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**THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (VLE) – MOODLE
ON STUDENTS LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES
TRINITY SAINT DAVIS LONDON CAMPUS**

AUGUST, 2020.

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Introduction

The learning environment can be said to be the diverse locations, contexts, and cultures in which students learn it can also be seen as a different platform where users engage and communicate in order to gain new skills. A learning environment contributes greatly to the overall success of the learner and offers a positive ambience/atmosphere to be engaged and at the same time, motivated. An ideal and excellent learning setting encourages the interaction between lecturers/teachers and the students and establishes a great sense of support.

Building and developing an interactive and positive learning environment for learners- for each course, is the most innovative aspect of teaching. The focus here is either on the physical learning environment like lecture rooms, labs, classrooms, or on the different technologies that have been drawn out to develop online learning ambience.

There are four distinct types of learning environments, each with its unique elements. Learning environments can be knowledge-centred, community-centred, student- or learner-centred; and assessment based at the same time, learning environment could be the face-to-face (classroom or traditional), online, or hybrid (where learning happens both in the classroom environment and online).

With the recent development and advancements in learning technologies, coupled with how information and communication technology (ICT) is implemented, there have become many mind-blowing possibilities have been created to reshape students' learning behaviour and teachers' teaching methods. (Kinshuk *et al.* (2016))

In hand with these technological advancements in learning environment comes virtual learning environment (VLE) which is a teaching and learning tools built to enhance a student's learning experience by including computers and the Internet in the learning process. (Margaret Rouse, Michael Holyoke 2011. This type of learning environment comes with its benefits and impact and has been accepted by a given set of individuals.

This study will be reviewing the effect of the virtual learning environment (VLE) on students learning experience using the university of Wales Trinity Saint David London campus as an assessment area. The study will be done by developing questionnaires and using published materials to analyze my findings.

Literature Review

It is not a disputable fact that traditional learning, such as fully face-to-face (classroom) learning, has become old-fashion in today's digital world. Students are born and raised in the digital era, and according to Marc Prensky are referred to as digital natives, while teachers are the digital immigrants. Students are said to be more digitally inclined than teachers, and thus it is suggested that education should also be in the digital realm. However, the needs to bring about learning off-classroom has provoked the provision/ designing of virtual learning environment where students can engage in secured learning and teachers also work at ease with automated class management (Rahmat and Ar 2017).

Before thinking of the differences between classroom learning and the virtual learning environment, it is essential to understand that there are apparent similarities between these two systems. The general goal of online education is the same as that of traditional (classroom) learning. This is so because, in the classroom learning environment for students to develop their knowledge in a particular subject area and to earn excellent grades that will explain their level of knowledge they are taken through series of lectures, tests, quizzes and exams- this can also be said of a virtual learning environment. Besides, similar to the on-campus courses, students' grades are affected by their level of participation, the only variation here is in the type of participation.

A Virtual Learning Environment, commonly known as VLE, is an integrated distance learning platform that stereotypically integrates course outlines, materials, assignments, assessments, and other tools that are external to the classroom experience. it may also involve social media tools that aid learners and instructors to interact through online discussion boards and chats.

The primary/basic components of a virtual learning environment package include student tracking, electronic communication- use of emails, chats, web publishing and threaded discussion, curriculum mapping (which is the breakdown of the curriculum into sections accessed and also assigned), and Internet links to other curriculum resources. Generally, VLE users are assigned either a student or teacher ID. The great part is that the teacher sees absolutely the same thing as the teacher. Still, it has

additional users' right to track student performance as well as restructure and modify curriculum content (Margaret Rouse, Michael Holyoke 2011).

Moodle which is a definite part of virtual learning environment is a course management system (CMS); a free package designed using known educational principles to help the instructors/ teachers to create effective online learning communities.

There are numerous benefits of implementing or using the virtual learning environment. Among these benefits is the flexibility of lecture time and dates, accessibility of information, affordability, convenience, etc. From these benefits, it can be noted that even an average student or student shoving between jobs and school would comfortably gain the knowledge they need in fields of their choice.

The lack of motivation towards school work is one of the most serious problems facing the education systems today (Yan 2009; Williams and Williams 2011). Academic motivation is important for students' task persistence, academic performance, and college selection (Lucia et al., 2016). The virtual learning environment has been seen to be a useful tool for the modern day educational sector because engaging and motivating students can be a great challenge. VLEs helps to pull together up-to-date, standard, interactive and interesting electronic resources and additional supporting materials – for example, for math and study skills. VLEs can open up opportunities for new ways of learning and communicating and can support collaborative learning and independent learning. For example, some economics lecturers have found, particularly with first-year students, that the VLE can help establish a community more quickly and 'integrate 'students into the institution, (Ros and Andy, 2000).

Many variables influence students' performance, making it almost impossible to identify them all and even more difficult to assess the influence of each of them on the learning results. Learning environments based on the use of digital resources and technology are mediators in the learning process through the activities they allow. This is because they enhance interaction and interrelation within a continuous communication process, thereby enhancing the designing and redesigning of knowledge. (Becerra et al. 2011). VLEs provide institutions with great information and the possibility to manage it and also provide it to their members in a simplified format and with a guarantee of quality and validity.

From an educational standpoint, the VLEs used in education institutions boost, advances and originate innovative experiences. However, they are primarily directed towards the production and distribution of contents. Dahlstrom et al. 2014 concluded that 74% of teachers say that VLEs are a very useful tool to the improvement of teaching; 71% of teachers say that VLEs are a very useful tool to the improvement of students' learning; 99% of institutions use a VLE; 85% of teachers use the VLE; 56% of teachers use it daily; 83% of students use the VLE, and 56% say they use it in all or most course units (Paulo et al. 2017).

The learning interactions occurring within the classroom are complex by nature. Still, the implementation of virtual learning environments helps the obtainment and the processing of large quantities of data from each interaction between the several parties in the process (Agudo-Peregrina et al. 2014).

Objectives Of Study

To access the impact of the virtual learning environment on student learning experience in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London campus. And to state the correlation between the virtual learning environment and student performance.

Methodology

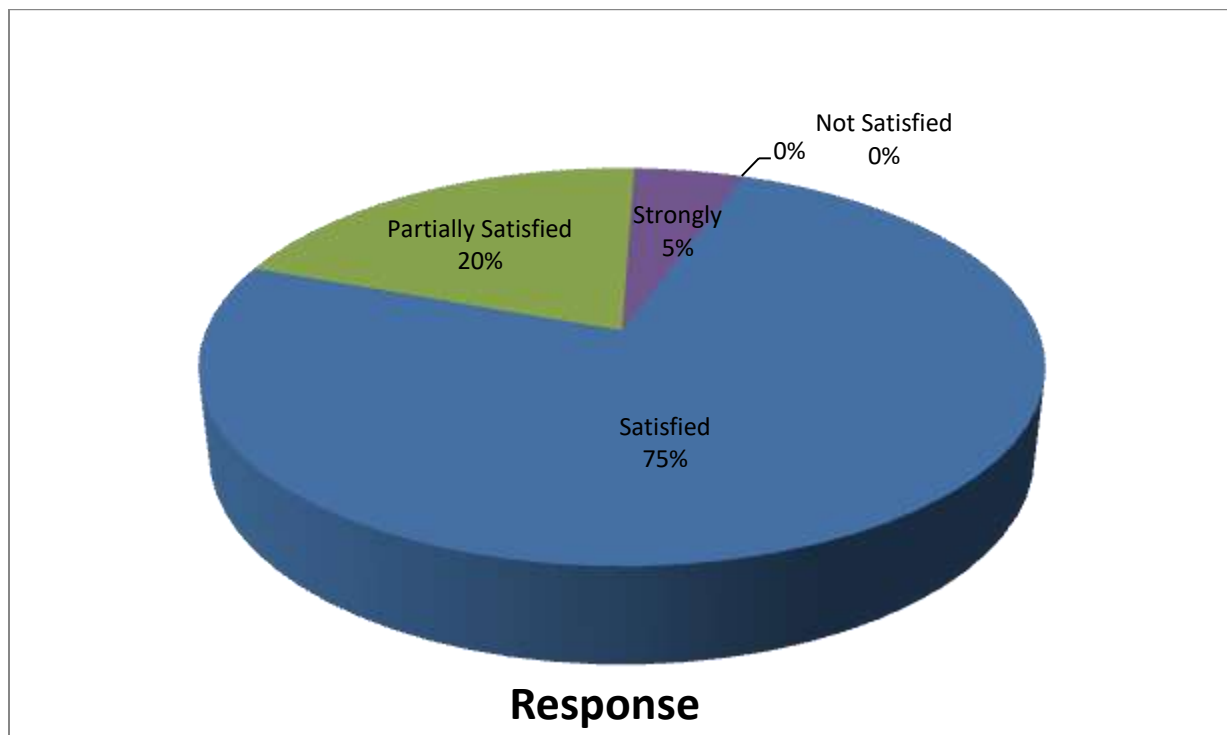
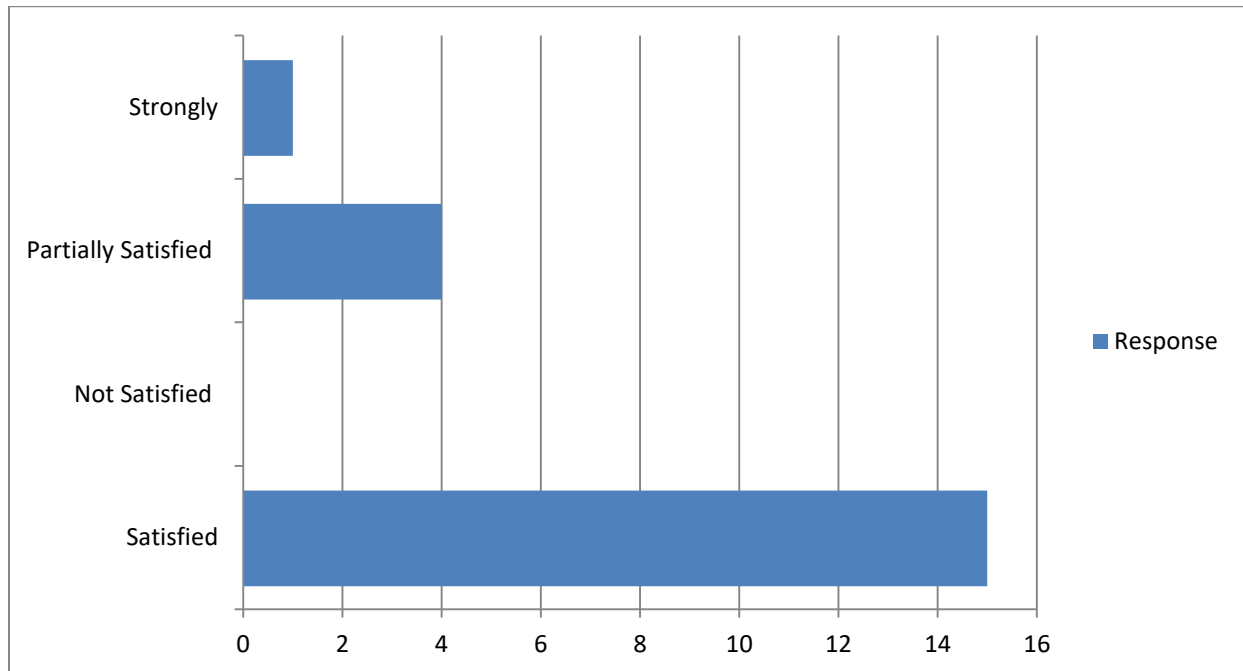
Questionnaires are the basic methods used in this study, with a sample size of 20 (5 male and 15 female students of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London campus).

Pie charts and bar charts were used to represent the quantitatively the results obtained from this study.

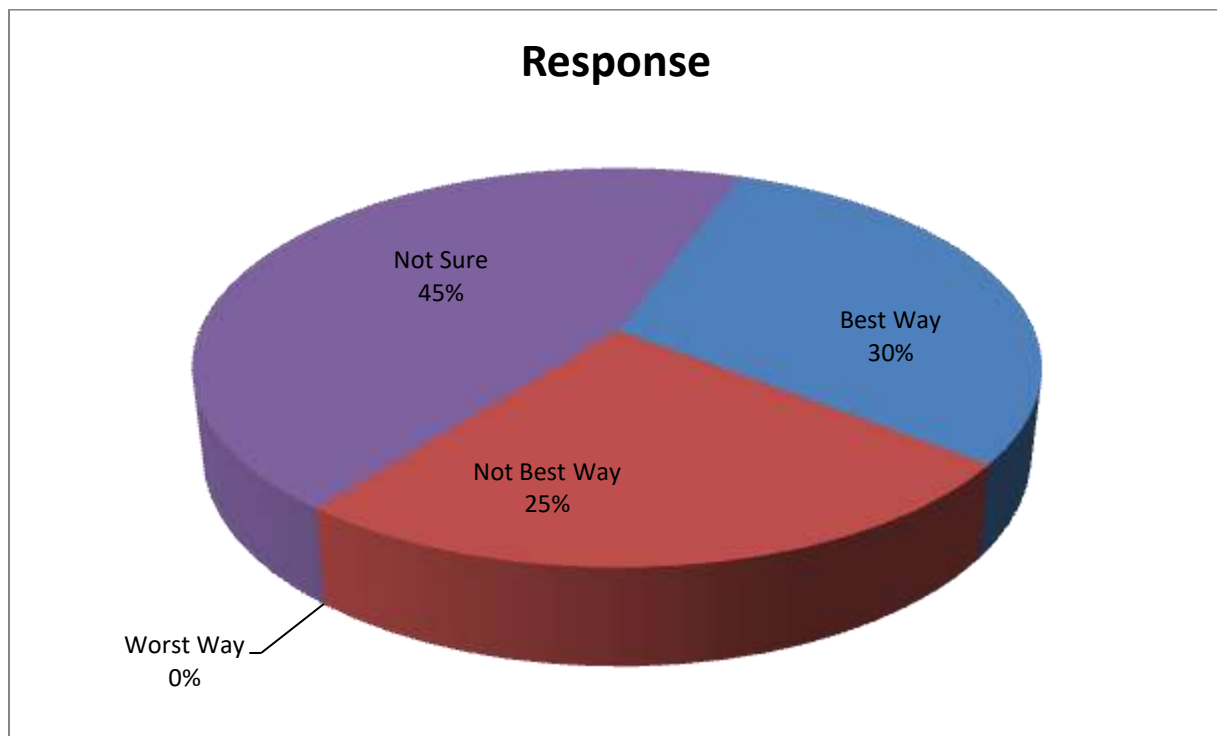
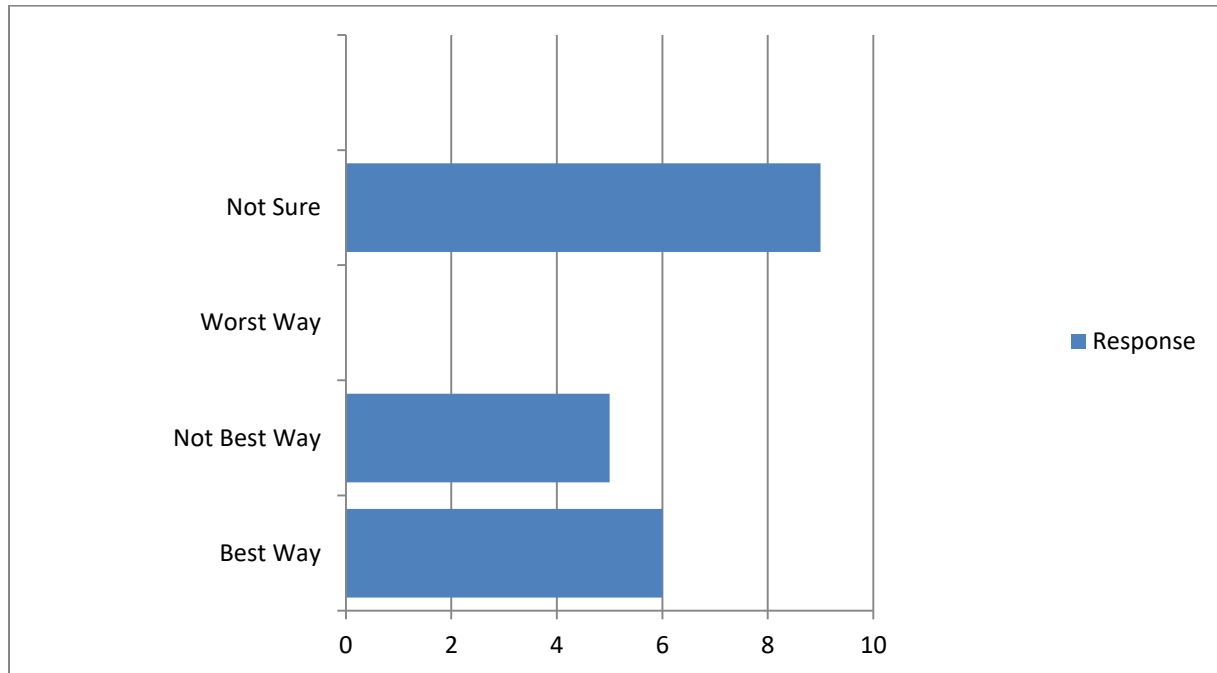
Findings, Analysis and Discussion

Findings

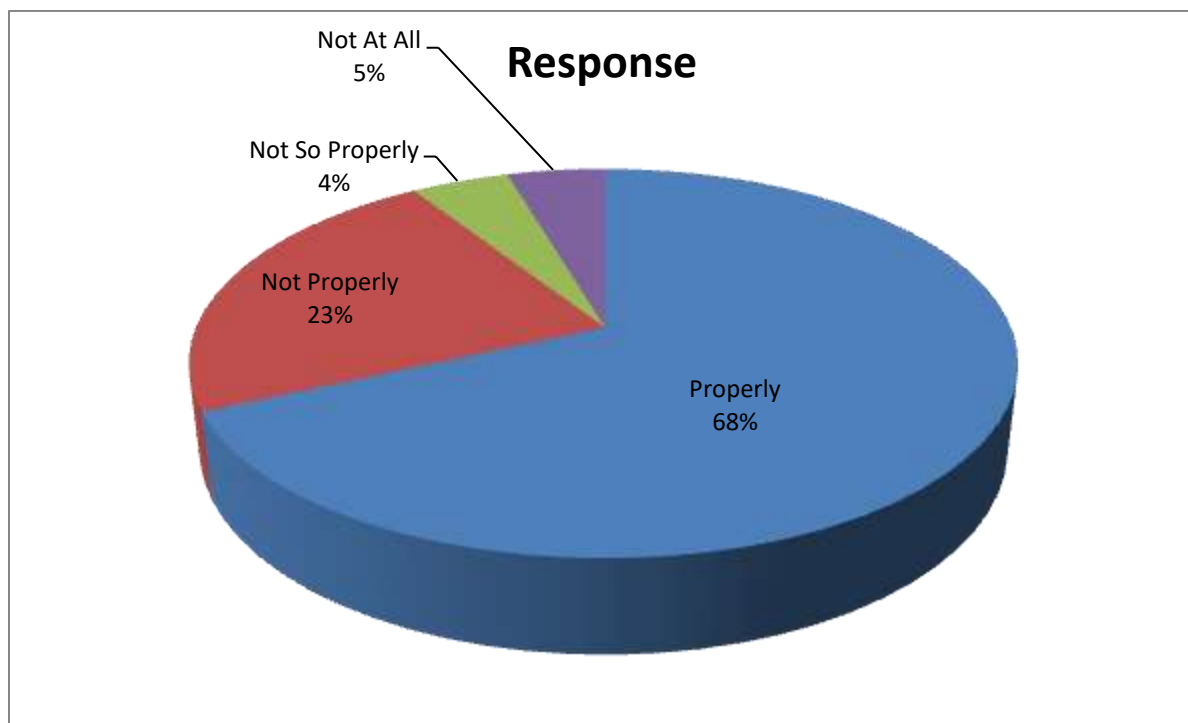
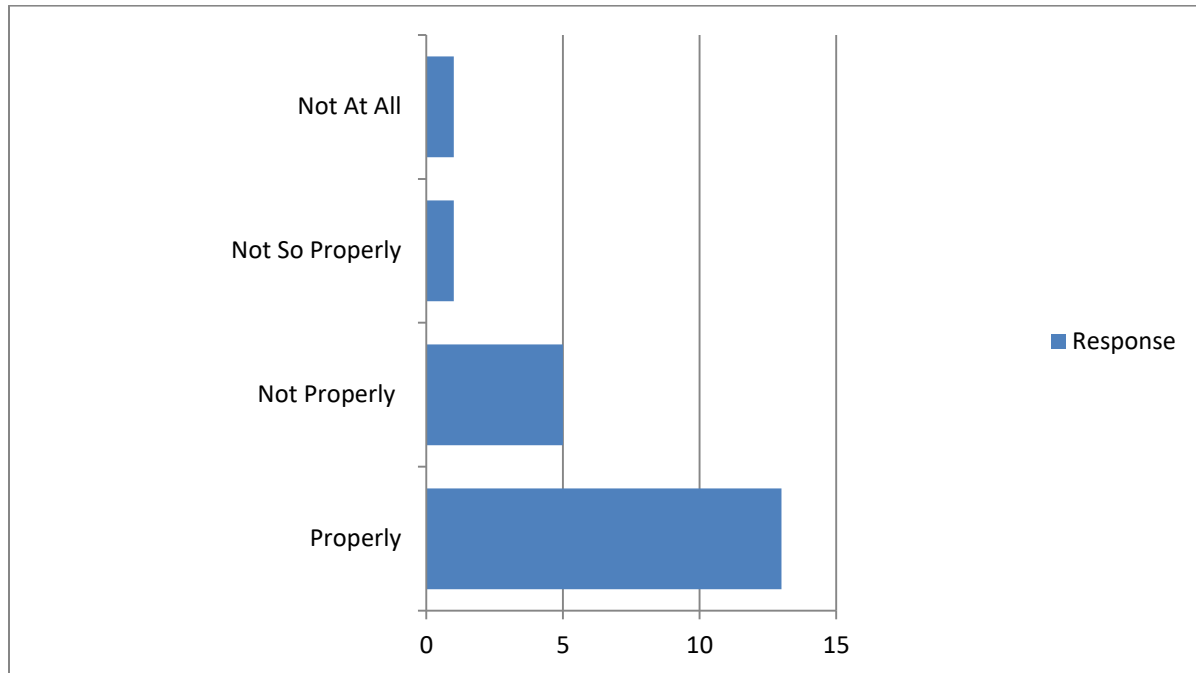
Q1. How satisfied are you with virtual learning?



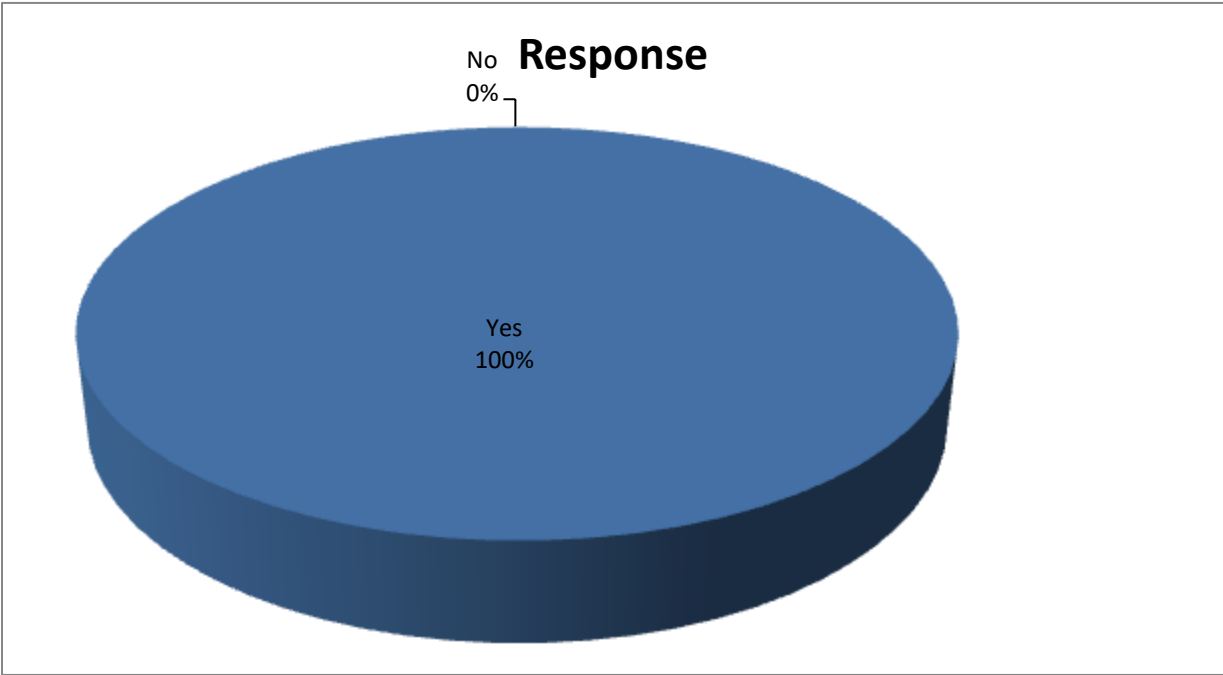
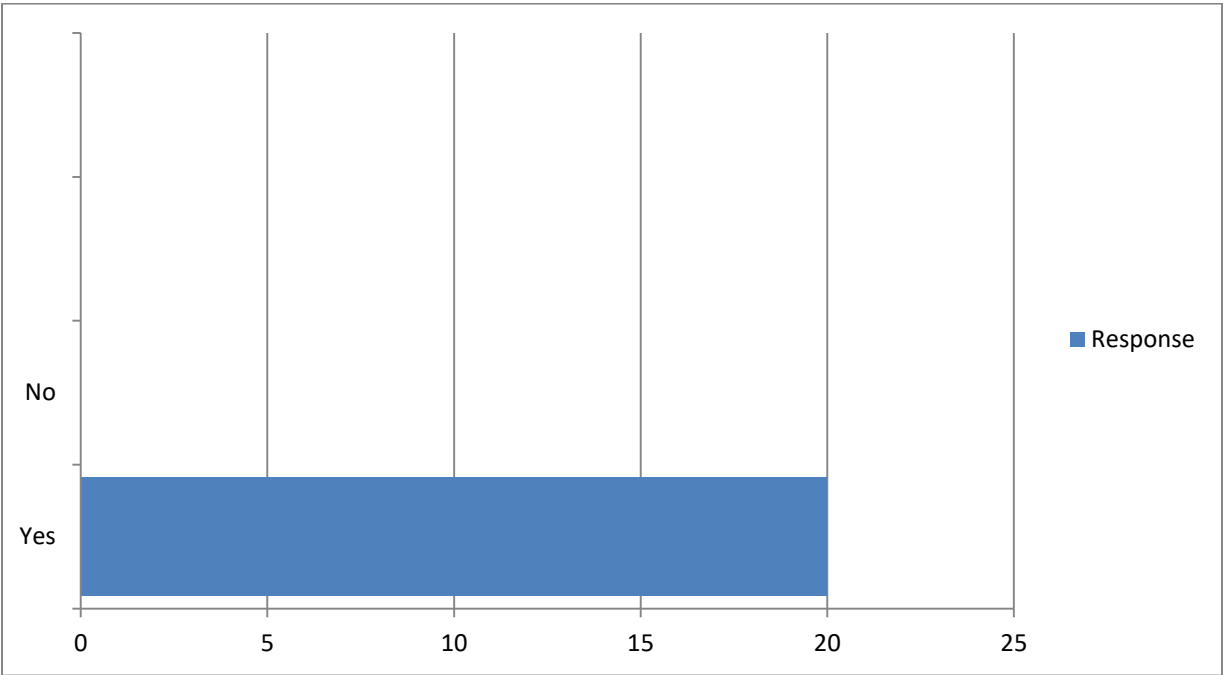
Q2. Do you think virtual learning is the best way of learning?



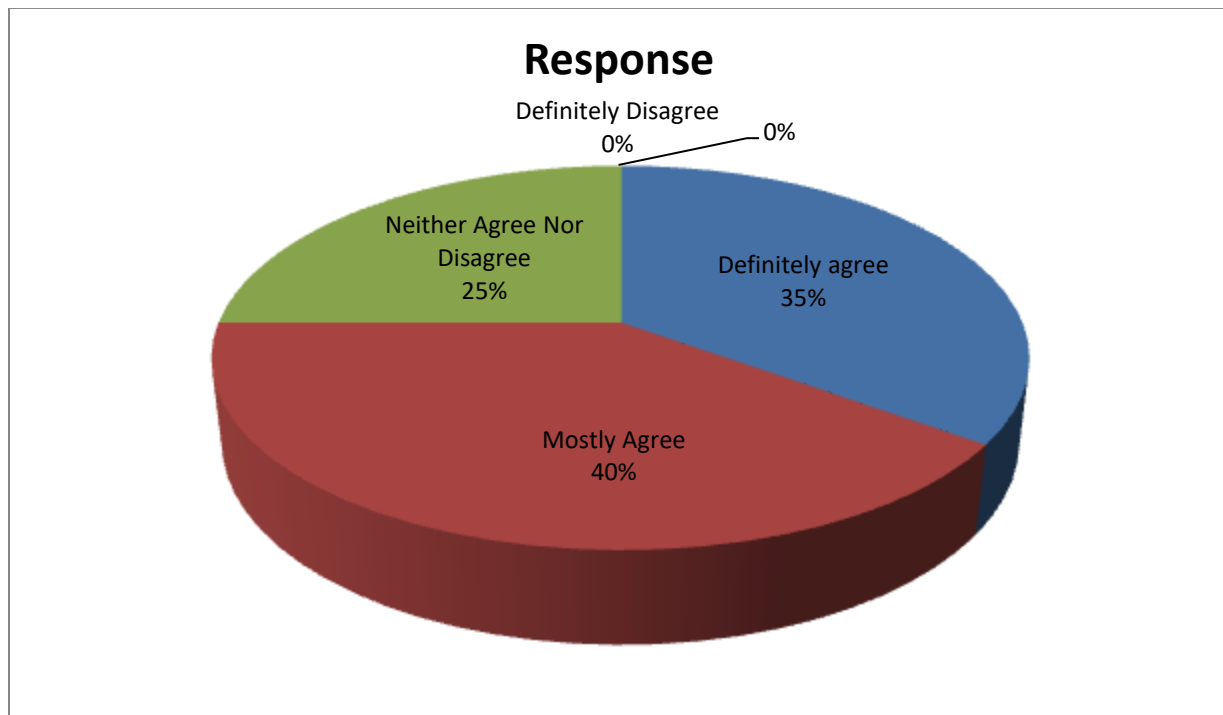
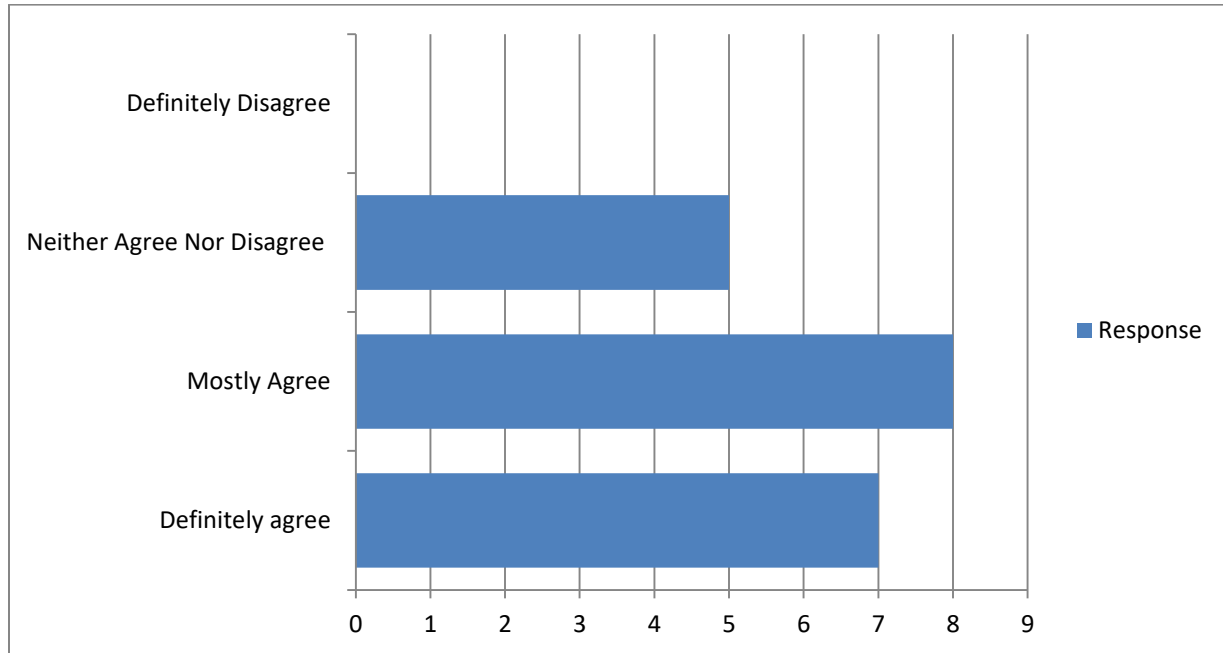
Q3. Are you able to access materials properly using virtual learning?



Q4. Do you know what virtual learning is about?



Q5. Do you agree or disagree with using virtual learning in higher education?



Analysis

From the data collected through issued questioners, this study found that the number of persons satisfied with virtual learning environment was higher than those who were partially satisfied or not satisfied, the number of persons who were able to access the system was greater than those who did not find it easy to access, there was also a greater percentage of persons who had knowledge of the system as well as people who strongly agreed to the use of virtual learning environment.

Discussion

The general question of the link between VLE use and academic performance has received less direct attention. Maltby and Mackie (2009) assessed the relationships between academic achievement and VLE in a group of public health undergraduates. The result of the research showed that the institution of the VLE program into the educational system was found to bring about mixed feelings/effect. On the other hand, Lee et al. (2009) were able to show a distinct positive correlation between the academic performance of students and the implementation of the VLE system especially in the learning of the Japanese language. Also, similar results were reported in students studying psychology (Beaman and Harvey, 2005) as well as those studying medicine (Johnson, 2008).

The survey from Peter and James 2015 also found that the VLE has minimal effect on students' academic performance within the Geotechnics 3 module, but a moderate impact on their performance in the Design Project in the final year of mathematics students.

Study form (Marileena et al. 2005) showed that the majority of students affirm the fact that the virtual learning environment is more satisfying, efficient, and effective than the traditional learning environment. Recently, several case studies including those from (Piccoli et al. 2001, Marandi and Luik 2003, Zhang et al. 2004,) has taken time to establish the impact of VLEs in educating students on information and communication technology (ICT).

Conclusion

In conclusion, findings from this study have ascertained shown that virtual learning environment has a positive influence on student performance and is a very accessible means of research. A large community of students overly accepts it.

It is recommended that this means of learning be incorporated into several learning institutions since it boosts students' performance. Furthermore, the monitoring of this means or method should be strict to ensure a high level of productivity.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Q1: c

- a. Satisfied
- b. Not Satisfied
- c. Partially Satisfied
- d. Strongly

Q2. Do you think virtual learning is the best way of learning?

- a. Best Way
- b. Not Best Way
- c. Worst Way
- d. Not Sure

Q3. Are you able to access materials properly using virtual learning?

- a. Properly
- b. Not Properly
- c. Not So Properly
- d. Not At All

Q4. Do you know what virtual learning is about?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with using virtual learning in higher education?

- a. Definitely agree
- b. Mostly Agree
- c. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- d. Definitely Disagree

Q6. Do you enjoy visiting virtual learning on your phone?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Q7. Do you experience any technical problem in accessing your module?

- a. I do not have any technical problems
- b. I did have but were resolved quickly
- c. I had some problems which took long to resolve

Q8. Do you agree or disagree in using virtual learning in higher education?

- a. Definitely disagree
- b. Mostly agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Definitely disagree

Q9. Is it possible to monitor the interaction of students involved?

- a. Very possible
- b. Possible

c. Not possible

Q10. What is your gender?

a. Male

b. female

Appendix 2

	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Partially Satisfied	Strongly
How satisfied are you with virtual learning?	15	0	4	1
	Best Way	Not Best Way	Worst Way	Not Sure
Do you think virtual learning is the best way of learning?	6	5	0	9
	Properly	Not Properly	Not So Properly	Not At All
Are you able to access materials properly using virtual learning?	13	5	1	1
	Yes		No	
Do you know what virtual learning is about?	20		0	
	Definitely agree	Mostly Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Definitely Disagree
Do you agree or disagree with using virtual learning in higher education?	7	8	5	0
	Yes		No	
Do you enjoy visiting virtual learning on your phone?	18		2	
	I do not have any technical problems	I did have but were resolved quickly	I had some problems which took long to resolve	

Do you experience any technical problem in accessing your module?	2	14	4	
	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Definitely disagree
Do you agree or disagree in using virtual learning in higher education?	7	8	5	0
	Very possible	possible	Not possible	
Is it possible to monitor the interaction of students involved?	4	14	7	
	Male		Female	
What is your gender?	5		15	