

Virtual Learning Environment

Digital Skills and Research Methods



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Introduction

In this assignment, I will explain I will be identifying and explaining the research methods. There are two types of research methods; Primary and Secondary. I have explained several examples so that the concept is clear.

I have made a questionnaire as my form of primary research about Virtual Learning Environment. I generated my questionnaire using Google Forms. I sent the link to the questionnaire to my colleagues at the university, especially those in my class. Through the link, they have been able to answer directly. This questionnaire has given me the opportunity to get involved in VLE and see how my colleagues perceive this new way of attending classes and getting involved in the day to day studies.

Virtual Learning Environment

A virtual learning environment (VLE) is a set of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance a student's learning experience by including computers and the Internet in the learning process. (Holyoke, 2020).

VLE covers many technological fields related to teaching, from giving classes to looking for information through questionnaires, graphs etc ... Which are very useful for students and teachers.

The objectives of VLE are to improve communication between teacher and student via email, chat or advertising web. The main components include studying tracking and curriculum mapping. VLE's are now well ingrained in educational institutions as a mode to structure, manage and deliver learning activities and content. They are recognised as having strengths in student tracking and managing online assessments.

Universities use this system for their students to submit their work online, as it is more efficient and anonymous, they usually use web portals such as Moodle or Blackboard that have a series of facilities such as an online library where you can find information for their students. jobs. Although many higher degrees or institutes, they use it for online classes through applications, for example, Teams, Zoom or Skype that allow group video calls.

In the situation in which we find ourselves, Covid-19 has made this medium more efficient and more relevant. Every day more educational institutions

around the world are opting for this system to maintain their educational system since it is not possible to face to face because it can be a risk for a more significant number of people due to contagion.

In fact, at my university we use Moodle as a web portal where we can see the content that the teacher has explained in each class, it is also the medium in which we have to upload our exams.

In my experience, it is advantageous, since it gives many facilities to students and teachers.

VLE Research methods

VLE is not only based on online teaching but also takes place as soon as we search for a university job or simply to carry out a statistic or a survey in which the participation of people is required. We can identify two types of research:

Primary research

Primary research is self-made research that involves going directly to the source of information. They can be questions that you ask students or clients, some examples are;

- **Interviews:** It is a process in which two or more people meet, where one of them asks a series of questions waiting for the opinion or answer of the other.
- **Surveys:** It is a survey that collects your answers in order to obtain information on a topic and make a study with graphs or statistics.
- **Questionnaire:** It is a series of questions on a topic that must be answered by the largest number of people. It is usually used to evaluate the effectiveness of an app or a system that is running

Normally when you do the first research you look for two types of information:

1. **Exploratory:** It consists of a general investigation with an open closure that usually involves interviews with an individual or a small group.
2. **Specific:** This search for information is more precise. Enlist a more formal structure in interviews

Primary research tends to take longer than secondary research but gives more accurate data.

Second research

Second research is also known as desk research consists of a search, which has already been completed, organised, and compiled by other people. Which includes reports, studies that have already been done by agencies or businesses.

This search is usually done before the first research. The objective of using the second research is to take the information based on what you have understood about the problem or situation. This research is very beneficial as it is quick, easy to find, and is a guide to first research. As I mentioned before the second research is to look for information from different sources such as:

1. **Online data:** This is one of the most popular sources of information today and that the Internet provides a lot of free information and from different sources, which can be accessed with just one click.
2. **Government and non-government file data:** This data branch is more problematic as it contains highly variable data. In many cases, you need to pay to access the data. Also, files that are often restricted by classified information that only authorised personnel can access.
3. **Library data: It is public and private access:** These are usually copies of academic research dissertations. You can also find receipts, checks or annual reports in which you can get details for your project.
4. **Data from learning institutions:** These are educational facilities offered by colleges, institutes, faculties, universities for the use of data collection for students. It is relatively easy to access this source of information, and these institutions give students the facility to access any type of material with an academic purpose.

This helps businesses, projects, even employees and customers, also is very useful to see the opinions and satisfaction of the employees and customers. But also has a big disadvantage which is that not always you find the specific information.

How do I use VLE?

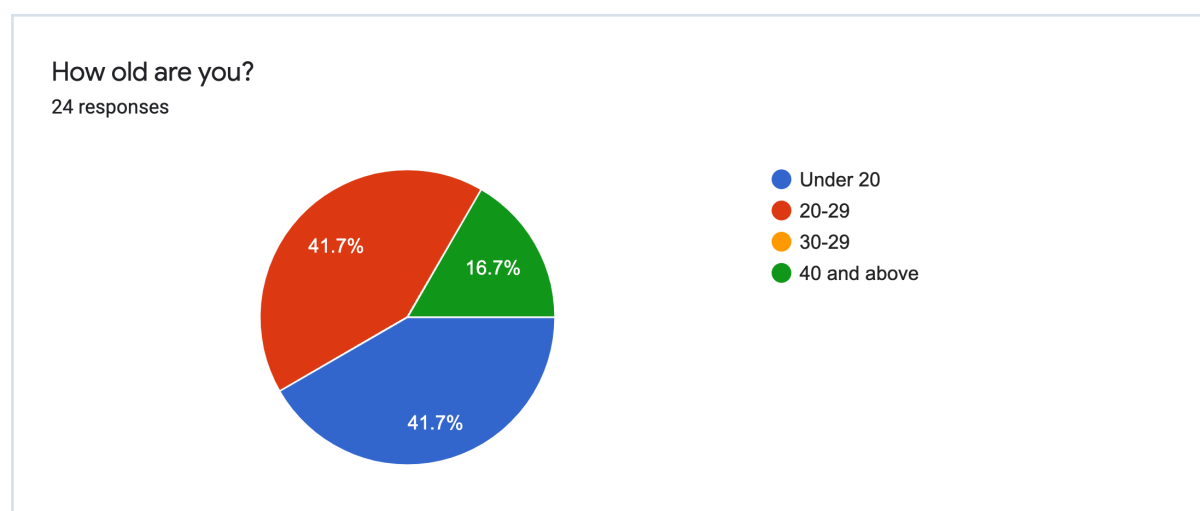
Before this course, I did not know how important the virtual learning environment is and how widely it is used today. This term I have learned to use a class of tools that I have used to complete this assignment.

As I have spoken before about the two types of search, I have used the first research by making a questionnaire to my university colleagues through the internet, using a google docs function that allows me to make an online questionnaire in which my colleagues respond directly.

Questionnaire

In the questionnaire, there are general questions such as how old are they to questions that require knowledge about VLE. From the answers, I have been able to make some diagrams in which the percentage of people who have voted for the different answers is shown.

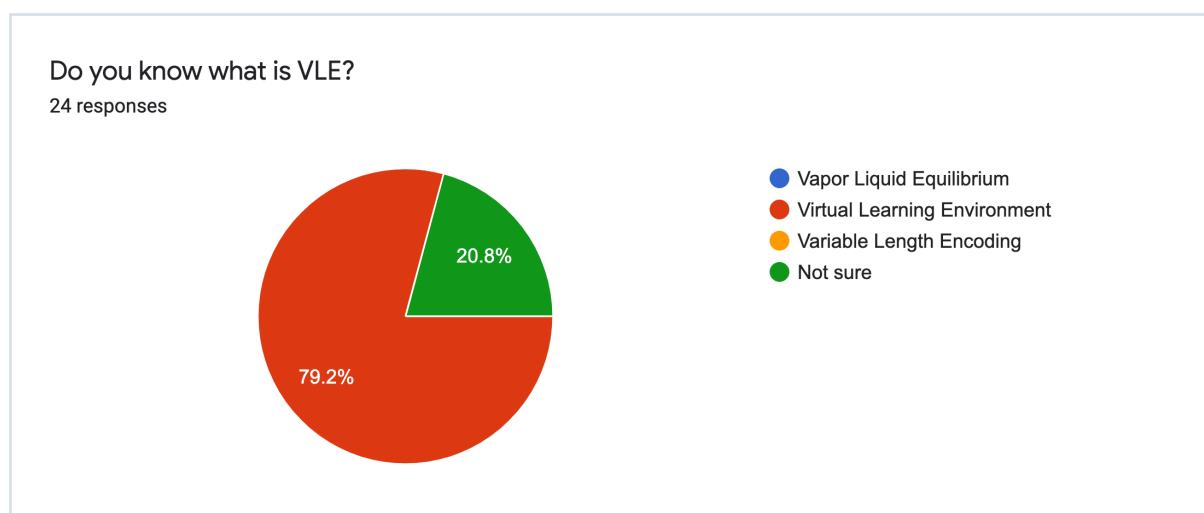
The questionnaire is made up of fifteen questions with different types of answers to evaluate the knowledge of the voters. In which I have obtained twenty-four responses from my colleagues. Based on the number of participants I have made a circular diagram with colours to which I have given value. An example is:



Each colour represents an answer, how can we observe the yellow colour does not appear in the graph because there are no votes for that age range. In this case, two colours stand out: red and blue, which mean that it has had the same number of votes.

The following question requires more knowledge with technology so I have put several answers that do not make sense, for example:

79.2% of my participants know what virtual learning environment is. As you can see I have put some nonsense answers, in which it is identified that not all have a clear meaning for this concept

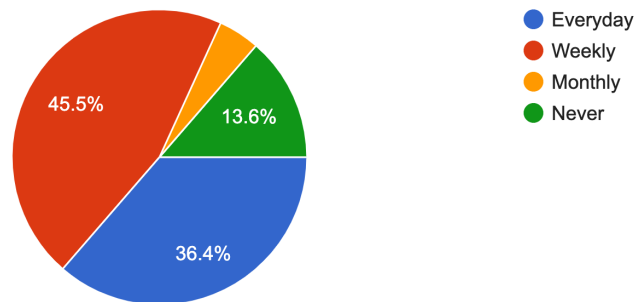


I have also asked the opinion of my voters about the usefulness and frequency with which they access Moodle, the university portal that our university uses.

As for the usefulness of Moodle, the majority have voted yes and it has been 8.3%, two people who consider that it is not very useful. However, the question of how often they access the Moodle is more variable.

How often do you access University Portal?

22 responses



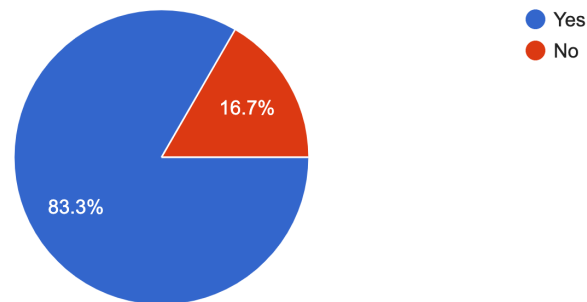
As you can see, not all the participants have voted since I have obtained 22 responses. Having the first contact with several of my Moodle colleagues has been very accessible to be able to return to the online classes that we have studied during this quarantine and despite some having had some problems with their connection or external factors. They can access middle where they can find everything that has been explained.

With the following answers I have made a google sheet in which all the questions and answers are included, and you can even see the time in which these people have answered, although it is anonymous.

A question that we should highlight is Do you think Teachers and Students need extra training for VLE? In which I have obtained 24 responses and of them, 20 people have responded that both teachers and students should have more training. Since the lack of knowledge about the app that is used can be a communication barrier and a great disadvantage for the education of the year 2019-2020.

Do you think Teachers and Students need extra training for VLE?

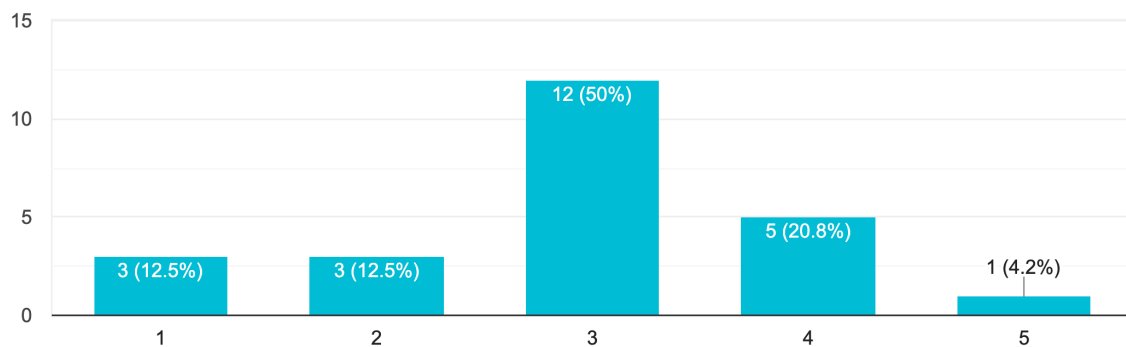
24 responses



Only 16.7% disagree with VLE due to the communication barriers that exist between the network and the devices. While doing the questionnaire online, I could see that some participants had several problems with the network, so attending online class was difficult for them since they could not hear the class well. Many of them are my colleagues who have talked a lot about this issue since also affects me.

How effective is VLE?

24 responses



50% of the participants consider that VLE is effective, the rest of the participants have very different opinions so I have considered making a bar graph. In which you can see the number of people who have voted for that option. In this case I have obtained 24 responses from the 24 participants

Where you can observe the variance of the voters' responses and consider that the system and the preparation of both students and students can be improved.

Conclusion

All this procedure has helped me to understand the meaning of Virtual Learning Environment and to use a type of tools that I was not aware of. This type of survey also helps the university learn about concerns and improvements they can make to the system so that it performs better. Research methods have taught me a lot to know how to choose what type of information I should choose since it is not the same to obtain the details in an easier and faster way than the secondary one, although the first one gives you more concise data collected directly of the participants. In my experience I like secondary research more, but not because it is easier, but because you get the information from more sources, although it also seems important to have the first contact with the participants.

Today we do not realise it but students are continuously using Virtual Learning Environment and it is more the situation that we find ourselves in which has been more relevant due to Covid-19. If it were not for this facility, classes could not continue and it would be a great pond for world education. I believe that despite the responses to my survey, it has been very useful for me to have this type of accessibility and to be able to contact my teachers during this situation and to be able to resolve my doubts. Although from my perspective I have sometimes had several difficulties with the network connection.

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