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DIGITAL SKILLS AND RESEARCH METHODS
BMSW4003

***Title:** Impact of VLE on the learning experience of the students of University of Wales Trinity
Saint David London Campus*

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Abstract

The outbreak of covid-19 has caused high barriers in educational system due to lockdowns and limitation in conducting physical classes. Therefore, the educational institutes have introduced the system of eLearning for conducting online classes. Furthermore, the use of eLearning methods has been increasing worldwide for the educational benefits of the students. The VLE system have been used by many educational institutions for conducting online virtual classes for enhancing learning. This research project would shed light upon the impact and factors driving the enhancement of eLearning and the barriers faced by the students along with effective recommendations.

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Introduction

Digital learning refers to a systematic practice that provides learning instructions for the students. Digital learning involves different types of technology-enhanced strategies for educational purpose. The learning methods include different technology like virtual assistance along with internet and information technology and augmented reality. E-learning techniques has been highly beneficial for the students to continue their educational courses from different location, especially during the time of covid-19. The restriction of physical services due to the lockdowns planned by the government has been a major issue for continuation of the educational classes in the universities.

Therefore, the E-learning procedure has taken a new advance level with the help of digital attributes for enhancing learning among the student living at different demographic locations. However, only about 24-27% of the students are able to use the skills of digital learning and access e-learning courses, which depicts there is need for increasing the digital skills among the students (Shahzad *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, this research work would discuss the eLearning procedures such as VLE and how it affects the learning tendency among the students of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus. Furthermore, this research would also analyse the impact of the learning mechanism upon the students along with suggesting effective recommendations for improving the learning experiences.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research project is to assess the impact of digital learning upon students along with identifying the barriers the encounter during eLearning.

Objectives

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time
To collect the primary data from students and secondary data from online resources	The progress can be measures through assessing the numbers on the survey questionnaires, after the survey is completed.	It is achievable with the data produced by the survey respondents and the secondary literary works.	Yes, there is relevancy as the participants are students, who are well	12 days

			acquainted with eLearning technology.	
To analyse the data	The measurement is possible through assessing the result of the questionnaire and analysis of the selected themes.	This objective can be achieved by using time management and good analytic skills.	This objective is relevant as it focuses upon the data related to eLearning.	6 days
To offer effective recommendation for improving eLearning method	The recommendation and conclusion yielded after completion of the project would give insight about the progress of this objective.	This objective is achievable with the help of effective analytic skills of the research team.	This is relevant as this objective is related to important information about eLearning technology for students.	7 days

Table 1: Objectives

Rationale

The researcher would be identifying the barriers related to online method for learning as the current scenario depicts high need for adapting to eLearning and increasing digital skills by the students as well as the teachers. The lockdown and restrictions due to covid-19 has been a barrier for conducting education through the traditional method. Hence, the eLearning method by using different mechanism like the VLE system must be utilized for conducting the educational lessons and learning.

Literature review

Idea of eLearning

According to Ngambiet *al.* (2020), eLearning can be defined as a learning mechanism that has replaced the traditional learning method of educational learning. This process involves high contribution of electronic and digital resources for transferring knowledge and aid in learning new things. The eLearning has been increasing due to the outbreak of Covid19 in 2020, which has enhanced the scope for the business worldwide, expecting a market share of £40 billion by the year 2026 (student.org, 2020). This is because at the present situation, about 90% of the global institutes are using the process of eLearning for providing educational services to their students, which was only 4% during the year 1995.

The various digital platforms are offering scope to access digital learning courses. Furthermore, the level of utilizing eLearning in educational system has highly increased in 2020 due to the restriction on physical classes for preventing Covid19.

Various learning methods

The two learning methods available to the students are online or Digital learning and the traditional learning or offline learning. The traditional learning refers to the classes conducted by the teachers on a physical classroom, which is not possible during the time of the pandemic disease, covid-19. Therefore, the teaching faculties are preferring to continue the educational process through utilizing the digital or online learning. The digital learning method offers the benefit of accessing the learning modules and resources from anywhere and at any time with the help of internet technology and electronic devices (Chang and Fang, 2020). Furthermore, the various technology like VLE and Augment Reality incorporated in the digital learning method for enhancing the learning and teaching experience of the students and the teachers respectively.

Advantages of digital learning

The eLearning mechanism has wide range of benefits in context to easy accessibility for the students. The following benefits are highly associated with eLearning technologies.

- ELearning is highly effective in improving the digital skills of the students through offering user friendly interface and easy acceleration.

- Personalised eLearning has been easier for the students with help of online educational strategies adapted by different institutions.
- The digital platform for learning helps to save time as students can access and attend online classes without travelling to physical venues. ELearning modules are available at any location and during anytime.
- The eLearning platforms help the students to go through the lectures and study material as many times as they desire to. Hence, it helps the, to re-watch the learning materials and get more beneficial information.

Though eLearning has been a great advantage for the educational system, but there are still certain **challenges** in context to digital learning. For instance, sharing immediate feedbacks can be an issue, where traditional learning takes place in physical classroom and offers scope to raise doubts and feedbacks by the students and teachers immediately during the lesson. Furthermore, Physical interaction is also not possible in digital learning as all the interaction takes place via online and electronic mechanism in the VLE system.

Opinion of the Students

It has been reported that majority of the students are showing high interest towards the process of eLearning technologies. However, only 24% of the respondents choosing online study materials are female, while around 27% of them are male. Therefore, it depicts that there is high scope for reaching out to the students body and raise awareness for the importance and utility of eLearning programs for their education (Ferdiget *al.*, 2020). This would help to engage more students to take up eLearning method and continue the learning courses. However, in order to increase the users of eLearning technology, the students must be well trained in using digital skills that includes using electronic devices and technologies like computers, internet and other digital features related to eLearning method.

Literature gap

The above literature review has information regarding the current progress of the impacts of eLearning method in an eloquent form. Nevertheless, it lacks university centric response of students regarding the eLearning techniques. Therefore, the research team would be working for minimizing this gap and analyse responds of students from the selected university.

Methodology

The researcher would be using both primary and secondary data collection for conducting the research. The quantitative along with qualitative analysis would be executed for data collection. The research team would conduct survey on 20 students from London through online process, as there would be no scope for physical interaction during the time of covid19. The student would be communicated through their individual emails.

The criteria for selecting the students are the following:

- They must be enrolled under the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus.
- They must have experience with using VLE for minimum 6 months

The questionnaire was prepared and sent to the students via email and collected the results through email as well for maintaining social distancing.

Primary Data Analysis

Q1. Specify your gender.

Options	Percentage	Responded	Total participants
Female	40%	8	20
Male	50%	10	20
Do not want to disclose	10%	2	20

Table 2: Gender

Analysis

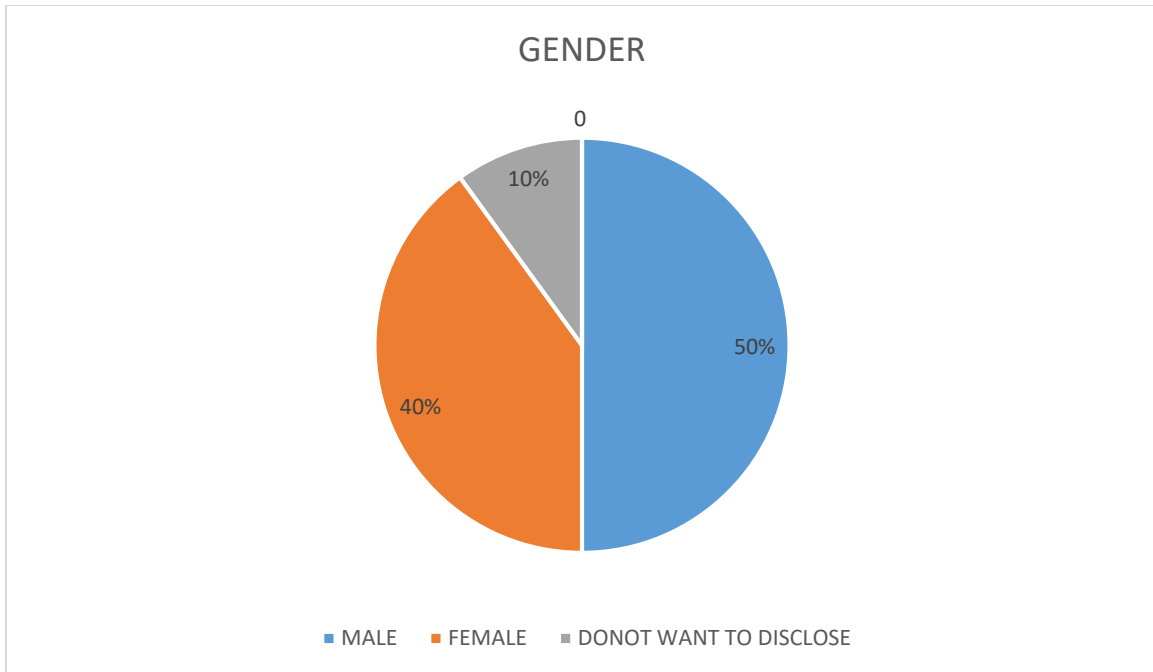


Figure 1: Gender graph

The gender graph depicts that there are 40% of female students and 50% male students responding to the survey, while 10% of them did not disclose their gender.

Q2. How long have you been using the VLE for educational purpose?

Options	Percentage	Responded	Total participants
Less than 6 months	0%	0	20
Experience of 6 to 12 months	70%	14	20
More than 12 months	30%	6	20

Table 3: Tenure of using

Analysis

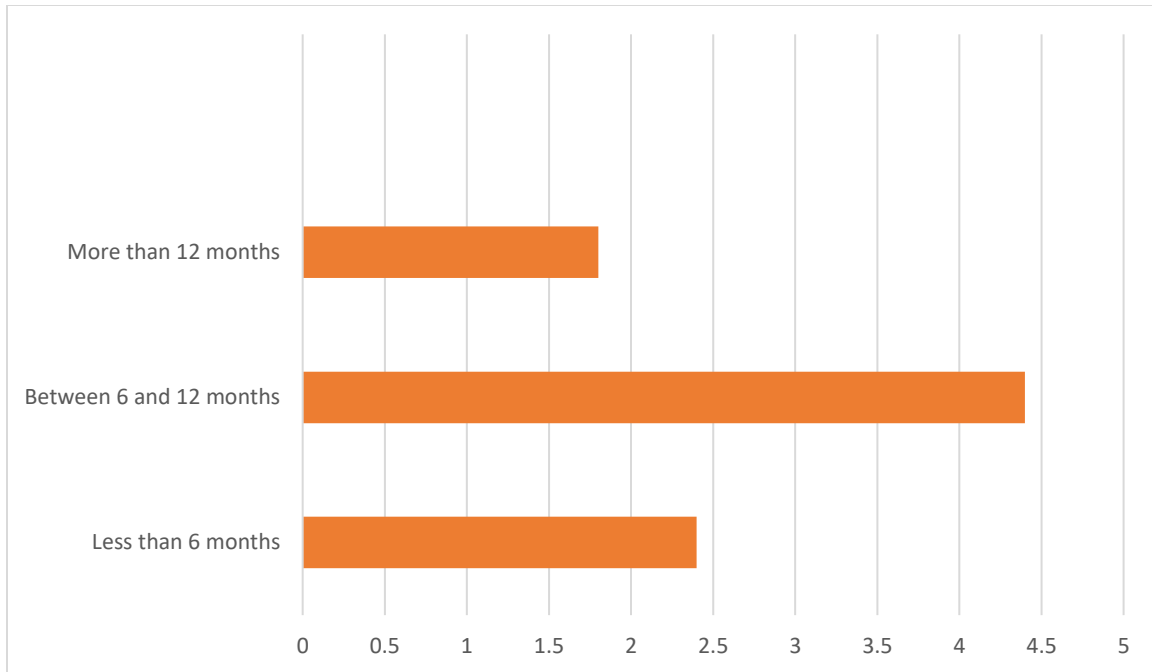


Figure 2: Using VLE tenure

The above graph depicts that 100% of the respondents have been using the VLE for more than 6 months, where 7% of them has been using the method for around 6 to 12 months and 30% them used it for more than 12 months. This graph also depicts that the method of eLearning has been increasing since the outbreak of covid19. As decided by the researcher, there would be no participants, with experience in using VLE for less than 6 months, the option accounts for 0% of respondents.

Q3. How difficult is using the VLE for digital learning?

Options	Percentage	Responded	Total participants
Very difficult	10%	2	20
Difficult	30%	6	20
Moderate	40%	8	20
Easy	15%	3	20
Very Easy	5%	1	20

Table 4: Experience

Analysis



Graph 3: Experience

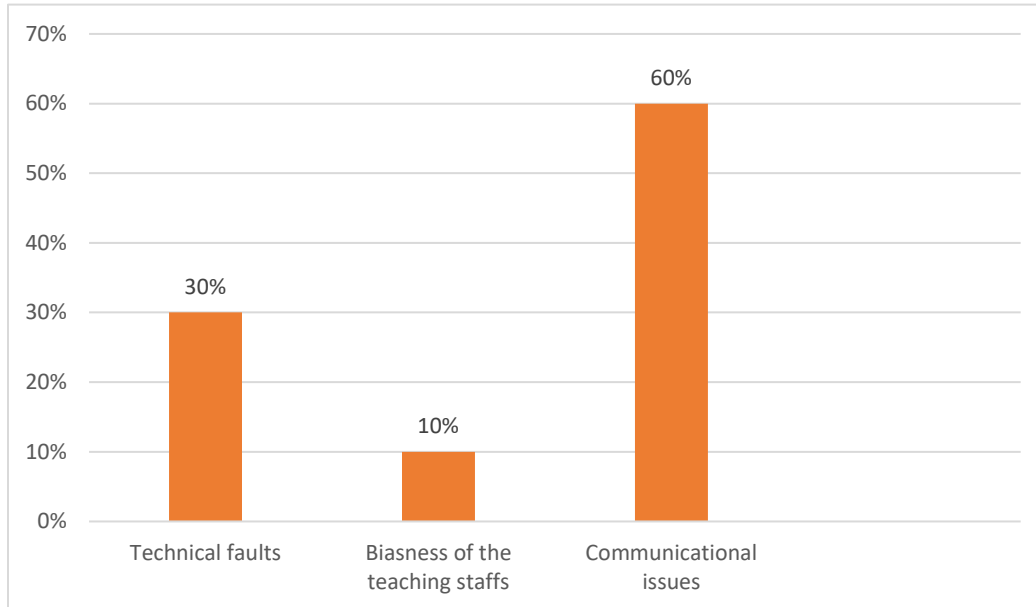
In context to sharing difficulty level of using the VLE, majority of the students gave stated that the difficulty level is moderate. Only 15% and 5% have rated their experience as easy and very easy respectively. Around 30% of the respondents feels it is difficult to learn through using the VLE system, while 10% finds it very difficult. Hence, the graph depicts that there is good scope for enhancing the method of eLearning through increasing the learning experience among the students.

Q4. What are the Challenges you encountered while using VLE?

Options	Percentage	Responded	Total participants
Technical faults	30%	6	20
Biasness of the teaching staffs	10%	2	20
Communicational issues	60%	12	20

Table 5: Limitations

Analysis



Graph 4: Limitations

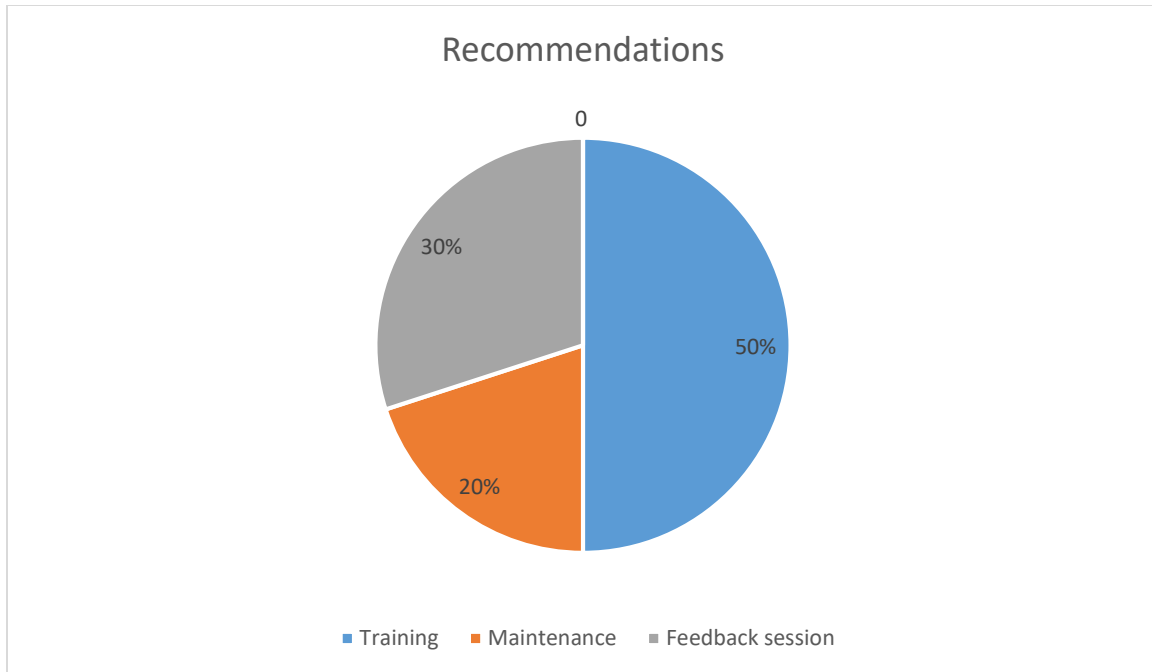
As the above graph represents, majority of the participants selected the option of limited communication as a drawback in the eLearning method with VLE system. However, 30% of them believes that lack of good technology is the major issue, which also depicts lack of communication in a way. About 30% of the respondents stated technical issue is a major concern, while using the VLE system for eLearning. Only 10% of the respondents think that biasness is a challenge, while using VLE.

Q5. What would be the most beneficial strategy to overcome the challenges in using VLE system?

Options	Percentage	Responded	Total participants
Online Training programs	50%	10	20
Maintenance	20%	4	20
Online Feedbacks	30%	6	20

Table 6: Recommendations

Analysis



Graph 5: Recommendations

In context to improving the user experience for VLE system, majority of the students responded that training would be a good measure. It would help to increase the digital skills of the students and aid in better experience with using VLE for online learning. Around 20% of the respondents selected maintenance of the technology would be great for improving the experience of the students, while 30% stated that system of getting feedbacks from the teachers would be highly beneficial for eLearning.

Secondary Data Analysis

Themes	Year	Article	Author
Theme 1: Concept of eLearning technology	2016	Future trends in the design strategies and technological affordances of e-learning.	Gros and García-Peñalvo.
Theme 2: Impact of eLearning during the time of Covid19	2020	COVID-19 and higher education: Changing adoption	Bickleand Rucker

		rates of online learning. <i>Journal of Online Higher Education</i> , 4(2)	
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Table 7: Thematic Analysis

Analysis

The secondary data offers good insight regarding the current scenario and the driving factors for the institutes to adapt the online learning techniques for education of the students. It can be observed that the outbreak of covid19 worldwide has highly affected the educational system, with restriction to conduct classes in physical setting. Therefore, the online platform has been highly beneficial to offer virtual classroom setting and conduct the lessons with the help of VLE system and digital technology. This has helped in overcoming the barrier of accessing study materials due to varied location along with good scope for using wide range of study materials for educational purpose. The impacts also include the advantage for the educational institutes to continue their courses for the students through digital learning technologies. However, there are certain barriers like lack of easy and smooth communication, lack of constant feedbacks and ineffective digital skills of the students makes it difficult for them to learn by using the VLE system.

Conclusion

The researcher has conducted a survey on 20 students from University of Wales Trinity Saint David London to find out the view of the students upon using the VLE system for eLearning. Furthermore, the secondary analysis has helped get more information regarding the impact and growth of eLearning technologies due to the outbreak of covid19. This research also concludes that there are certain disadvantages related to the VLE system, such as low scope for feedbacks and ineffective communication. Therefore, the management must intervene and plan the study materials with offering good scope for sharing feedbacks and transparency by the teaching staffs for smooth communication.

Recommendation

- The following measures can be adapted by the educational team:

- The lesson plans must be planned with sufficient time for everyone offering more time to learn the study materials including online tests.
- There should be good communication between the students and the teaching staffs for sharing doubts and feedbacks along with motivation for the students to take up eLearning more seriously.
- There are scope for improving the technology for better learning experience.

Referencing

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Q1. Specify your gender.

- ✦ Male
- ✦ Female
- ✦ None of the above

Q2. How long have you been using the VLE for educational purpose?

- ✦ Less than 6 months
- ✦ Between 6 and 12 months
- ✦ More than 12 months

Q3. How difficult is using the VLE for digital learning?

- ✦ Very Difficult
- ✦ Difficult
- ✦ Moderate
- ✦ Easy
- ✦ Very Easy

Q4. What are the Challenges you encountered while using VLE?

- ✦ Technical faults
- ✦ Biasness of the teaching staffs
- ✦ Communicational issues

Q5. What would be the most beneficial strategy to overcome the challenges in using VLE system?

- ✦ Online Training Programs
- ✦ Maintenance
- ✦ Online Feedbacks

Data Collection Tables

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