

Moodle Utilization: Its Effects to Higher Education Institution's Academic Learning

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Abstract

Learning styles, study habits have changed since the advent of technology. Classrooms have become millennial with elearning. Students experience virtual environment with their access to moodle. Both the instructors and the students benefit largely from the moodle applications. This study investigated on the student conceptions of the effectiveness of moodle to academic learning. With the internet and the gadgets like the mobile and the laptops, students experience virtual learning environment. The elements of descriptive method in conducting a research supported the results of this study. Students visit and use the moodle for their academic learning. The moodle is one valuable avenue of measuring the students' interest in improving their academic performance; hence it is recommended that instructors encourage students to use the moodle, and teachers should maximize the programs in the moodle for more effective teaching as extension of the classroom.

Keywords: Moodle Utilization, elearning, Virtual Learning Environment

Introduction

Learning has become easier with the advent of technology. Lucky are the generations that study with the age of computer. There are traditional classroom managements that are

being modified for better access of knowledge and information [1]. The elearning is one of them.

The elearning has been facilitating a transformation of the classroom setting which brings key benefits in students' learning and development. Such is a proof of an effective learning with lower but lower costs in environmental impact [2].

Millions worldwide, the moodle has been a partner of the teachers and trainers in creating and delivering online learning environments. It is an education software with an open source platform that caters a great solution for both teacher and student needs. The moodle has extensive scope of features that make the resources available for documentation, instructional materials for courses and even books.

Developed on pedagogical principles, the moodle is a free and open software learning system used for blended learning, distance education. A large number of schools, universities, workplaces and other sectors find the moodle very useful for e-learning projects. Moodle (acronym for *modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment*) allows for extending and tailoring learning environments using community sourced plugins [3]. It has been continuously evolving-helping the educators in designing online courses with focus on interaction and collaborative construction of content.

Jagnathan and Martines (2008) adhere on the aforementioned benefits being serviced by the moodle. They confirm that moodle has been playing significant roles by a large scale of educational institutions. Its reputation also stems from the academic community's values of freedom, peer review, and knowledge sharing. [4].

Relative to the transactional method of exchange of knowledge, Tungue (2013) stated that that moodle encourages interaction and exploration; students' learning experiences are often non-linear. Moodle shows the systematic arrangement of conditional activities. Students can easily follow the instructions from the announcements. It seems sender

dominated; however, other features of the moodle will make the learning dynamic because courses contain both conditional and non-linear activities [5]. An internet connection answers all.

These university students have been using the moodle to their studies. Initially, the teachers upload course specifications followed by the instructional materials. With the teacher as manager of the course assigned to him/her, there are interactive activities in his/her control that challenge the students to accomplish tasks during in the classroom.

On the other hand, the moodle posts also some disadvantages. It has a flat structure for organizing and navigating learning materials. With the constant encouragement of the teachers for the students to visit the moodle and do the tasks given in the announcement, still there is but moderately impressive reactions from the students using the moodle. The researchers believe that this study will benefit the university administrators because the results will show the specifications of the moodle that need enhancement and improvement; hence, there will be better student online learning services. In addition, the programmers of the moodle software will be encouraged to identify the limitations of the moodle specifications that need further attention.

Objectives of the Study

This study delves on the ability of the moodle to integrate well between student administration systems and Moodle student information. Initially, this study aimed to determine the profile of the respondents: age, social status, course timing and civil status. Further, this work found out the frequency level of the respondents utilization of the moodle and identified which of the common moodle applications they usually consider for academic learning. Finally, this research determined the effectiveness of the moodle to students' academic learning by identifying the relationship of the respondents' level of utilization and their perception on the effectiveness of the moodle to academic learning.

Research Methodology

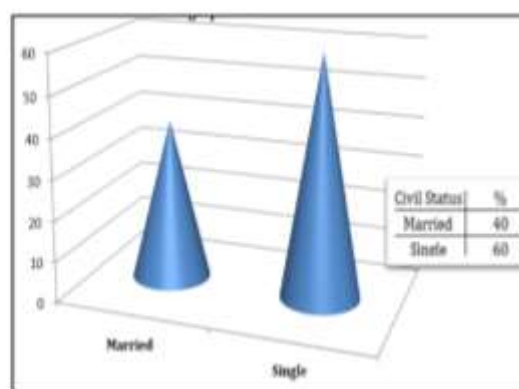
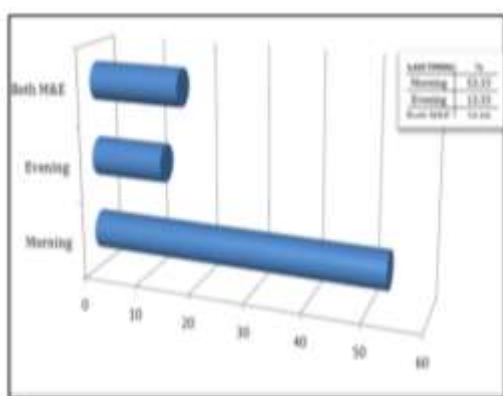
This study used the descriptive method. It is an appropriate instrument tool in calculating frequencies and averages. It will be used to get information on the present status of persons Involved in the investigation and to describe what is existing in respect to conditions or variables that are found in the given situation. Description is a fact-finding with adequate interpretation; it is also more and beyond than just data-gathering. This is effective in analyzing this study.

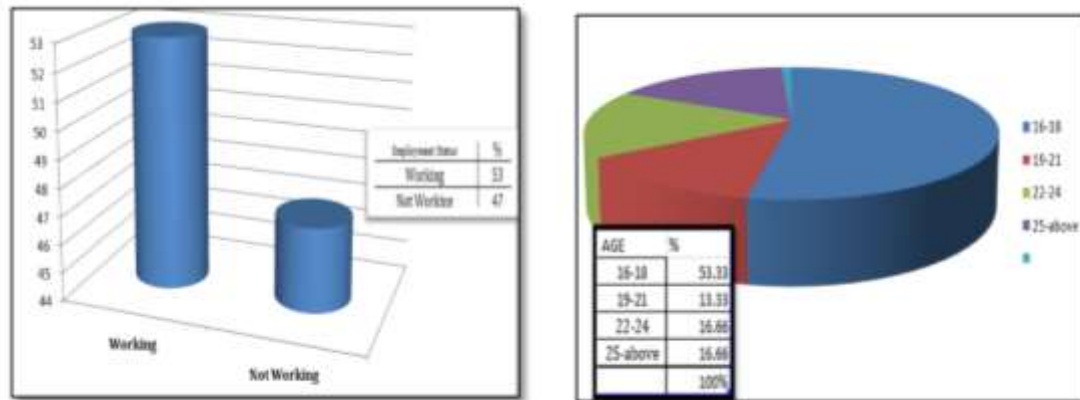
The researchers prepared the questionnaire based from the statements of the problem. Eventually upon finalizing its elements, these questionnaires were distributed to thirty (30) engineering students in one international university in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The distribution took place on 2nd trimester 2017. Taking the frequency of visit, mean and percentage of utilization were used for statistical treatment. The results of this study are presented in tables and graphs.

Results and Discussions

Findings

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

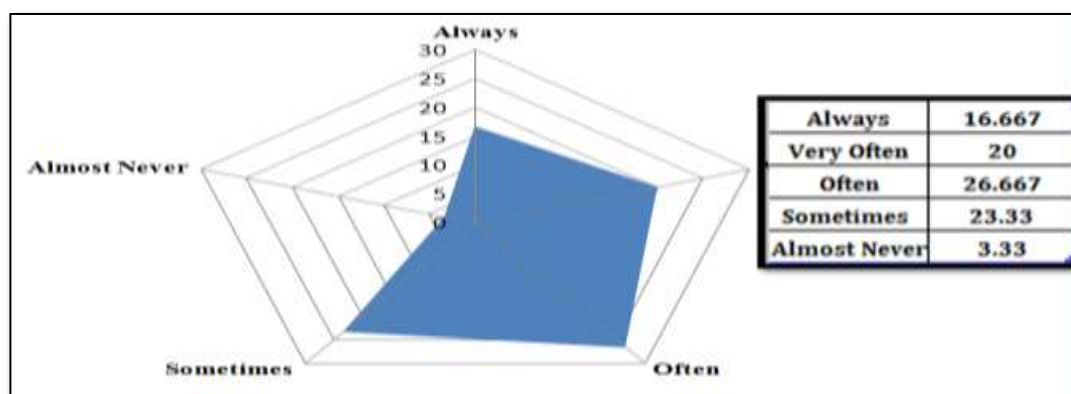




The graphs above show that most of the respondents are between *16-18 years old*, *working*, *single* and are *studying in the evening*. This is proven by Jarvis (2016), a contact reporter when he quoted Cleveland (2015) in his statements in Chicago Tribune. Accordingly, working can exhaust students, interfere with their studies; hence most students who work full time don't have the leeway in their schedules [6].

Young and working students despite some conflicts must put attention in the lessons they miss by taking advantage of the features of the moodle. In their unavoidable physical absence to classrooms, they should collaborate with other students in study groups. There is a particular discipline that they should maintain to make it to graduation rites. Relative to this, working students should have a wise and practical time management. They should allot time based from their priorities. Working students are determined to persevere, give their best and take advantage of the opportunities the school offer [7].

1. *Frequency Level of Students' Moodle Utilization*



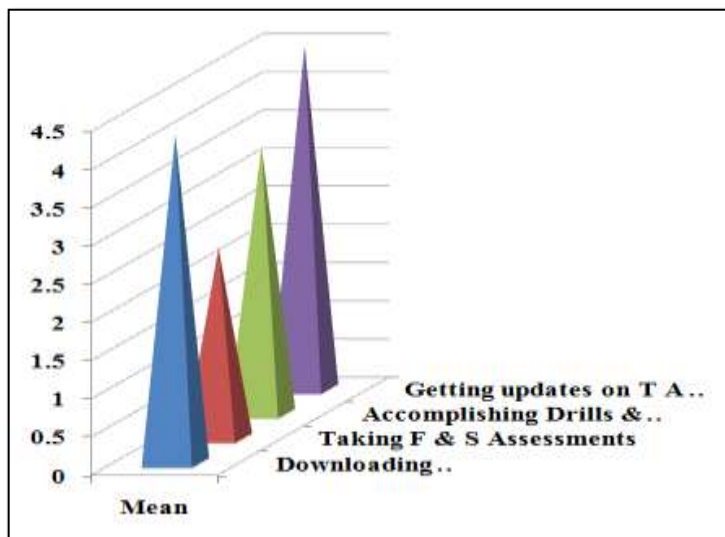
The web graph above shows that 26.67% of the respondents use the moodle *often*, 23.33% use it *sometimes*, 16.67% always utilize the moodle and 3.33 *never* use this elearning environment. This result matches the computed mean at 3.11 that most of the respondents have used the moodle. It shows an impression that respondents recognize the moodle as a support to their academic learning. Moodle is a very useful and good platform for E-learning. Moodle allows educators to control and manage all features of course content and delivery using one integrated system [8].

On the other hand, the students should regularly visit the moodlle because it is an extension of the classroom. The access to moodle with the students' initiative promotes independent learning. As part of the Virtual learning environments (VLEs), the moodle is widely used in education, in many sectors, typically to deliver instructional materials and facilitate communication [9]

2. Effectiveness of the Moodle

The graphs above show that respondents find the aforementioned features of the moodle *effective* with a *mean of 3.16*. In downloading instructional materials and getting updates on

teacher's announcements of tasks



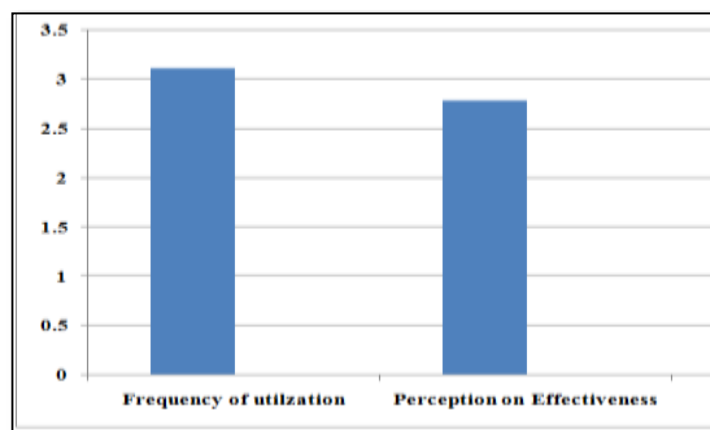
Common Features of Moodle for Student's Use	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Downloading Instructional Materials	3.16	Effective
Taking F & S Assessments	2.33	Moderately effective
Accomplishing Drills & Seatwork	2.43	Moderately effective
Getting updates on Teacher's Announcements of Tasks & Reminders	3.2	Effective

and reminders. The rest however

moderately effective does not show significant difference from the positive results of the

moodle's effectiveness. One of the key strengths of Moodle is its flexibility. It is modular in nature and can therefore be extended to include extra features relatively easily and so the users have always the chance to adapt to its learning environment as well [10]With somehow impressive perception of the respondents on the moodle specifications, it is therefore sound to say that the moodle plays a vital role to students' academic life. It is one of the learning avenues of the students-their partner to academic success.

3. *Relationship of the computed means between the level of frequency utilization and effectiveness of the moodle*



	Computed Mean	Mean Difference	Interpretation
Frequency Level of Utilization	3.1034	0.3201	Not significant
Effectiveness of the Moodle	2.7833		

Critical at .5

Table above with a mean difference of 0.3201 further implies although there is small difference that yields *not significant* from the computed means of the two variables, it indicates a positive impression that the respondents use and consider the effectiveness of the moodle towards academic learning. Daneshmandnia, A. (2010) stated in his paper that while technology based learning has been around since before the advent of Internet, there is still a lot of room for improvement [1]. The moodle although perceived more or less effective to some of its features still plays a vital role in the students' academic endeavors. The students

should continue visiting and using it. Any problem that they encounter in engaging in virtual learning environment should be reported to the IT Department for further updating.

Conclusions

Students regardless of profile find the moodle useful in getting engaged in digital environment. The moodle provides them a flexible and healthy experience. The accessibility of moodle an open source learning management system eases the academic burden and issues of the students. Students' access to virtual environment helps them in completing the course requirements. The moodle indeed, has become their partner in university life because it teaches them to be independent. Students learn to file notes by downloading the materials. In the course of filing the instructional materials, students get a review and preview of the lessons; thus, providing a way to make them prepared in their academic concerns. The moodle has been always considered as a useful support for the students and effective in their academic learning.

Recommendations

Students should allot time in visiting the moodle, and follow the necessary instructions from the announcements of the instructors because the students accomplish the given tasks whether the students present or absent in the class thru the moodle. Students should take the opportunity that moodle offers so they can comply with the course requirements. Students should frequently visit the moodle to get on the loop of course always; they should be more encouraged to regularly visit the moodle. University life becomes more interesting with the availability of the moodle. It is for this reason that students should explore the applications available on the moodle. With the utilization of the students of the moodle, they are helping the IT personnel on its improvement and updating as well.

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