"A Perceptual Study on E-Learning among College Students"

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Abstract:

Information & Communication Technologies [ICT] have become a powerful force which are transforming and will continue to transform all aspects of education. The growing influence of technologies on all aspects of life, including the education sector, requires developing countries to follow the example of the developed countries and adopt technology in their education systems. The use of ICT in education helps to establish virtual campuses in many universities and colleges to provide an advanced platform for learners and instructors. E-learning is becoming more and more popular. Along with numerous universities and colleges heavily relying on e-learning environments to train their students and faculties, the design and development of adaptive educational hypermedia that customize the content and navigation for each student has gained importance and priority all around the world. This study aims to identify the significant difference among college students on e-learning. Study is exploratory in nature and convenient sampling technique has been used for data collection and z test has been used for data analysis. Three hypotheses where formulated and after data analysis it was found that hypotheses were accepted.

Keywords: e-learning, ICT, Education, Information, Web CT

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1. Introduction

The E-learning initiatives have connected the whole world and have removed the barrier of age, place, time and socio-economic nature. The technological revolution has created a new dimension in whole education scenario. E-learning refers to the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance and/or support learning in education system. E-learning can be divided into several different types. In all cases, a campus-based institution is offering the courses, but using e-learning tied to the Internet or other online network to a different extent.

According to **Tom Kelly, Cisco**: "E-learning is about information, communication, education and training. Regardless of how trainers categorize training and education, the learner only wants the skills and knowledge to do a better job or to answer the next question from a customer." According to **Rosenberg**: "E-learning refers to the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance."

With the amazing development of Internet, the field of education has tried to exploit web as a communication channel to connect distant learners with their learning resources. It is a platform with flexible learning using Information Technology and Communication (ITC) resources, tools and applications, and focusing on interactions among teachers, learners and online environment. E-learning usually refers to structured and managed learning experiences, and may involve the use of Internet, CD-ROMs, software, other media and telecommunications. Because of the flexible nature of E-learning and since it provides the right information in right time and in right place, students are now more familiar and feel more comfort in this new education system.

ELearning is construed in a variety of contexts, such as distance learning, online learning and networked learning (Wilson 2001). In this context all of these instances will be considered to describe learning that utilizes information communications technology (ICT) to promote educational interaction between students, lecturers and learning communities (Holley 2002). Volery (2000) argues that the fast expansion of the Internet and related technological advancements, in conjunction with limited budgets and social demands for improved access to higher education, has produced a substantial incentive for universities to introduce eLearning courses. Volery (2000) continues that if universities do not embrace eLearning technology that is readily available, they will be left behind in the pursuit for globalization. Ribiero (2002) argues that if universities are to maximize the potential of eLearning as a means of delivering higher education, they must be fully aware of the critical success factors concerned with introducing online models of education. Evan & Hasse (2001) found out that learners are moderately lacking in computer proficiency and, since e-learning is centered on computer technologies, it is a barrier to those learners without good computer skills. In addition, studies of Evan & Hasse (2001), O'Regan (2003) and Rovai & Jordan (2004) found out that learners face limited physical interactions among themselves in e-learning.

Review of Literature

The present study is an attempt to add one grain in the vast field of educational research. It is presumed that the survey of related studies will make the present investigation more correct and to the point. It enables the researcher to perceive the gap in the concerned field. Some of the studies conducted on e-learning are as following:

Ahmad M. Mashal et.al (2008) concluded that the learning style chosen by the student is mainly affected by non-economic factors, rather than by economic factors, especially when it comes to those students enrolled in the open/E-learning style. This is due to the fact that the majority of this category of students are economically settled (have a job), and thus they seek the social prestige of joining this innovative open/E-learning style. Nevertheless, seeking a better job or a more promising career is always in the mind of each student, which is a healthy sign in society. E-learning style is more cost effective with large sizes of classes, contrary to the case of the traditional learning style where education is more effective with small class sizes. Major findings were that the E-learning style is still and will always serve as a very rewarding and promising alternative, not only from the student perspective but also from the business

perspective. Therefore, establishing and expanding such an alternative mode of education is well justified for the foreseeable future.

Boyle et.al (2003) studied ways to improve student's success rate in learning to program. The project team introduced a number of changes in module organization, tutorial support and online resources. The blend represents a mixture of traditional and novel elements, with the novel elements more marked in the online developments. Results demonstrated marked improvements in pass rates. Evaluation of the students' use of the new environment indicated generally positive evaluation of the main elements of the blend and widespread use of the new online features.

Curran (2004) examined the e-learning strategies adopted by universities, from the perspective of three common objectives: widening access to educational opportunity; enhancing the quality of learning; and reducing the cost of higher education. E-learning has grown significantly over the last decade to become a significant mode of instruction in higher education. If as yet neither as ubiquitous or influential as some early proponents predicted, few doubt that it has the potential to become a substantive pedagogy – and one, perhaps, with a pervasive influence on tertiary teaching.

Kayte O'Neill (2004) suggested that universities failing to embrace technological progress made during the 1990s will be unable to meet the needs of knowledge based societies and as a result will not survive the change in the paradigm of education. However, the implementation of eLearning brings forth implications for all stakeholders in Higher Education, and poses a number of risks which cannot be overlooked. Students are also greatly affected by the implementation of eLearning, principally by the shift in learning styles required to be successful in an online environment. Universities should be aware that dependent learners will require courses tailored to suit their educational needs, potentially offering a blend of face to face and virtual interaction. Failure to provide for these needs will lead students to shop elsewhere. The critical factors for success will change with the implementation of eLearning programmes: prior experience of using technology; the technological infrastructure; and the lecturer will be the new key elements in the success of the learning experience. HE institutions can help students to achieve success by doing three things. Firstly, a face-to-face session familiarizing students with the courseware will help to overcome the issue of prior experience. Secondly, the functionality of the technological infrastructure should be ensured before the course is implemented. This should be backed up by technical support from either the lecturer or a course facilitator. Finally, human resources should be committed to the project at an early stage and lecturers should be selected based on their attitude towards technology, teaching style and ability to control to technology.

Sarah Golden et.al (2006) revealed factors i.e. the analysis of the relationship between lecturers' experience and use of e-learning, their attitudes and confidence, and intermediate outcomes for students accounted for around half of the variance in lecturers' responses. This suggests that there are a range of other factors which are potentially influential on lecturers' views which are not reflected in this analysis. It revealed that, in general, background, personal

and contextual factors were less strongly associated with lecturers' attitudes and confidence in relation to e-learning, or their views on the extent to which their learners used e-learning and how effective they were as a result. Rather, these were more strongly associated with lecturers' own use, and their attitudes. Focusing on encouraging and developing these among lecturers may lead to wider use and take-up of e-learning in further education among both lecturers and learners.

Siragusa et.al (2005) studied the development of sound instructional design principles for online learning in higher education needs to draw from the vast body of literature which reports on the findings of research into instructional technologies, cognitive learning theories and adult education (Reeves & Reeves, 1997). Through an examination of learning theories, learning philosophies, instruction design principles, student learning in higher education and online learning technologies, it has become clear that research into online learning needs to involve more than just an examination of an online study such as Web CT. Ongoing evidence from the literature suggests that the maturation of online delivery will be realized once innovators develop appropriate models for instructional design and realistic strategic and pedagogical approaches as we move further into the twenty first century.

Schweizer et.al (2003) examined how groups of learners work together in blended learning and e-learning environments. Three pure e-learning courses were compared to one blended learning course where participants formed learning teams who met at three points in time. All participants received joint learning material, in order to build shared knowledge, and individualized information to build unshared knowledge. Variables analyzed include students' extent of online activity, the groups' task performance, and coherence of the groups' discourse. Results indicated that achievement in a particular group does not depend solely on the mode of communication used in the course. From the above literature review it has been seen that various attempts have been made in this context from time to time to understand the concept of e-learning or on-line learning. Thus, there is a gap to proceed further, the researcher attempts to know the role of e-learning in education.

Singh Gurmak et.al (2005) suggested that ELearning may provide universities with a means of exceeding the newly formed competition, by taking full advantage of their traditional, already established reputations. For students, eLearning can provide an educationally-superior alternative to traditional lectures, in which learning can take place outside the lecture hall. ELearning can also provide a model for students on how to become self directed independent learners, which may assist them to become 'life long learners'. For lecturers, networked learning may cause changes in work patterns and even change their professional role, but in addition, eLearning provides them with the opportunity to test students in real business situations and new methods to evaluate each student's learning. ELearning programmes represent a change in teaching style.

Thapa Anju (2012) revealed that the advent of Information and communication technology has its impact on all diversified fields including education sector. The study attempted to investigate the attitude of students towards e-learning which revealed that in the present context e-learning plays a crucial role in the education sector. She also concluded that there is no difference in the attitude of university students of different gender towards e-learning. Thus the process of e-learning has been seen as an important aspect as its demand is increasing.

2. Objectives

1. To measure the perception on e-learning among Government College students running Traditional Courses and Government College students running Professional Courses.
2. To measure the perception on e-learning among Private College students running Traditional Courses and Private College students running Professional Courses.
3. To measure the perception on e-learning among Private College students running Traditional & Professional Courses and Government College students running Traditional & Professional Courses.

4. Hypothesis

H01: There is no significant difference in the perception of e-learning among Government College students running Traditional Courses and Government College students running Professional Courses.

H02: There is no significant difference in the perception of e-learning among Private College students running Traditional Courses and Private College students running Professional Courses.

H03: There is no significant difference in the perception of e-learning among Private college students running both Traditional & Profession courses and Government college students running both Traditional & Profession courses.

H11: There is a significant difference in the perception of e-learning among Government College students running Traditional Courses and Government College students running Professional Courses.

H12: There is a significant difference in the perception of e-learning among Private College students running Traditional Courses and Private college students running Professional Courses.

H13: There is a significant difference in the perception of e-learning among Private college students running both Traditional & Profession courses and Government college students running both Traditional & Profession courses.

3. Research Methodology

It is an exploratory study based on primary data. A self structured questionnaire has been used to measure perception of e-learning in the colleges of Indore (M.P.) city. The questionnaire was on 5-point Likert Scale, where 1 indicated high level of dissatisfaction and 5 indicated high level of satisfaction consisting of 14 items has been used. In the study, convenience sampling method has been used. The questionnaire has been distributed on the basis of convenient sampling to 128 students of Government and Private Institute of Indore running Traditional Courses and Professional Courses. The Z-test (at 5% level of significance) has been used for data analysis.

4. Result and Discussion

Table of Z values

S No.	Study Between	S	Z
1	Government Colleges running Traditional Courses Vs Government Colleges running Professional Courses	5.69937	1.0089
2	Private Colleges running Traditional Courses Vs Private Colleges running Professional Courses	5.63	1.04
3	Private Colleges running both Traditional & Professional Courses Vs Government Colleges running both Traditional &Professional Courses	5.66884	0.29624

I. $Z_{\mathbf{1.0089}} < Z_{1.96}$ Hence it means that H0 is accepted. The reason could be that student level is almost same and they are technological savvy so there is no significant difference in the perception of e-learning.

II. $Z_{\mathbf{1.04}} < Z_{1.96}$ which means that H0 is accepted.

III. $Z_{\mathbf{0.29624}} < Z_{1.96}$ Hence it means that H0 is accepted.

As per the results, it is evident that there is no significant difference in the perception of Students who are government colleges and private colleges running traditional/professional courses. It also infers that whether college is running traditional courses or professional courses does not have any impact on the perception of e-learning. Results also indicate that colleges i.e. government or private do not play vital role in the perception of e-learning.

Kramer et.al (2009) discussed the need to evaluate student's performance in On-line distance education course. It focuses on so called "generic" or "key" competencies, which are increasingly in termed as part of academic competence goals. Also, the works on e-learning and e-infrastructure have been adopted most widely. E-learning is preferred to "On-line learning" as it appears to be considered a more often comparing term across the countries (Venkatraman, 2009). It has been seen that learner identity needs to and can be developed in our rapidly changing digital globalised world. Two tools for learning are discussed in relation to this notion of development of learner identity and personalized learning. The first is the VResORT (Virtual Resources for Online Research Training)

The second tool for learning is the Virtual Interactive Platform (Joyes, 2008). Numerous studies have demonstrated that a student's active involvement in the learning process enhances learning, a process often referred to as *active learning* (Benek-Rivera & Matthews, 2004; Sarason & Banbury, 2004). Simply stated, active learning involves "instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing" (Bonwell & Eisen, 1991, p. 5). Interactive instruction or "learning by doing" has been found to result in positive learning outcomes (Picciano, 2002; Watkins, 2005). Because many new technologies and webbased activities are interactive, online coursework has the potential to create environments where students actively engage with material and learn by doing, refining their understanding as they build new knowledge (Johnston, Killion & Omomen, 2005; Pallof & Pratt, 2003). As Driscoll (2002) observes, "When students become active participants in the knowledge construction proc ess, the focus of learning shifts from covering the curriculum to working with ideas. And using technology tools 'to think with' facilitates working with ideas and learning from that process" (also see Scardamalia 2002).

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