

THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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Table of Contents

Rationale of the report.....	3
Introduction	4
Methodology.....	5
Primary data collection methods	5
Results	6
Secondary data collection.....	11
Limitations of the study.....	13
Conclusion.....	14
References	16

The impacts of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)

Rationale of the report

This study was conducted with the main objective of investigating and describing the various ways in which virtual learning environments impacts the lives of students in the university. The research used the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London Campus as an area of focus during this study. A total of three hundred students participated in this research as well as a total of twenty lecturers. Considering the data collection tools that were used, a questionnaire was used as a primary device of collecting data while a research of various published materials on topics focusing at the implications of the computer generated learning system was the secondary tool of data collection. Various responses on the impacts of VLEs on the learning experiences of the students as well as its impacts on the lecturers were obtained during this research. Both positive and negative responses were obtained. Helpful recommendations were then

given that could effectively help in solving the various problems and challenges that the students and the lecturers faced in their use of VLEs.

Introduction

It is first important to understand what this types of learning system is. Virtual learning environment refers to the various computer generated mediums as well as spaces that students, lecturers as well as employers use to conduct online learning as well as other online activities. This method of learning involves the application of computer software as well as the internet to provide lectures to the students without sharing a classroom. Since the two parties are not physically present. The research found that most in most cases, VLEs is used as a complement to the classroom learning in this university. Many of the respondents of this research acknowledged and expressed their motivations on the positive impacts that virtual learning environments play in their lives. There were however those who had the feeling that VLEs had negative implications on them following the inconveniences that are related to it.

Among the positive effects of the computerized methods of learning as found in the research is that this learning environment promoted independence among the students as they can effectively conduct various research on themselves through the internet this also helped in improving the students' time management skills. The research also found that VLEs are more convenient to the disabled students who cannot making to school or classes on time of regularly as well as the slow learner. These students can spend most of their time studying wherever they are. The writing skills of the students was also found to be enhanced through the use of VLEs. Following the appreciation of the participants of this research on the impact of VLEs, VLEs should be established in various universities in the country.

Methodology

Primary data collection methods

A questionnaire was the primary tool of data collection used in this research. A total of thirteen questions were posed to the respondents through this questionnaire. The questions sought on various issues relating to the impacts of VLEs on the lives of the

students. The questions inquired on how and where the students and lecturers accessed the virtual facilities, the experience they had on the application of VLEs, it also inquired on their views on how VLEs can improve the educational orientation as well as their views on the future space of VLEs. The questions had choices that were to me marked by a tick or dot based on the preference of the respondents.

Results

On the question that inquired about the students' experience on VLEs, 95% of the participants had the view that they had had a good experience with the use of VLEs. 3% however claimed that had no positive impacts of their lives while the remaining 2% had no idea on the impacts that VLEs had on their learning experience. 96% of the participants were convinced that the application of VLEs could effectively help them in improving their educational orientation while 3% had the opinion that VLEs was not effective and could lead to a drop in their educational experience. On the question that inquired the students to give their view on the future space of VLEs, 97% of the participants were convinced that VLEs could overtake the traditional classroom studies and could be the only method of learning used. On

the question that inquired if VLEs could improve the attendance of the students to class, 75% of the respondents claimed that VLEs could improve the attendance of the students while a 20% believed that VLEs could not improve the students' attendance.

Below is a section of the questionnaire that was used during this study:

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPACTS OF VLEs ON THE LEARNING SKILLS AMONG THE LEARNERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID, LONDON CAMPUS.

Respondents of this questionnaire are requested to give their responses accurately. In case you find any of the asked questions unsuitable, kindly ignore. Give your responses using a clear tick if required.

1. FEMININITY

Male	✓
Female	

2. AGE BRACKET

18-25	√
26-35	
Over 35	

3. Which is your main source of information when using VLEs?

Computer	√
Telephone	
Other (Name it)	

4. How do you find the platform design?

Easy to use	
Could be easy to use	√
Very hard to access	
Am not sure	

5. How do you think the VLEs can improve the educational orientation?

Insert more information	
Gives me more opportunity of interaction	√
Am not sure	

6. Do you think VLEs could become the future “distance Educational platform”.

Yes	√
No	
Not for the moment	
It must be improved first	
I am not sure	

7. Do you feel safe whenever you enter your personal data in virtual platforms?

Yes	
No	
Privacy should be enhanced	√

8. Do you think VLEs could be more interactive?

Yes, more space for the students	√
No, its fine	
Could be improved	
I am not sure	

9. How do you think virtual learning environments will change the students' learning process in the future?

It will not change the students' learning capacities	
Will greatly improve learning capacity	√
I am not sure	

10. Do you prefer the virtual learning environments over the physical class learning?

Yes	√
No	
I do not know	

11. Do you think VLEs will improve student's attendance to class?

Yes	√
No	
I do not know	

12. What are the benefits of using VLEs? (give three benefits).

Many students can attend the class wherever they are.

It provides the opportunity for students from various countries to attend classes.

It also enhances the student's writing skills as it is mainly done through writing.

13. Who should decide if it is possible to change a virtual learning environment?

Government	
Professors	
Students	
All the above	√

Secondary data collection

The main secondary data collection tool that was used is a research of various published materials concerning the implications of the computerized learning systems among students in the university. After the research, it was confirmed that virtual learning environments

play significant roles in the learning experiences of the students. This is because majority of those who participated in this research showed their motivation and appreciation on the application of VLEs.

This research through the published materials on the effects of computer-generated learning found that VLEs plays vital role in enhancing the attendance rate of the students. This is because VLEs has enhanced accessibility of learning facilities at any given place and time. Through the VLEs, students can interact with their lecturers in a more personal level. They are able to engage the lecturers in various discussions and questions thus enhancing their knowledge and performance. Submission of assignments is also easy and elaborate since the students and teachers are able to provide relevant information on the assignments provided (Atayero, Ilori, & Adedokun, 2017).

Another impact that the study found effective through the application of VLEs is that it is helpful in promoting self-dependency among the students as well as promoting time management among the students. VLEs was found helpful in enhancing independency among students since the students who engage in the online studies are always able to work individually without being supervised (Yen, 2020). They

also try to keep on time since most of their assignments always have strict deadlines that must be met. Through the personal research and assignment performance, students are able to acquire a wide range of information thus improving their knowledge and performance (Barker, & Gossman, 2013).

It was also found that this type of learning system is important in stimulating the various teaching activities. VLEs enables the teachers to effectively plan their lessons. It also helps in the management of the various administrative requirements. VLEs also facilitates in following the performance of the students as well as in the provision of extra materials and support to people in need. The application of VLEs was found effective as it allows various people to learn new skills and information without moving from place to place since they can learn from home.

Limitations of the study

Various challenges were faced during this research. The main challenge being lack of adequate time to conduct the research. Majority of the students and lecturers were highly committed in the learning

activities that majority could not provide adequate information as required. There was also no time during the study thus it was difficult to explore and confirm it in need the students used the VLEs.

Conclusion

There are various impacts that VLEs have on the learning experiences of the students. From the questionnaire, it was evident that most of the students prefer the use of VLEs over the physical learning environment in the classroom. majority had the belief that VLEs could improve their attendance to class as well as improving the educational orientation of the students. It was also found that VLEs is important as many students can attend the class wherever they are. It provides the opportunity for students from various countries to attend classes VLEs also enhances the student's writing skills as it is mainly done through writing. On the research of published materials on the topic of the effects of online learning on students' experience in school it was found that VLEs are important as it enhances the attendance of the students, it also stimulates the various activities involved in teaching, it also promotes independency of the students.

Following the numerous impacts that VLEs have on the students in terms of their studies, the survey made a number of recommendations. One of the recommendation made was that the institution should ensure that it promotes the application of VLEs effectively. This can be done by ensuring all students have access to effective machines and internet. Effective education on the usage of the machines should also be taught to the students.

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1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Age bracket

- ☐ 18- 25
- ☐ 26- 35
- ☐ over 35

3. Which is your main source of information when using VLEs ?

- ☐ Computer
- ☐ Telephone
- ☐ Other _____

4. How do you find the platform design ?

- ☐ Easy to use
- ☐ Could be easy to use
- ☐ Very hard to access
- ☐ Am not sure

5. How do you think the VLEs can improve the educational orientation ?

- ☐ Insert more information
- ☐ Gives me more opportunity of interaction
- ☐ Am not sure

6. Do you think VLEs could become the future "distance Education platform" ?

- ☐ yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not for the moment
- ☐ It must be improved first
- ☐ I am not sure

7. Do you feel safe whenever you enter your personal data in virtual platforms ?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Privacy should be enhanced

8. Do you think VLEs could be more interactive ?

- ☐ Yes, more space for the students
- ☐ No, it's fine
- ☐ Could be improved
- ☐ I am not sure

9. How do you think virtual learning environments will change the students' learning process in future?
- ☐ It will not change the students' learning capacities
 - ☐ Will greatly improve learning capacity
 - ☐ I am not sure
10. Do you prefer the virtual learning environments over the physical class learning?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I don't know
11. Do you think VLEs will improve student's attendance to class?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I don't know
12. What are benefits of using VLEs? (Give three benefits)
- Many students can attend the class wherever they are.
 - It provides the opportunity for students from various countries to attend classes.
 - It also enhances the student's writing skills as it mainly done through writing.

13. Who should decide if it is possible to change a virtual learning environment?

- ☐ Government
- ☐ Professors
- ☐ Students
- ☐ All the above