

Report

The Impact of Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

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Introduction

In this report I am going to talk about the impact of virtual learning on students studying in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David – London campus. I am going to present primary and secondary research about the report, including analysis on questionnaire and graphics. Providing useful research, we can understand how much actually the Virtual Learning Environment is important for our education. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic these years, the using of virtual learning platforms increased, because everyone was restricted of the educational life, so that's why these platforms are so essential for all of us, because we can communicate, study and work whenever we are. Flexible access and the best thing – you can spend more time with your family while staying home.

Background

The Virtual Learning Environment or VLE is a web platform used by teachers and students for the digital aspects of courses in different educational institutions. VLE provides to all user's activities, resources and interactions within a course structure and different stage of assessments for the students and teachers. The right VLE can replace a physical classroom with an online one when providing the opportunity for discussion threads, polls and surveys. Nowadays, due to the pandemic, most of the people around the world are forced to work and study from home, that's why all VLE platforms are the best alternative for everyone. More than a virtual repository, the platforms offer gateways to limitless connections, contents and learning where everyone can benefit. The most commonly platforms which are being used are Moodle and Blackboard.

Advantages of VLE

Here I am going to list some of the advantages which VLE has, and they are:

-  **Easy tracking and Assessment** – with the VLE the teachers easily can say which students have completed their tasks and they can assess them on taking quizzes so they can ensure if their students are absorbing the material.
-  **Time saving** – the platform can provide online training or educating through connections for those who cannot make it to the physical classroom because of illness or those who don't have the opportunity to study in campus at all. Same for employees/employers.
-  **Communication and connection** – due to research of BBC Active, they found out that students, employees etc can answer question with forums and message board on the VLE platform. This saves time and builds connection and community among the team of the institution.
-  **Flexibility** – students can have access to the platform whenever and wherever they want. If they did not understand something, they can review the entire curriculum from time to time. For the teacher its flexible because they can add or change material at any time.

Disadvantages of VLE

Some of the disadvantages for the VLE platforms are:

-  **Getting lost in the material** – depending on the learning style each student has, some might want to ask lecturer for a something which they are not able to provide online or lessons which are more visual and hands-on.
-  **Discomfort with technology** – some people might not be sure how to use these platforms due to lack of experience with the newer technologies which nowadays are operating the digital world. That's why, all VLE platforms' users have online training of how to operate it and how to understand it.
-  **Limitations** – the platforms don't offer a human-to-human contact, which limit the opportunities to minimum for teamwork, role-playing activities and discussions.
-  **Wi-fi connection** – we all know that all platforms are dependent of internet connection, and I think that's the biggest minus here. For example, if you are attending an online lecture and you have internet issues, you are logging out automatically and like this you can miss very important information.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of VLE is to create motivating and self-learning experiences for students in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

The objectives are:

- To identify the benefits of learning on students in the educational institutions.
- To improve the quality and effectiveness of education to support online learning by using a computer.

Method

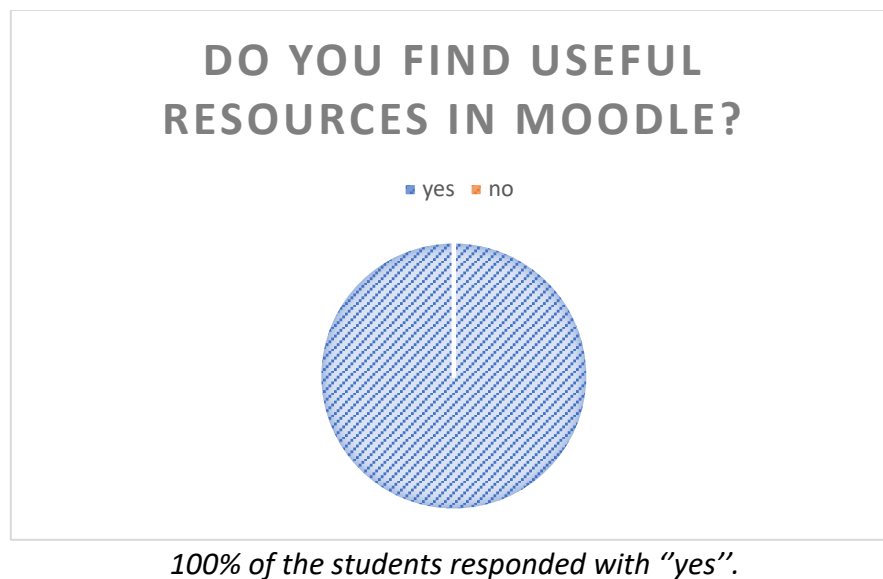
The method I am using to gain information for this report of doing my primary research is based on qualitative and quantitative data. The research I did is a collecting information from students studying in the University of Trinity Sain David London Campus by survey. It contains 14 questions from which 10 are close ended questions and 4 are open ended

questions. The qualitative data I got I will explain in detail by analysing the open-ended question and the graphics from them. The quantitative data I am going to explain with graphics produced by Excel. All 12 students were asked to answer all 14 questions based on their experience with the VLE platform – Moodle.

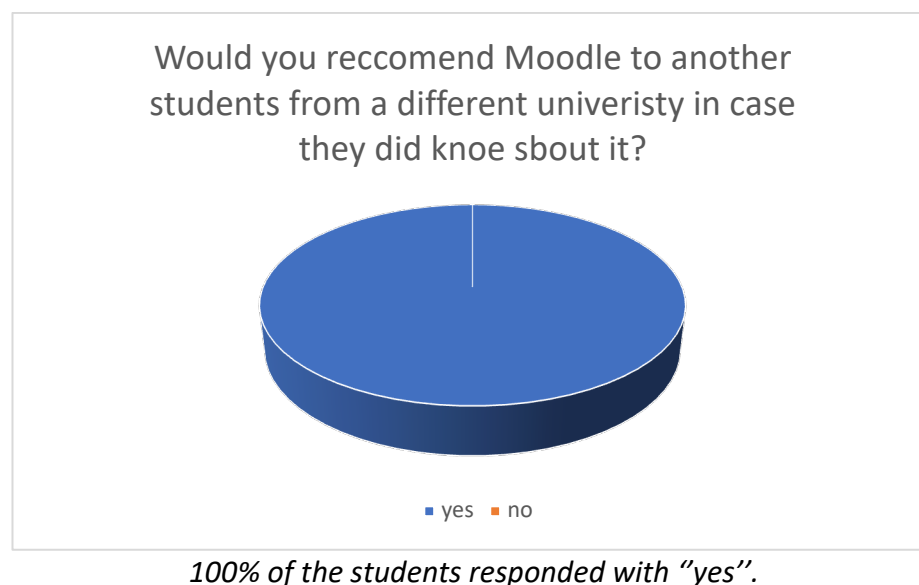
Results

Quantitative analysis – (Closed Questions)

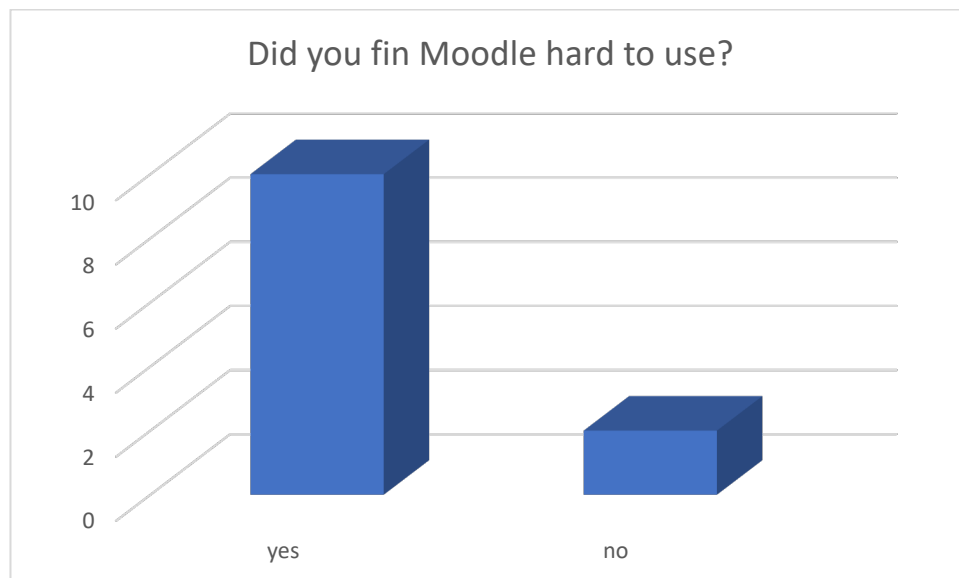
1. The students were asked if they are finding any useful resources in Moodle. All of them responded with 'yes'.



2. They also were asked if they would recommend Moodle to other students from a different university if they did not know about it. All 12 students responded with 'yes'.

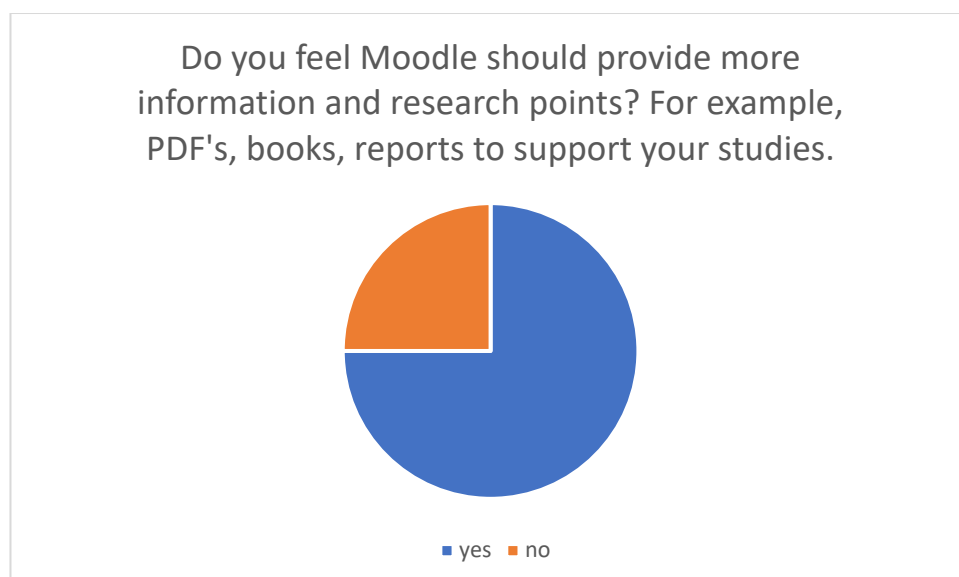


3. In this question, the participants had to answer about if they found Moodle hard to use. Ten out of twelve students answered that for them Moodle is easy to use. However, two students answered with 'yes' which is leading to that for them Moodle is hard to be used.



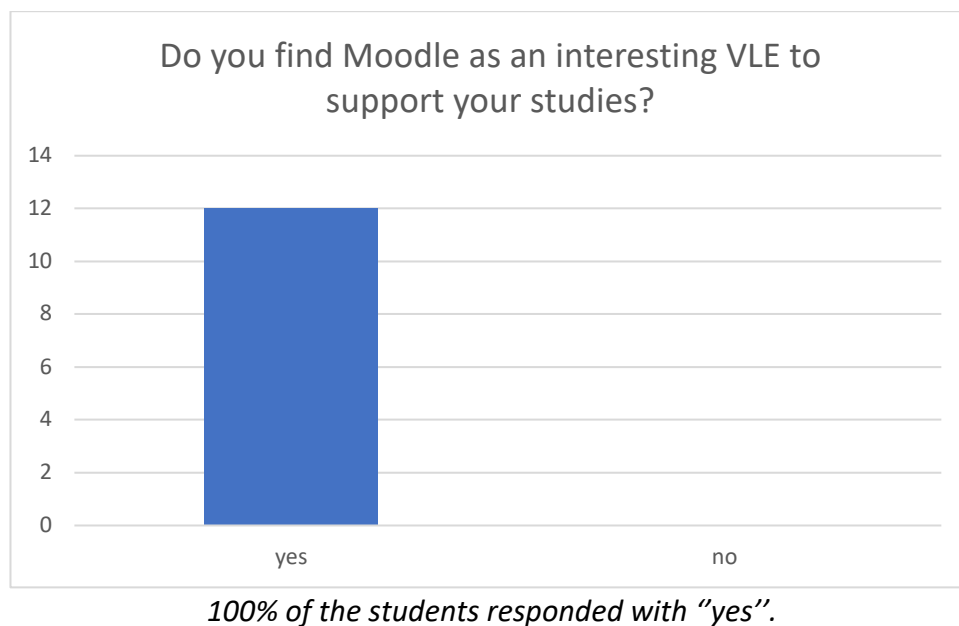
58% students responded with "yes", 42% students responded with "no".

4. In question four which is "Do you feel Moodle should provide more information and research points? For example, PDF's, books, reports to support your studies." Nine students indicated 'yes' for their answer and the other three indicate with 'no'.

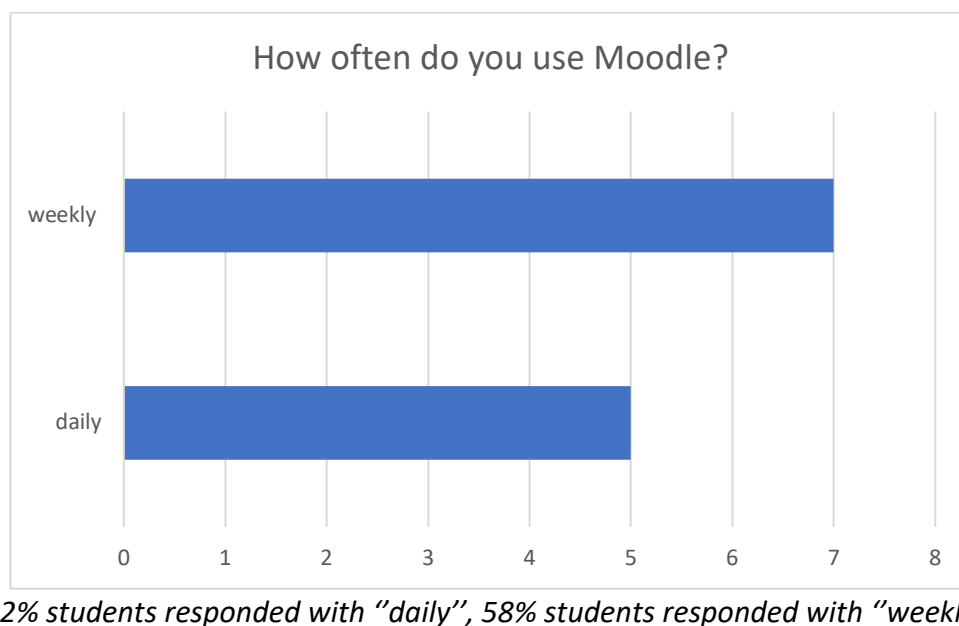


75% students responded with "yes", 25% students responded with "no".

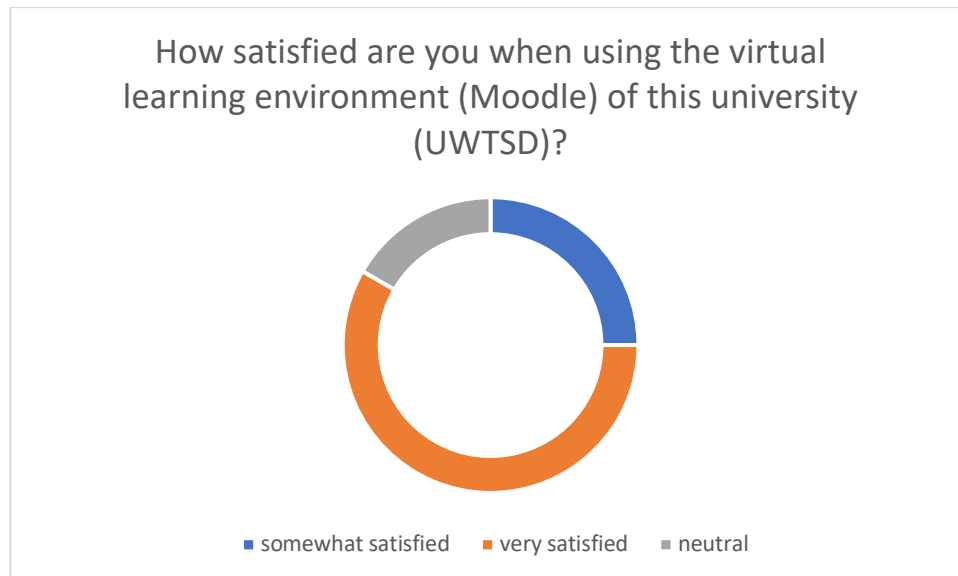
5. The students were asked if they found Moodle as an interesting VLE to support their studies. All of them responded with 'yes'.



6. In addition, the participants were asked about how often they are using Moodle. Five of them indicated that they are using Moodle daily and the rest seven students are using Moodle weekly.

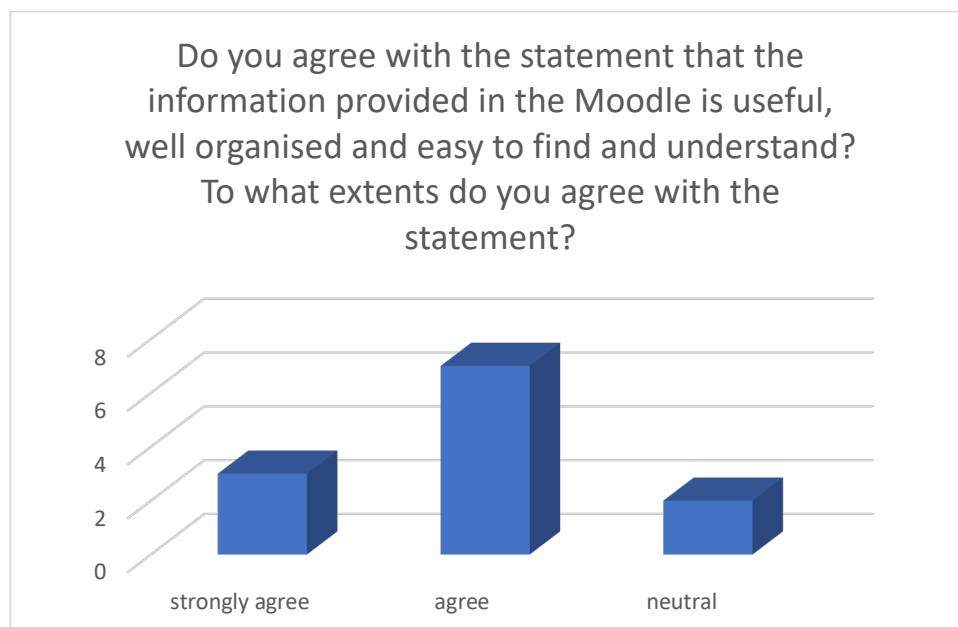


7. The students had to indicate how satisfied are they when using the virtual learning environment (Moodle) of this university (UWTSD). Seven of twelve students answered that they are very satisfied with the VLE in the university; three were somewhat satisfied and the rest indicated that they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



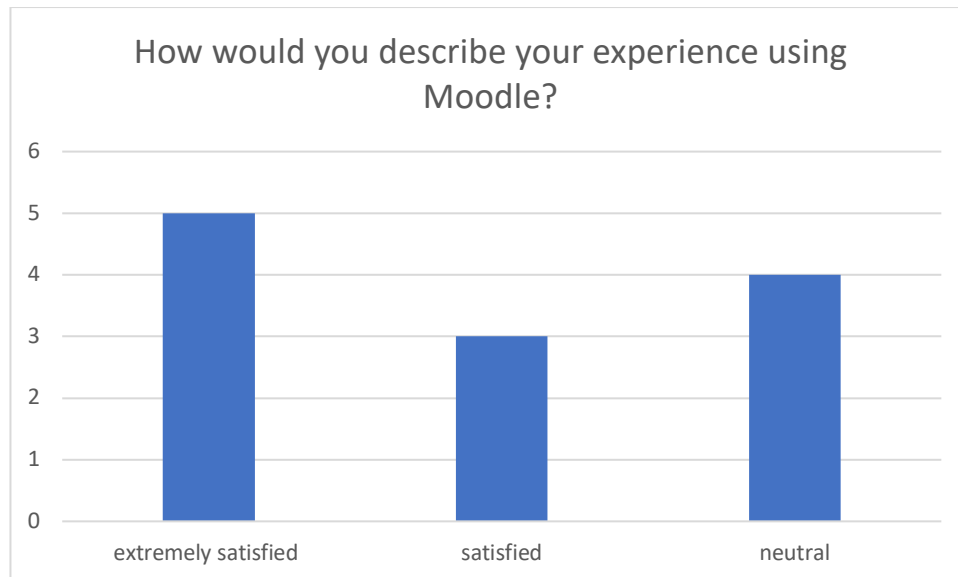
25% students responded with "somewhat satisfied", 58% students responded with "very satisfied", 17% students responded with "neutral".

8. In response of the question "Do you agree with the statement that the information provided in the Moodle is useful, well organised and easy to find and understand? To what extent do you agree with the statement?" 2 out of 12 gave neutral responses and three students strongly agree.



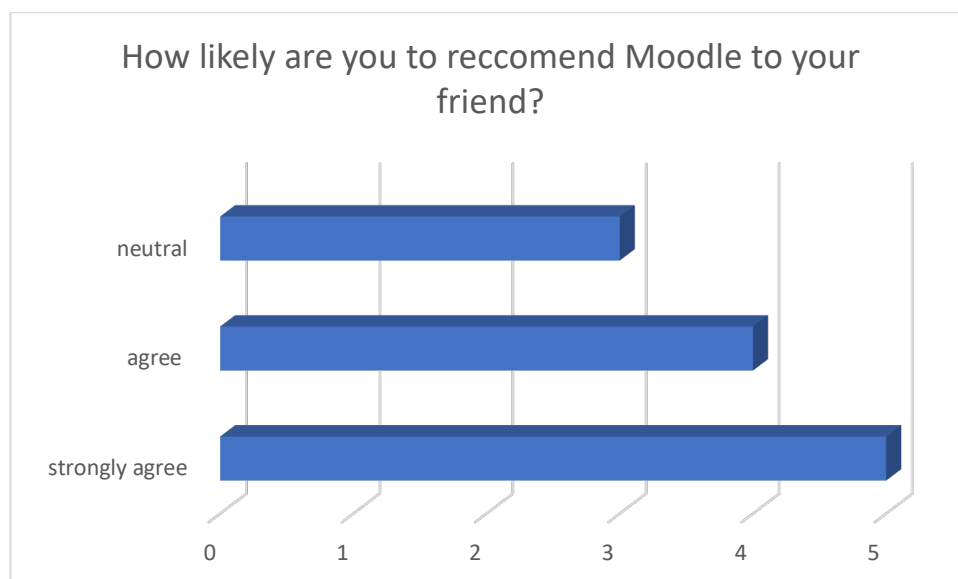
25% students responded with "strongly agree", 58% students responded with "agree", 17% students responded with "neutral".

9. Also, the students had to answer about how they would describe their experience with Moodle by selecting the numbers from 1 to 5 on the scale. In that case, five students chose that they were extremely satisfied; three were satisfied and four gave a neutral response.



42% students responded with "extremely satisfied", 25% students responded with "satisfied", 33% students responded with "neutral".

10. Last but not at least, the students had the question to answer about is they would recommend Moodle to their friends. From the scale of 1 to 5 where five is strongly recommended, 5 of the 12 students indicated that they would strongly recommend Moodle to their friends; four agreed and three gave a neutral response.



42% students responded with "strongly agree", 33% students responded with "agree", 25% students responded with "neutral".

Qualitative Analysis (Open ended questions)

- i. The students were asked if Moodle did help them in their academic study and one of the students responded with 'It is easy to upload my work in the university and it is improving that I am author of it' which leads to that this student is very satisfied of the function of Moodle during his education. Also, another student added the following answer 'Useful links, module slides available to check for previous and upcoming classes and more.' However, one students admitted that 'It does help for sure but the information is not up to date, it should be updated regardless if students are level 4, 5 or 6. I am spotting always information on Moodle which needs to be updated or changed and mention this to lecturers in class but nothing ever gets done and I am not sure if this is a falling of UWTSD or not.' In summary of that question, the students agreed that Moodle did help them in their academic studies.
- ii. For the second question the participants were asked to explain the useful section of Moodle and they said its 'flexible'; 'the lecturers are always available'. One student said that 'the information for students to study, check about the university, I see Moodle as my guide to succeeding in my education.'
- iii. Moreover, the students were asked if they want to change anything in Moodle what it would be and why. Most of the students admitted that they would not change anything in Moodle. However, one student responded with 'Library, because it is not user friendly.' Another one said, 'I haven't fully experienced/discovered all about the Moodle answer this honestly.'
- iv. Finally, the last question for the 12 students was if they think that Moodle provide for them all the resources and they don't need to look for other websites for relevant information. Most of the students responded that they still need to look for more information – 'No. It require to add more information'; 'No, but maybe it could be yes and that we as students are still not fully aware of how to make good use of Moodle.'; 'Yeah, somewhat – doesn't provide all the information I need.' But also, some students indicated with 'yes' and 'yes I think so'; 'it definitely does and one can for sure pass using only that information, but also good to check out external sources for the sake of the research.'

Discussion

As we can see from all the research which has been done, the VLE platforms its very important in not only our education but for work as well. For the UWTSD students, the VLE is an essential part of their education. Due to the pandemic, Moodle is the best program which can be used from a student because provides everything that they need. It is easy for access a range of material from learners on any age, clear directions so can help students with self-regulation in their learning pathways. Teachers and students can develop and adapt curriculum aligned information. The platform also can support classes and information in around 100 languages.

Dr Martin Dougiamas (CEO of Moodle) released the innovation of Moodle due to excellent online experience from its users. He is saying that around 70% of the internet traffic is via mobile devices and he is expecting for a rapid increase in the next couple of years. The statistics shows that most of the students want to have their studies easily for access, that's why Moodle is trying to meet these need and expectations of the students. The CEO also adds that Moodle's mission is to always bring powerful and flexible tools for education to the students.

Conclusion

In conclusion I could say that after that research, I realised that all VLE platforms are important and useful. Teachers easily can assess students' work and provide online lectures. As advantages there are disadvantages as well from which the VLE platforms can improve their services. In this report, I analysed all the positive and negative impacts, I also analysed all of the 14 questions of the primary research which was provided to 12 students studying in UWTSD. In my opinion due to the pandemic, the University of Trinity Saint David has excellent and positive influencing by Moodle. Most of the student are satisfied because they have access to library, available teachers, flexibility and service desk in Moodle where they can get support if they need. that's why most of the students agreed with the fact that they would recommend Moodle to their friends or students from different universities. In addition, however, after the survey, it seems that Moodle needs a regular update as well.

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