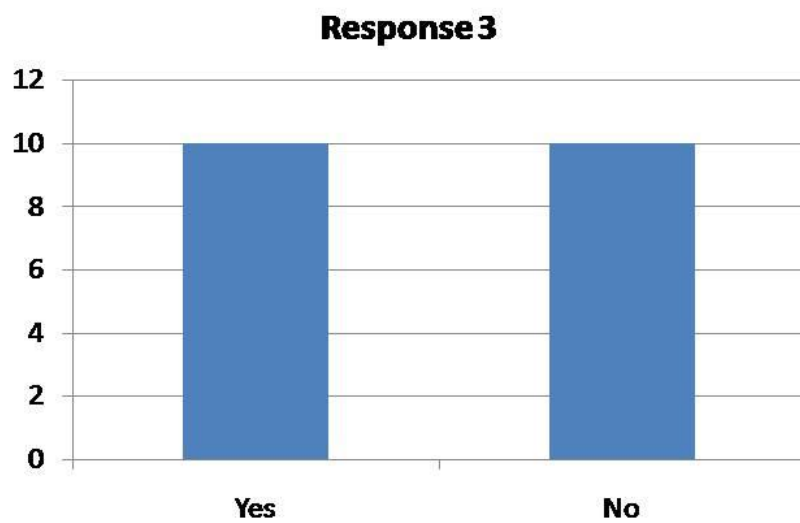


Fig: Response to question 3

Question 4:

What would you like to see if the university continues to use the VLE platform after the pandemic as well?	
Strongly Disagree	0
Disagree	2

Not Sure	3
Agree	5
Strongly Agree	10
Total	20

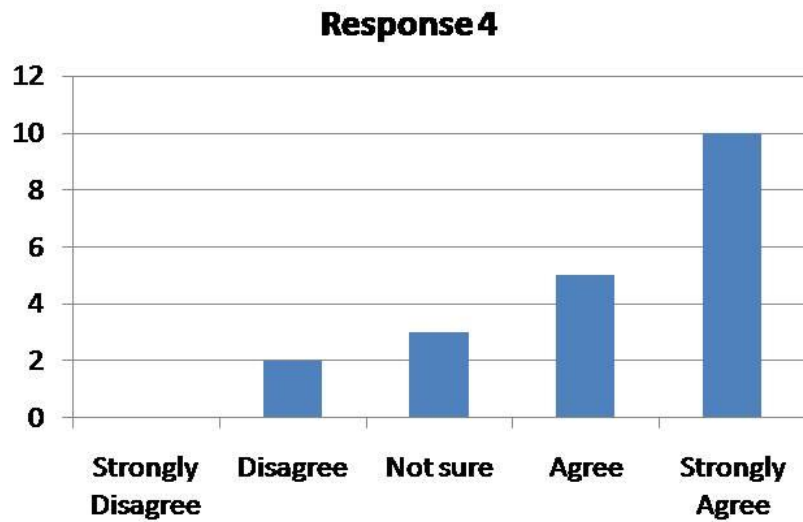


Fig: Response to question 4

Question 5:

Do you prefer to communicate with your lecturer and your friends via VLE?	
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	3
Not Sure	1
Agree	10
Strongly Agree	5
Total	20

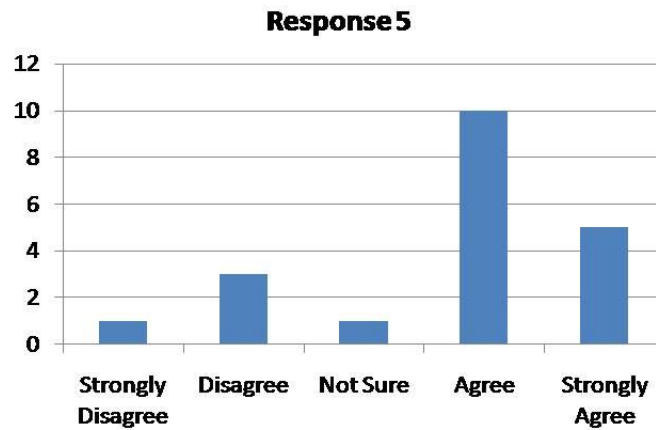


Fig: Response to question 6

Question 6:

Please rate the impact of the online learning platform on your academic studies during the pandemic.	
1	0
2	0
3	1
4	6
5	13
Total	20

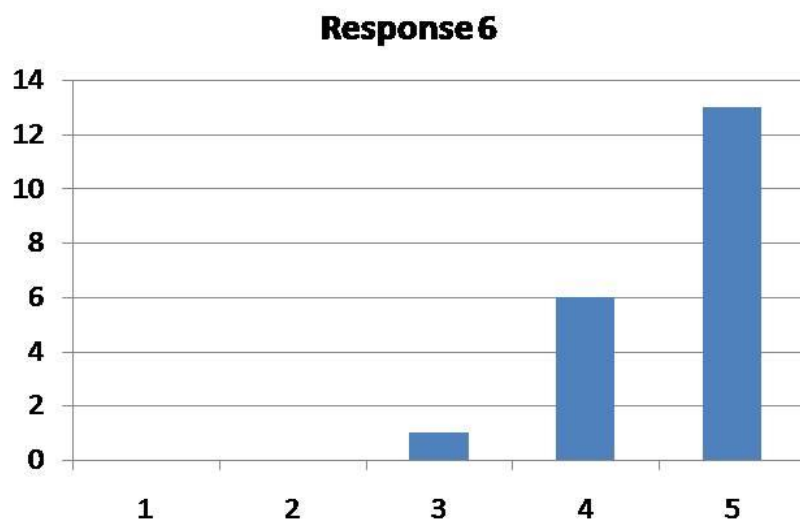


Fig: Response to question 6

Question 7:

Please rate the preference to do your studies in VLE	
1	1
2	1
3	2
4	4
5	12
Total	20

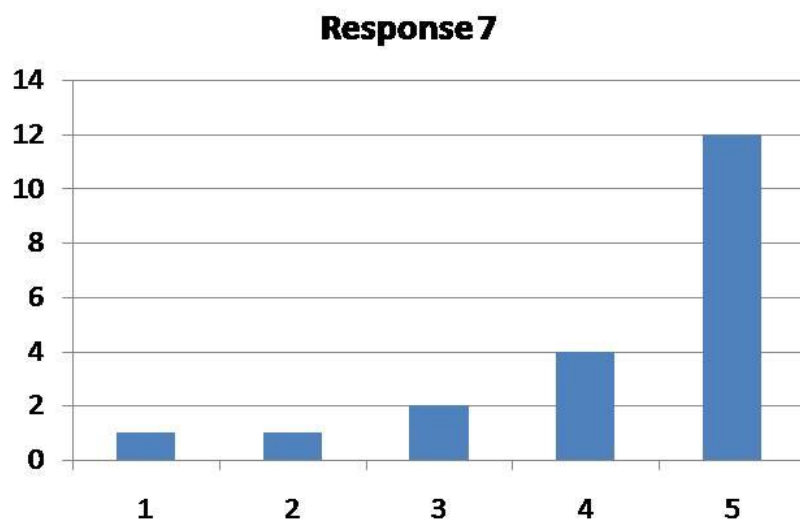


Fig: Response to question7

Question 8:

Does your e-learning provide appropriate support to complete your assignment?	
Yes	18
No	2
Total	20

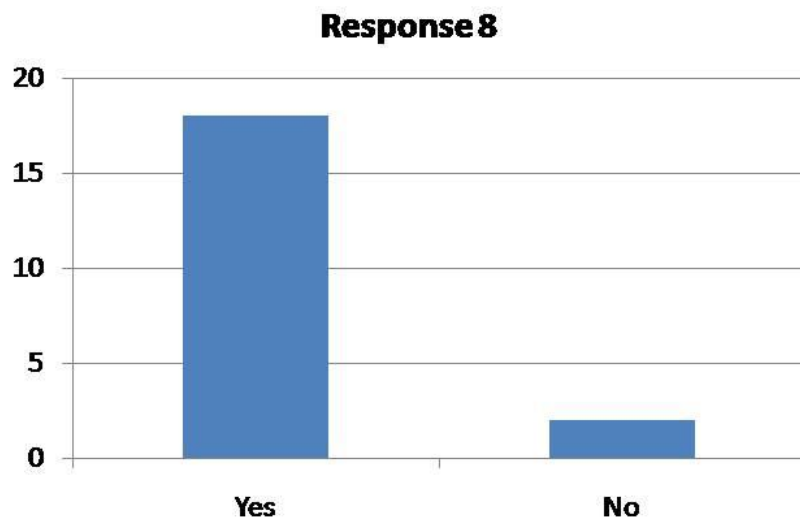


Fig: Response to question 8

Question 9:

Do you find required and appropriate resources in VLE for each module that you study?	
Yes	20
No	0
Total	20

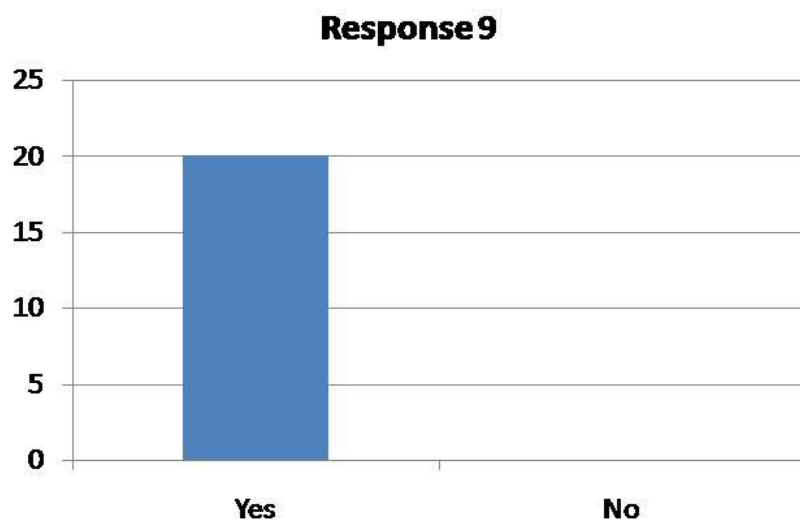


Fig: Response to question 9

Question 10:

Since lockdown, how satisfied you are with the support which you received from lectures, university admin, and management towards your studies?	
Extremely Dissatisfied	1
Dissatisfied	3
Satisfied	6
Extremely Satisfied	10
Total	20

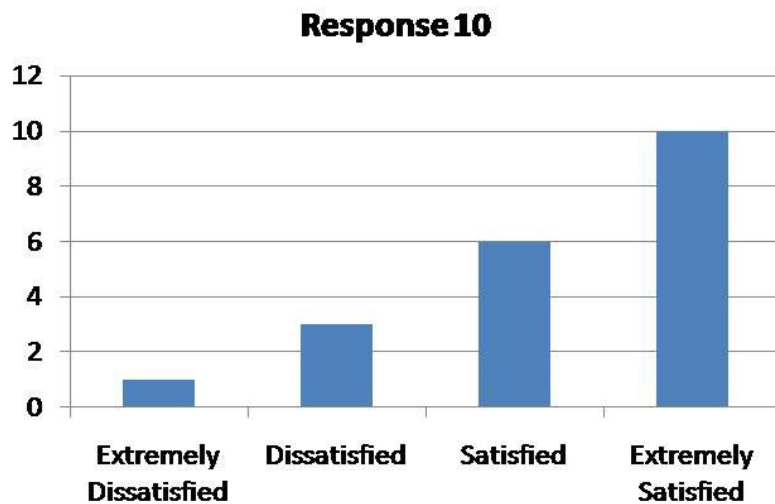


Fig: Response to question 10

Secondary Research

All education must be based on a virtual learning environment since it is so critical to the future of society, according to authors, researchers, journalists, and academicians. "Student-Centered Virtual Learning Environments in Higher Education" was written by writers Boboc, Marius; Koç; Selma in 2018 and stated that VLE helps students to be more flexible and affordable in their learning capabilities (Boboc and Koc, 2019). According to another group of authors, the "International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments," published in 2007, the VLE is open to trying new things with organisations of substance as well as new methodologies and active learning. This group included J. Weiss, J. Nolan, J. Hunsinger, and P. Trifonas. It uses online examinations and tests, recordings, and webcasts to provide an informative tour. By using a variety of activities, teachers can increase student engagement and satisfaction while also improving the quality of instruction (Weiss et al., 2016). As a result, the value of the VLE and the influence it has on pupils may be appreciated. For this study, it has been determined that the virtual learning environment (VLE) has a significant impact on students' learning experiences in today's contexts, intending to gain knowledge and understanding of these characteristics.

Discussion of Result

From the first question, it can be learned that students of the University are fully aware of the VLE as they all have experienced the technology. They all know what the technology is and how it works. From the second question's answer, it can be seen that 75% of the students prefer to use and the other 25% of students do not prefer the technology. As the technology has various opportunities, maximum students liked the technology. But, some students could not cope with the change in the system which is why do not like the VLE technology. From the third question, it can be seen that 50% of students have the training to use VLE and the other 50% do not have the training. If all the students are trained up, they will prefer VLE more. From the response to question no 4 it can be seen that a major part of the students agreed that they want to continue using VLE after the pandemic. As VLE helped students to continue their studies during the pandemic and the technology is highly time and place flexible, students want to continue using VLE after the pandemic. From the response to the fifth question, it can be seen that maximum students prefer to

communicate using VLE. VLE allows communication from anywhere and anytime that is why students prefer it. But some of the students did not find it as a substitute for physical communication. From the response to the sixth question, it can be seen that online learning platforms had a huge impact on their academic studies, as there was no other way than online learning. From the response to the seventh question, it can be seen that a major part of the students prefers to do their studies in VLE. For the flexibility that VLE gives, students prefer to study on this platform. From the response to the eighth question, it can be seen that online and e-learning provide the necessary support that students need. From the ninth question, it can be seen that everyone has found required and appropriate resources in VLE. Online learning platforms have the access to huge resources like the library, journals, and all other things. These resources and their teachers support them to complete their assignments. That is why students are extremely satisfied with their experience of using VLE. From the response to the tenth question, it can be seen that 80% of the students are satisfied with the support they received from lecturers, management, and university admin. This technology is very easy to use and with the support of others, students found it very satisfying to use VLE.

Conclusion

The current educational system is centred on cutting-edge innovation that sets the pace. Learning tactics and methodologies are currently evolving as well as a result of cutting-edge breakthroughs. The use of the VLE or Virtual Learning Environment in the study hall is a well-known method and a practical example of this. It seems clear that the future of teaching and learning will rely completely on the VLE based on these two types of study.

References

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Appendix

Online Survey Virtual Learning Environment

Dear students

Q1. Do you have an experience in relation to the usage of Virtual Learning Environment? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Q2. Do you prefer to use VLE for your higher studies? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Q3. Do you have proper training to use University VLE for your studies? *

- ☐ yes
☐ No

Q4. What would you like to see that the university continue to use VLE Platform after pandemic as well? *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

Q5. Do you prefer to communicate with your lecturers and your friends via VLE? *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Not sure
☐ Agree
☐ Strongly Agree

Q6. Please rate the impact of the online learning platform on your academic studies during pandemic? *

1 2 3 4 5

Low impact ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ High impact

Q7. Please rate your preferences to do your studies in VLE. *

1 2 3 4 5

Low preference ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ High preference

Q8. Does your e-learning provide appropriate support to complete your assignment? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q9. Do you find required and appropriate resources in VLE for each module which you study? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q10. Since lockdown, how satisfied you are in relation to the support which you received from lecturers, university admin and management towards on your studies? *

☐ Extremely Dissatisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Extremely satisfied