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Executive summary

This research report will be based on the impact of Virtual Learning Environment which is also known as VLE - Moodle on students learning experience in the University of Wales Trinity Saint David London Campus. I will be collecting primary and secondary data from students and various other sources to which I will then analyse to form a conclusion on the end results. I will be carrying out this report in order to find out the opinions on how the students at university find Moodle and if they think Moodle is relevant to them while they are studying.

Introduction

The chosen topic is to discuss the impact of Moodle within the learning environment of a student whilst studying at university and if it has made a difference or been of use within their studies and time in education.

The aim is to find out if VLE has made an impact in the learning process for students and to see if improvements can be made in order for students to use VLE in an educational form.

Literature Review

Moodle is a free online learning management system which is also known as VLE. The Virtual learning Environment platform is designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments (Moodle, 2019).

This is a system designed to be used for teaching and learning globally with ease of use for enrolled students. Moodle is web-based so can be used at anytime and anywhere and on any device from anywhere in the world. There are extensive resources available with an all-in-one learning platform.

Some of the features Moodle allows students to:

- Access course materials
- Communication between students and lecturers
- Support group tasks
- Take online assessments with automatic marking and feedback facilities

Moodle can be used for administration tasks such as:

- Displaying announcements for example when a lecture venue has been changed.
- Submitting of assignments
- Administration of online surveys, such as module questionnaires

In May 2012 a group of students named David Read, Simon J. Coles, Jeremy G. Frey and Ben Littlefield from the University of Southampton conducted a short survey; Investigating the use of Virtual Learning Environments by teachers in schools and colleges. They created this survey in order to provide a snapshot of VLE use in local schools and colleges. They gathered data from 86 respondents and what was interesting about the responses from their surveys was that people commonly used their VLE for the purpose of sharing links to websites, videos and other links and the most common response from all the participants was that they all reported using VLE

as a repository rather than for educational purposes which is what I found similar within my own research of VLE.

One of the questions asked was How easy is it to use your VLE? Just over 25% of people responded that they found it hard/difficult to use, when asked what made their VLE hard to use the response was poor organisation and an unintuitive interface, which is also similar within my own findings.

Primary Research

Methodology

I began my research by beginning with a short questionnaire which was distributed as primary data. In class a questionnaire was developed which consisted of ten questions asked to the students of University of Wales Trinity Saint David in the London campus. The aim was to gather a worthy number of responses speedily in order to gather an image of how VLE has impacted students. The questions which were asked were all related to Moodle in order to gain an understanding and opinion on what everyone thought of this Virtual Learning Environment. I asked 30 students to take part in completing the questionnaire within a two-week period. The questionnaire was promoted and aired during teaching hours but students were able to complete it within their own time.

The ten questions which were in the questionnaire were as follows:

- 1. Gender**
- 2. Age range**
- 3. Since studying at UWTSD, have you used Moodle?**
- 4. How many hours do you spend on Moodle per week?**
- 5. Did you know you could check your attendance on Moodle?**
- 6. Do you find the UWTSD Moodle easy to navigate?**
- 7. Are you happy with the range of services which are provided on Moodle?**
- 8. Do you think the UWTSD Moodle could use some improvements?**
- 9. If Yes, please specify the improvements needed.**
- 10. Has using Moodle had a positive impact towards your learning?**

Before a final copy of the questionnaires had been made, a few last-minute changes in wording were made to some of the questions and an additional question was

added at the last minute after the feedback was received from the lecturer. Question 10 was added to the questionnaire as I thought this question would be beneficial to the survey and the feedback received would be of importance. The questionnaire was constructed and presented in a simple format with the choice of answers to be ticked for all questions except one, which a space had been left for a short comment/answer to be left.

All questionnaires were anonymously filled and students were made aware of this prior to the completion of each one. The completion of each questionnaire was taken as informed consent for the data provided to be used in the study being researched. This Research report provides a snapshot of student's views about the use of VLE and its impact on their learning.

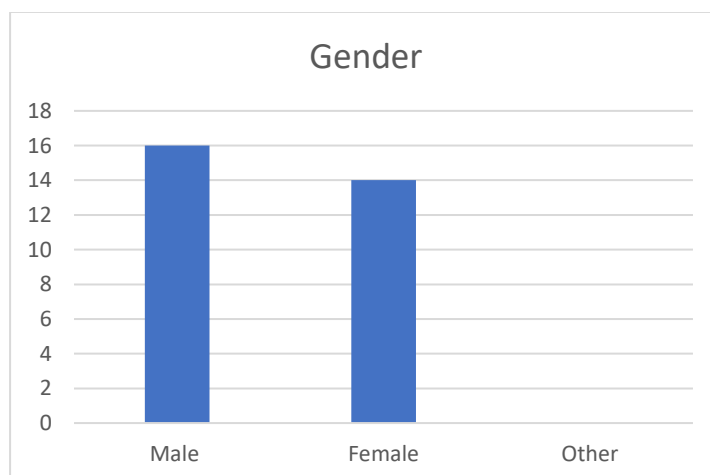
Ethical considerations

All the information and data collected was anonymously collected which means that no one will be traced back from the questionnaires. None of the information collected was personal and no one's names or I.D numbers were requested. Confidentiality and privacy were considered in all aspects before the questionnaires were given out and afterwards.

Results

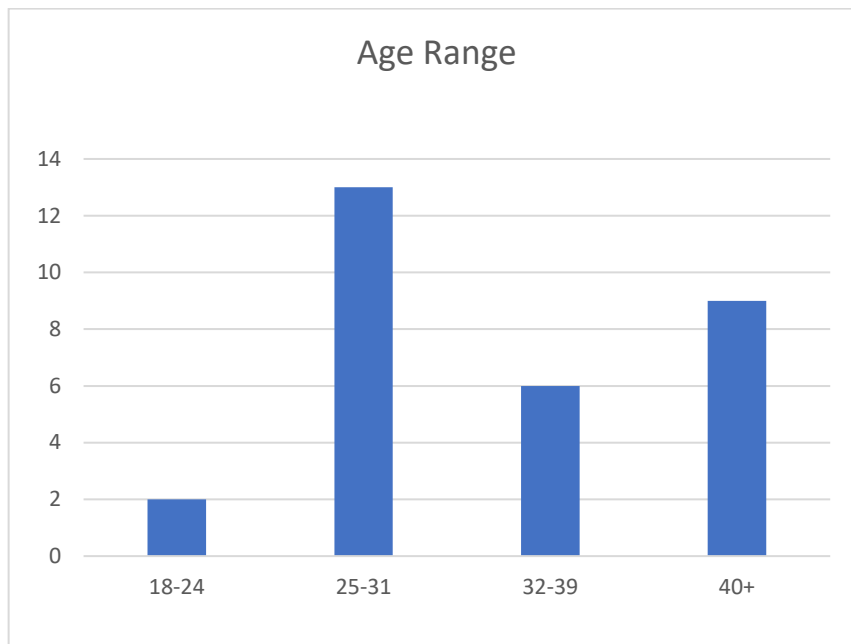
30 questionnaires were completed within a 2-week period by the students of University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London Campus. A total of 30 students participated, 16 males and 14 females. The students who participated are from various other courses studying different courses within the university.

1) Gender



Gender	Total
Male	16
Female	14
Other	0

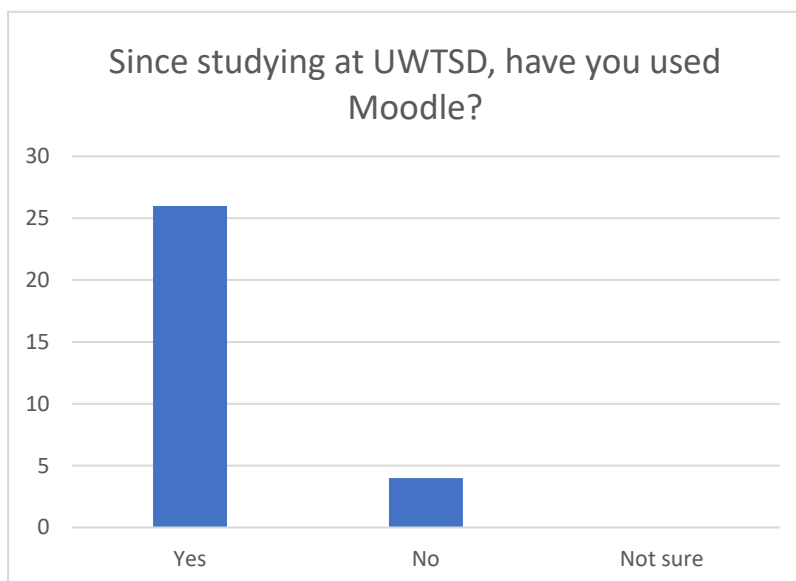
2) Age range



Age Range	Total
18-24	2
25-31	13
32-39	6
40+	9

The students were of a vast range of ages, the majority being 25-31. Most of the students stated they were adept users of technology.

3) Since studying at UWTSD, have you used Moodle?

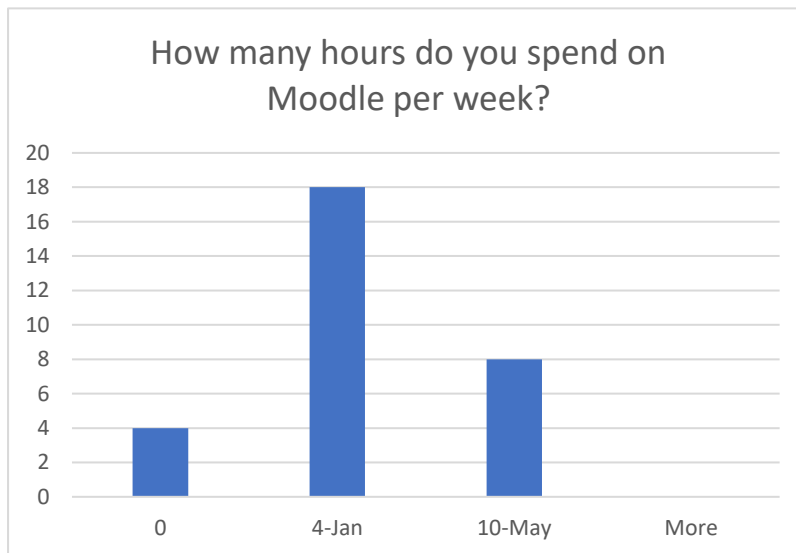


Use of Moodle	Total
Yes	26
No	4
Not sure	0

Almost all of the students who responded to the questionnaire had accessed Moodle since being at university. Only 4 students had said that they had not accessed

Moodle since being at university. The purpose of this question was to find out if all the students at the university knew what Moodle was.

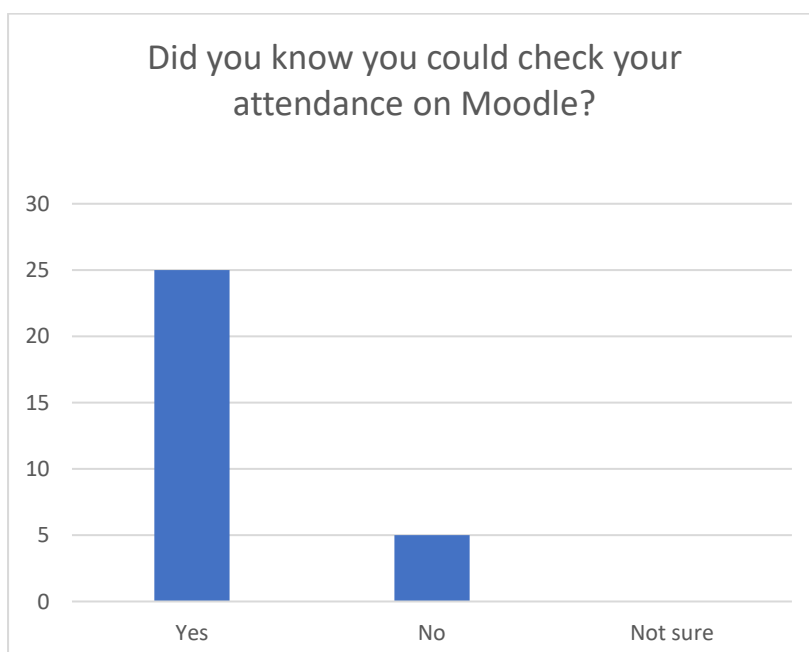
4) How many hours do you spend on Moodle per week?



Hours on Moodle	Total
0	4
1-4	18
5-10	8
More	0

From the numbers indicated above it is clear to see that the students do not spend enough time on Moodle for it to make a big enough impact on their learning.

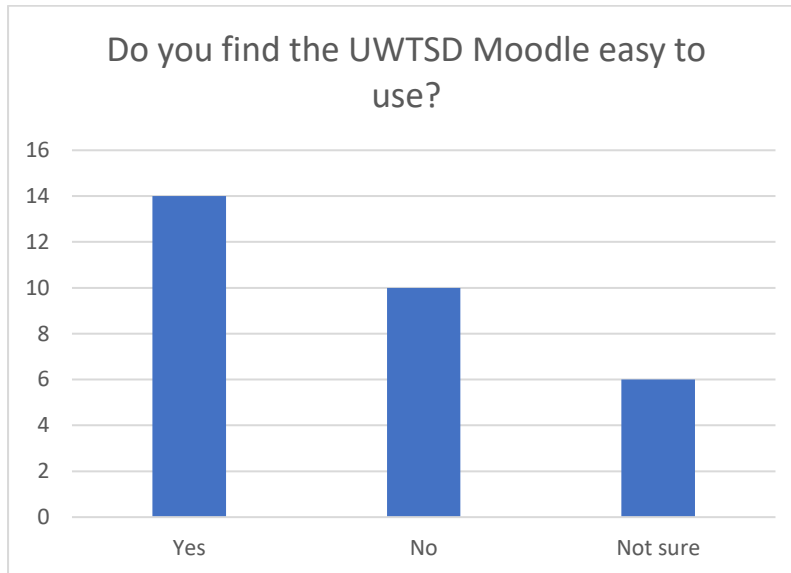
5) Did you know you could check your attendance on Moodle?



Attendance check	Total
Yes	25
No	5
Not sure	0

This was a general question in order to see if the students were aware of the basic navigations of Moodle.

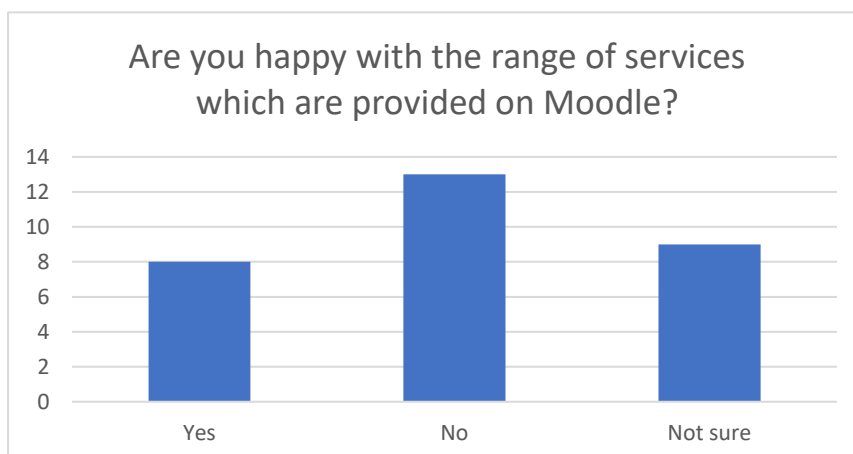
6) Do you find the UWTSD Moodle easy to use?



Ease of using Moodle	Total
Yes	14
No	10
Not sure	6

Almost half of the students reported that they found Moodle easy to use, the rest of the students said they found navigating and simply accessing Moodle quite difficult. 6 of the responses were either not sure or felt neither indifferent. Some of the students who stated that Moodle was difficult to use were adept users, who were surprised how hard it was to navigate. A few of the students also suggested that they would have used Moodle more if they had been shown how to navigate it.

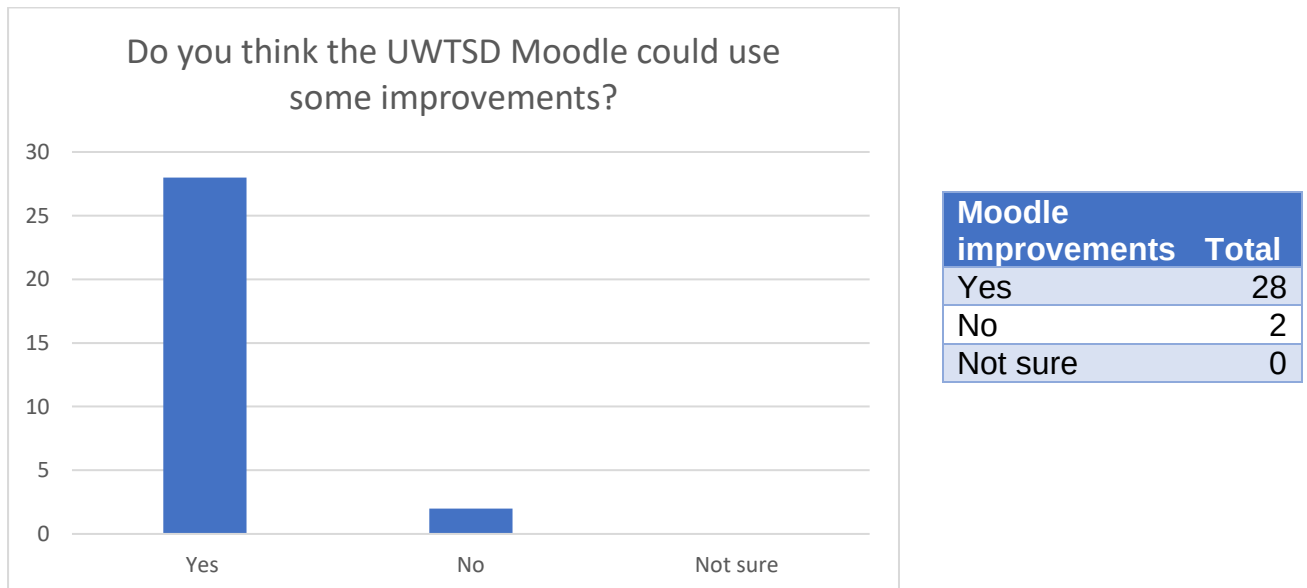
7) Are you happy with the range of services which are provided on Moodle?



Happy with services?	Total
Yes	8
No	13
Not sure	9

Many of the students said they were not satisfied with the range of services provided on Moodle at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. They also said they were not made aware of some of the services which they may have benefited from if they had known of beforehand.

8) Do you think the UWTSD Moodle could use some improvements?



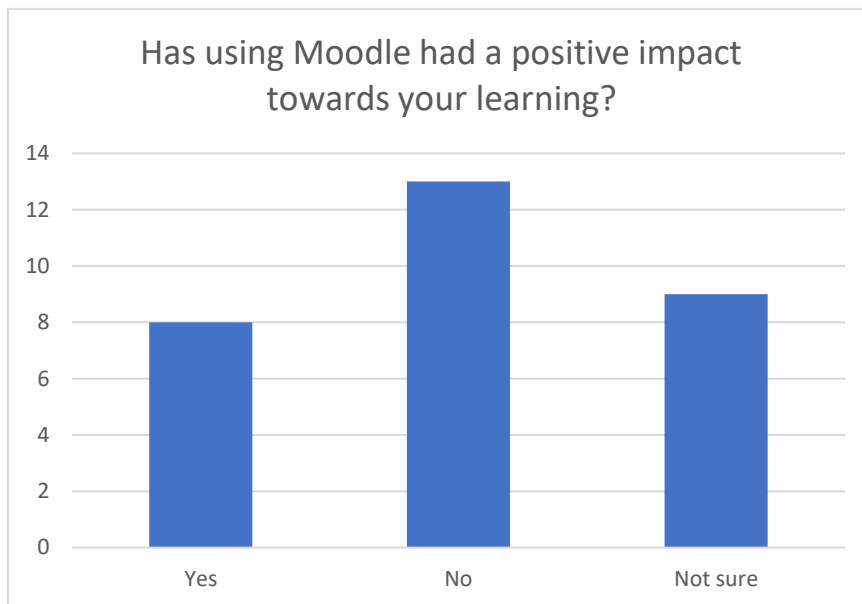
The majority of the students said yes to Moodle needing improvements and most of them said Moodle was complicated to use and simply was not easy to figure out where and how to navigate.

9) If you answered yes to the previous question, please specify the improvements needed.

This question was asked in order to find out what type of improvements students would like to see or would recommend to make their experience using Moodle better. Some of the improvements suggested were:

- More information is needed on how to use Moodle
- More learning materials
- Make navigation easier
- More sports activity information

10) Has using Moodle had a positive impact towards your learning?



Positive impact towards learning	Total
Yes	8
No	13
Not sure	9

From the results shown above it is clear to see that less than half of the students said that using Moodle had not made a positive impact within their learning process and only 8 students agreed that it did make a difference within their learning whilst the rest of the students were left undecided.

Limitations of the study

The sample size from which I collected the questionnaires from was a limitation for me as I only collected questionnaires from 30 students who were all from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, London Campus. The sample selection process was also a limitation. I could have also used other various methods to collect data, which would have given a more variable set of results but due to the lack of time this was not done.

Conclusion

The data collected and analysed indicates that whilst a few of the students found Moodle beneficial to gain information from for their studies and about the university in general but almost half of the students stated 'No' when asked if Moodle has a positive impact towards their learning experience whilst some were left unsure if Moodle had really affected their learning or education at all. When asked what they used Moodle mainly for they said it was for assignment related, such as to upload their assignments and to check for assignment deadlines.

I have also found that the students struggling to understand the concept of Moodle are mainly the age group 40+ and this is due to the lack of understanding of the internet and how proficient they are to use technology. Only a small minority of students are using their Moodle for the purposes it is intended for and this could be

increased in numbers if students felt more confident in knowing what they were doing on Moodle and knew of what services were offered on Moodle. Creating surveys and conducting research on VLE will help make improvements to the services in future which would benefit the use of VLE for students in the years to come.

References

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Appendix

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Questionnaire on Moodle

1. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

2. Age range

☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-31 ☐ 32-39 ☐ 40+

3. Since studying at UWTSD, have you used Moodle?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

4. How many hours do you spend on Moodle per week?

☐ 0-5 ☐ 5-10 ☐ More

5. Did you know you could check your attendance on Moodle?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

6. Do you find the UWTSD Moodle easy to navigate?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

7. Do you think the UWTSD Moodle could use some improvements?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

8. If Yes, please specify the improvements needed.

9. Are you happy with the range of services which are provided on Moodle?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure