

Digital Skills and Research Methods

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Introduction

The Virtual Learning Environment also called VLE is a platform that makes possible the communication between people, students and professors or coworkers in order to exchange ideas or with the purpose of learning something and getting an outcome. The VLE consists of sending the necessary materials such as learning documents, assignments or any sort of information through websites. (Moura et. al., 2020).

The main purpose of the VLE is to provide everything is needed for students and professors in our case in order to be able to study and understand the curses that are needed to be studied during the school year. (Rouse, 2020).

Background

The primary data is the type of data which is collected from credible sources from books, articles, newspapers s on and so forth while the secondary data are data which interpret the primary data in order to have an outcome of them and get a result. (Form Plus, 2020).

For example, primary data are the official information that the government has and the secondary data are the articles published online or at the TV according to the subject that the Government talked about.

Usually, the primary data is read or let know in real time while the secondary data is something that has time to be processed and interpreted in order to get a new meaning or to become a point of view of someone. This assessment is a secondary data because even if the primary data is the

questionnaire and its answers, here is an interpretation of the primary data in order to see the impact of the VLE on the students and their behavior since starting to use VLE as a permanent studying form. Although, for some students secondary data is difficult to handle and encounter issues while others were able to adapt and get used to it. (Form Plus, 2020).

Aims and Objectives

The main advantage of the VLE is the fact that it is easy to be used by anyone with minimum computer skills and a good connection for the internet anywhere in the world no matter or time, weather or other external factors. On the market there are many VLE platforms such as Moodle, which is the one we are using in our University. For example, other platforms are Tech radar, Google classroom so on and so forth. It is also affordable and it does not require a fix schedule but instead through Moodle learning can be done anytime the student has time or needs to study. There are also some disadvantages of the VLE which include self-discipline which is very important in order to be able not to quit and do the right things at the right time but the most important, to avoid procrastination. For some of us, the fact that you study alone, with no human direct interaction, there can appear the feeling of loneliness which may be discouraging for some of the students. There are people who like to work in teams or be around people which consider Moodle quite boring because they do not have people to exchange ideas with or socialize, but on the other hand some of the students become more focused and concentrated on what they need to do while studying alone and focusing only on their own ideas. The VLE, may become difficult to use while having technological issues such as a poor internet connection, problems with the computer or laptop or the student lack of computer skills which are vital for using Moodle. (CIF Training, 2018).

Method

The method used in order to conduct this survey was creating a questionnaire on Survey Monkey with the questions I considered the most relevant about the VLE- Moodle. After the questionnaire was done, I sent the questionnaire to my class-mates and to other students in order to figure out how they see the VLE and mostly, if there are difficulties while using it. After sending the questionnaire via e-mail I asked everyone to send it to me back and answer honestly in order to have a clear image about their opinion about VLE-Moodle. Once I have got the results, I started analyzing the answers and contour an overall opinion about the impact of VLE on the students.

Results

Question 1: How useful is it the VLE for you?
a. Not useful – 20%
b. Useful – 40%
c. Very useful – 40%

Question 2: Is VLE easy to use?
a. Yes – 80%
b. No - 20%

Question 3: Is it easy with VLE to accomplish the required tasks?

a. Yes – 90%

b. No – 10%

Question 4: How much time you needed to accommodate with VLE?

a. 1-3 months – 60%

b. 3-6 months – 35%

c. I did not accommodate with VLE – 5%

Question 5: What level of computer skills do you have?

a. Low – 15%

b. Medium – 55%

c. High - 30%

Question 6: Do you have good internet connection at home?

a. Yes – 95%

b. No – 5%

Question 7: What is your level of comprehension learning via VLE?

a. Beginner – 15%

b. Medium – 40%

c. Advanced – 45%

Question 8: Are you a good writer?

a. Yes – 60%

b. No – 40%

Question 9: Do you have the same motivation of learning since using VLE?
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a. Yes - 75%

b. No – 25%

Question 10: Is it easy for you to upload your assessments?

a. Very easy – 35%

b. Easy enough – 45%

c. Not as easy as it seems – 20%

Discussion

The first question's answers from Appendix 1 regarding if the students consider that VLE is useful I have found out that for 20% of the students it is not so useful while the rest of 80% consider it useful and very useful in a proportion of 40% and 40%. As these answers were given,

I can say that for the most of the students VLE is something useful but also important while studying.

As the question number 2 from Appendix 1 asks the students if there is easy to use VLE, 80% of them find out it is easy while the rest of 20% consider it hard to use which means that for most of the students using VLE is not so difficult and they can manage it.

The third question from Appendix 1 concerned if the students are able to acquire the required tasks through VLE and most of them, exactly 90% agreed that they are able to accomplish them via VLE while 10% of them said that they do not manage to acquire them. I may conclude that they are not prepared enough or do not have the same interest as others in order to sort things out according VLE.

In the fourth question from Appendix 1 I was curious about finding out how much time the students needed to accommodate with VLE. The most popular answer was said by 60% of the students which said that they needed between 1 and 3 months in order to accommodate with VLE, while for the 35% which were not so open for changes, took around 3 to 6 months to accommodate. There were also 15% that maybe prefer the traditional system of learning because they sustain that they did not accommodate with the VLE. In my opinion VLE is easy to use and there is need of a little bit of interest in order to get used to it.

The fifth from Appendix 1 question checked out the level of knowledge in computer skills so the results are, 55% for the medium users, 30% for the advanced users and 15% for the low skilled users. This question highlighted the fact that the students are well prepared and most of them manage to use the computer with not much effort.

The sixth question from Appendix 1 concerned if the students have a good internet connection at home and it resulted that 95% of them have while 5% of them are struggling with the internet connection so I may say that even if the connection at home is not quite good, students may spend their studying an attending-hours in public spaces where they have free and strong wi-fi connection.

In the seventh question from Appendix 1 the students were asked about the level of their comprehension when learning via VLE and the answers were 15% for the ones who have a low level of comprehension, 40% of them have medium comprehension and 45% of them have an advanced level of comprehension. I may say that VLE is a success because most of the students manage to understand the information given via VLE quite easily.

The ninth question from Appendix 1 was asking the students if they have the same motivation of learning since they started the curses via VLE so the answers were split in 75% which answered Yes and the rest of 25% answered they loose interest of learning since they started learning via VLE. This is sad for the 25% because adapting is the most vital skill for students all population all around the world these times.

The last question from Appendix 1 concerned about how easy the students can upload their assessments and if we are looking at the results, for most o them there is not very difficult to upload them because 35% of them assumed that is a very easy process, 45% assumed that is easy enough. So, the rest of the students, 20% of them need to improve their computer skills in order to use easier the VLE.

Conclusion

In conclusion, to be honest, introducing the VLE as a full-time learning practice had a big impact on the student's behavior and way to see things in matter of studying. For some of them, it is really hard to adapt to these changes and the fact that everything is meant to be done on the computer really scares people with minimum knowledge about computers or which are not used to use it frequently. On the other side, most of the students are seeing things differently and the freedom that using VLE offers may increase their time-management skills or they are able to do their schedule as they want and it is easier now to prioritize things such as accomplishing the tasks for the job, studying, taking time to have fun or going out with the friends as well as spending more time with the family. The best way to use VLE for students is from the comfort of the house because most of them have access to a very good internet connection which is necessary while using VLE. All in all, Having benefic results in the survey, may conclude the fact that this change from the traditional system of learning to the VLE, had a big and benefic impact and it may be a long term option until the COVID-19 Pandemic ends.

Appendix 1 – Questionnaire

1. How useful is it the VLE for you?

- a. Not useful
- b. Useful
- c. Very useful

2. Is VLE easy to use?

- a. Yes
- b. No

3. Is it easy with VLE to accomplish the required tasks?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. How much time you needed to accommodate with VLE?
 - a. 1-3 months
 - b. 3-6 months
 - c. I did not accommodate with VLE

5. What level of computer skills do you have?
 - a. Low
 - b. Medium
 - c. High

6. Do you have a good internet connection at home?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

7. What is your level of comprehension learning via VLE?
 - a. Beginner
 - b. Medium
 - c. Advanced

8. Are you a good writer?

a. Yes

b. No

9. Do you have the same motivation of learning since using VLE?

a. Yes

b. No

10. Is it easy for you to upload your assessments?

a. Very easy

b. Easy enough

c. Not that easy as it seems

References

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