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INVESTIGATION OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARD E-LEARNING IN THE FIFTH SEMESTER OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION UNDIKSHA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate students' perceptions of e-learning. This research was conducted to determine students' perceptions in the use of information technology, especially e-learning in classroom learning. The research data were collected at English Language Education of UNDIKSHA with 80 questionnaires. The outcomes of the study showed the majority of the students think e-learning is an innovative idea and must be encouraged. Hybrid learning, which is a combination of online learning and face-to-face learning, is the preferred mode of learning for the respondents.

1. Introduction

The interest in e-learning seems to be coming from different directions such as corporate and educational sectors. Corporate sees e-learning as a tool to save cost in terms of training and travelling to the learning center. Bassi (2010) as from the educational point of view, it is an additional access to improving the teaching and learning process and to provoke a better communication between the teachers and learners.

Electronic learning (e-learning for short) has been variedly defined by researchers, including the following-it is the use of computer network technology, primarily over or through the internet, to deliver information and instructions to individuals (Ong & Lai, 2006; Welsh et al.,2003). Another similar definition is one that sees e-learning as any form of education that is facilitated by the internet and its technologies and encompasses the use of the World Wide Web (www) to support instruction and to deliver course content (Masrom, 2007).

The advancement of Information Technology (IT) has affected how things are done. Its effect on teaching and learning in this manner turns out to be progressively complex and widespread. The use of latest technology means that one no longer has to be in a conventional classroom in order to be educated. Teaching and learning can be done with the help of technology – e-learning. The term e-learning has been widely used in education since the mid-1990s. Some researchers see e-learning as the delivery of teaching materials via electronic media, for example, web, satellite broadcast, sound/video tape, interactive television, and CD ROM (Engelbrecht, 2005). Others also see e-learning as web-based learning which uses web-based communication, collaboration, knowledge transfer, and training to add value to individuals and to organizations they work within (Kelly and Bauer, 2004). This research, therefore, sought to study students' perceptions on e-learning, as they are the main beneficiaries of this IT enabled learning, hence the need to know what they think of this mode of teaching and learning is vital.

A significant number of colleges in countries such as Sweden, India and the United States of America (USA) have taken advantage of e-learning, where they offer a portion of their projects to students all over the world. Thus, projects of study are accessible to students who do not have to leave their home countries in order to embark on them. An example of projects offered wholly through e-learning is the MSc

There are IT platforms available that enable universities and other institutions all over the world to offer some of their projects through e-learning. Examples of these platforms are: www.coursera.org and www.edx.org. Universities use these websites to offer their projects to Nanjing College, Vanderbilt College, Australian National College, Cornell College, National Taiwan College and College of Tokyo (Coursera, 2015 and EdX, 2015).

Technology has changed the way we live, work, think and learn. Today's learning has to process more information in less time than in the past (Veeramani, 2010). E-learning is very important because it is not just a technology but a ground for people to socialize and share knowledge and skills. E-learning is not just having a multimedia-based computer in a single desktop but a combination of world-wide networks of computers that connect instructors and learners globally with the usage of text, graphics, audio and video. The writer chose 5th semester of English Language Education UNDIKSHA as research subjects, because these students had been given education about e-learning.

It is very important to evaluate e-learning from a psychological perspective so that the instructors know what type of e-learning tools can be used to create the instructional materials and which tools are suitable to assist them in the teaching and learning processes, and thus enhance students' learning achievement.

This study intended to decide the level of mindfulness and view of perception of College students towards e-learning. As the research was done in UNDIKSHA, which is one of the educational institutions in Singaraja it will not be appropriate to conclude, based on this research finding that the opinions expressed cover views of all students' body in the country. Furthermore, the high response rate of 80% to the questionnaires returned could be due to the fact that the questionnaires were administered and retrieved by students, however, efforts were also made to get good representation of the views of all students.

As there are different definitions of e-learning, three types (fully-online, hybrid/blended/mixed and web assisted) and also two forms (synchronous and asynchronous) of e-learning, it must be made clear that the term e-learning in this study does not refer to any particular type or form, except where explicitly indicated.

The potential for e-learning is said to be high, a few students are as of now demonstrating interest for taking an interest in participating in e-learning to further their studies. It is therefore timely and prudent to seek to understand how students think and feel about this medium of teaching and learning. This research, therefore, aims to analyze the perceptions of students about e-learning.

It is hoped that this research work will help to uncover and explain the concerns and opinions of students on e-learning; illuminating any expectations and experiences they might have had in their encounters with e-learning. It is the intention of this research that the findings presented here will be of interest to any institution wishing to implement this mode of teaching and learning, assisting them in their consideration of such concerns and, in the process of making e-learning appealing to students.

The findings of the study allow the teachers to design courses to fit program's expected reason, identify communication requirements and plan for course structure requirements. Findings also serve to inform educators on the usefulness of implementing e-learning tools in campus.

2. Methods

The main objective of this study is to investigate the level perception of university students towards e-learning and to study the factors that influence them towards e-learning. It also aimed to test the theoretical model developed in the study. There are several potential research designs that can be used to collect data. According to (Creswel, 1994) l, there are three types of research design which are qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. In this study, a quantitative approach applying a survey research design in a form of questionnaires has been selected as the data collection strategy to achieve the objectives of the study and to answer the research questions posted in the study.

Questionnaire has been used in this study to gather information about students' opinion on how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statements and questions given in the survey questionnaire. By having a large group of representatives to answer the questionnaire, judgement can be made of what the students think the most. Furthermore, questionnaire was used because it was relatively quick and easy to create, code and interpret. Questionnaires are very easy to standardize because every respondent is asked the same question the same way. By doing so, every respondent in the sample answers the same question. This would allow the researcher to provide a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or options of a population by studying a sample of that population.

The questionnaire developed based on reviews and past studies was tested for its reliability before distribution. The questionnaire also went through a number of iterations to narrow down the number of

scales and ensure clarity of language. At the same time, the survey procedures which consist of data collection and data analysis were planned and designed to ensure a proper questionnaire distribution and selection of appropriate data collection and data analysis method(s). Samples were then selected using random sampling method for this study followed by collection of quantitative data. Data collected were analyzed using SPSS program and results were produced. These results were further be used for discussion and future work of the study.

3. Discussion

The principal research method employed in this study involves the survey technique. The main instrument developed in this study was a survey questionnaire which was designed to obtain as much relevant information as possible in achieving the objectives of the study.

The questionnaire has an introductory section providing information on the topic being researched and instructions for respondents filling the questionnaire was also included. In all, there were 21 questions. Questionnaires were used for the data collection because it was felt that this was the best way to ensure that the researcher was able to gather the opinions of as many students as possible in the time available. In all, 100 questionnaires were distributed, of these 80 were returned, representing 80% of response rate.

The respondent cohort comprised 35% males and 65% females. This result showed that the ratio of the male and female respondents approximately matches the gender balance of students at English Language Education of UNDIKSHA– the total member of students of class B, D, and E was about 80, 35% was males (21) and 65% (59) were females.

All of the students possessed a personal computer. However, 29% of the respondents had been using a computer for between 1 and 5 years, 51% had been using computers for 6 to 10 years, 20% had used a computer for over 10 years. It can be seen that all of the students have had an experience using the PC. The table 1 can be seen as follows.

Table 1.
Personal information

Gender	*Total*	*Percentage*
Female	52	65
Male	28	35
Total	80	100
Have personal computer	Total	Percentage
Yes	80	100
No	0	0
Total	80	100
Using computer	Total	Percentage
1-5 years	23	29
6-10 years	41	51
> 10 years	16	20
Total	80	100

To get the understanding on how the respondents make use of e-learning, they were presented with the common features that were identified in the various definitions, forms and types of e-learning for them to choose from. The response showed that 48% of the respondents understood e-learning as online learning. The response further showed that 16% of the respondents believe e-learning means having live lectures over the internet. This can be likened to the earlier understanding of e-learning being online learning only, but this crop of respondents also believed in the possibility of synchronous learning which enables the instructor and students to have real-time interaction with each other over the internet, including live lectures (Kalpana, 2010).

This is enabled by the use of asynchronous tools and is also one of the features of the fully online type of e-learning. However, another 11% of the respondents understood e-learning as a general term that includes all the features given. This group of respondents believed that e-learning is not only limited to online learning but also includes web-assisted type of e-learning or better still hybrid type of e-learning, as this response reflects features of these types of e-learning. There is, however, a great disparity between the male and female respondents about this response. While only 7% of the total female respondents chose this description of e-learning, 15% of the total male respondentsagreedto this, more than double of the female response rate, however, this difference is not statistically significant. On the other hand, 12% of the respondents indicated that they had no idea of what e-learning means. While females (18% of the total

female respondents) reported this as compared to their male (6% of the total male respondents) counterparts. From this response, it can be seen that the majority (50%) of the respondents understood e-learning to be online learning. It can be deduced from this response that when the term e-learning is mentioned, the majority of the respondents assume it to mean fully online learning. This understanding of e-learning being fully online learning is fairly distributed among the male and female respondents, this is because 54% of the total females who participated in this study believed e-learning means online learning. This understanding is similar to the male respondents as well - 46% of them also believed e-learning means online learning.

With regards to the features of e-learning, the response showed that 81% of respondents agreed that e-learning platforms are appropriate for administering tests and assignments electronically, while 14% were undecided and 5% disagreed. It can also be seen that 79% of respondents agreed that e-learning can enable people to learn at their own pace and convenience, however, 11% disagreed with this assertion and, 10% were neutral.

Furthermore, 78% of the respondents agreed that e-learning allows participation of students located anywhere in the world, 14% disagreed with this feature of e-learning and 8% were undecided on this feature. It can also be seen from the Table 2 that 55% of the respondents agreed to the possibility of interaction between instructor and students, 27% were undecided and 18% disagreed with this possibility. Lastly, the response concerning the possibility of interaction among students in e-learning showed that 47% of the respondents agree, 34% were undecided and 19% disagree.

Pertaining to the ease of use of e-learning, on average 50%agreedthat e-learning platform is easy to use (accessible). This is followed by 20% who were undecided as to the ease of use of e-learning systems. Furthermore, 13% expressed strong agreement that e-learning system is or could be easy to use. 10% disagreed and 7% strongly disagreed on the easy usage of e-learning systems.

Concerning the level of comfort of using information technology (IT) tools that enable easy usage of e-learning system, on average, 52% of the respondents indicated that they are very comfortable using IT for various activities, while 32% indicated they could easily use IT for various functions.

With regards to how respondents feel about e-learning, it can be reported that 80% like the idea of e-learning, 11% were undecided, and 9% disagreed with the idea of e-learning. On the other hand, 79% believe that e-learning is an innovative concept and should be encouraged, 16% and 5% were undecided and disagreed respectively. Additionally, 69% of respondents thought e-learning platform will be fun to use, 16% disagree, while 15% were undecided on this issue.

In the scholarly literature, 3 different types (hybrid, web-assisted and fully online) and forms of e-learning - synchronous and asynchronous (Kalpana, 2010) were identified. These varied forms and types of e-learning are intertwined with one another, for example, web assisted type of e-learning can also be synchronous in nature, which will allow for interaction and live lectures to be delivered, or can be asynchronous, which allows for only self-paced learning. It can also be argued that because of their interconnectivity in nature, these types and forms of e-learning have similarities, for example, all the types and forms of e-learning make use of the internet as a medium of learning, for getting information and or teaching.

As students perceived e-learning as an appropriate alternative to studying in the traditional classroom setting, by the principle of TAM, the next stage after the Perceived Usefulness (PU) is to consider how e-learning is perceived to be easy to use. Perceived ease of use (PEU) in this study, is defined as the degree to which a potential user views e-learning in terms of how easy it is to utilize (Davis et al., 1989). The PEU parameters used in this study were the perceived easy usage of e-learning platform and the level of comfort of using basic information technologies (IT) that enable one to have an easy usage of e-learning as a technology.

In the technology acceptance model (TAM), attitude is defined as the positive or negative feeling about a technology (e-learning) which is based on perception or experience (Davis et al. 1989). It is also implied from the model that attitude towards usage is the positive or the negative feeling of a student towards e-learning, that influences their future reaction and behavioral intention to use e-learning (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2000). This attitude one adopts towards e-learning influences their behaviors towards e-learning. The adopted attitude also affects the person's reaction towards e-learning and also influences the intention of the person to use it in the future (Al-Gahtani & King, 1999). By the principle of the TAM, if one has a positive opinion about e-learning, this will influence the person's attitude towards e-learning, and this will further influence the decision the person takes to use e-learning in the future or not.

4. Conclusion

The main finding of this study is that e-learning was perceived to be useful. This usefulness includes people being able to study from anywhere in the world without necessarily relocating. This ability to study from anywhere in the world becomes an advantage e-learning provides over face-to-face learning because this is not possible in traditional face-to-face learning. This research further showed that students believe that when studying through e-learning there is the chance to experience substantially similar or an alternative means of being educated.

It is also discovered in this research that e-learning platform and tools were perceived to be easy to use. The study further concluded that students had very good ability to make use of the various tools and technologies that enable one to participate in e-learning with ease. It is indicated that good technological background is needed for students to be successful at e-learning, because they need to have some level of comfort with using the computer and web technologies (Lee & Witta, 2001). Without the technological knowledge it becomes a hindrance for the students to easily participate in e-learning. This study, therefore, showed that most students have strong technological background that will enable them to easily make use of the e-learning tools that can enhance their e-learning experience without much hindrance.

Varied attitudes towards e-learning have been displayed in this study. These includes students liking the idea of e-learning and also considering it to be an innovative concept which needs to be encouraged and enhanced. The research also showed that most of the respondent's view e-learning as not an appropriate medium to study courses that have practical components, as it (fully online learning and web assisted types) does not allow for face-to-face interaction. This study also revealed e-learning is considered to be more expensive to pursue courses through than the traditional face-to-face learning.

It has also been discovered in this research that despite the fact that all the respondents were studying in the traditional classroom setting, most of them were willing to study through any of the e-learning modes in the future and not to continue their studies through the fully classroom learning as all of them presently do. The research further showed that in comparison, men had positive views about e-learning than women, and that men were more likely to pursue further studies through e-learning modes than the women. The researcher is of the view that as the choice of learning mode is gradually being shifted from fully classroom learning to e-learning, there should be a gradual preparation of both human resources and technological resources by educational institutions to welcome this gradual paradigm shift.

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