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NEED/IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

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RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

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SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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ROLE OF E-LEARNING IN EDUCATION: A STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of Information and communication technology has its impact on all the diversified fields and education is not an exception. Today the availability of e-resources and their use in libraries are very common. E-learning is a form of learning in which the educational process is supported by information and communication technology (ICT). Thus, e-learning has become a dominant delivery method at workplace learning setting across organizations of various sectors and of varying areas. Although many organizations are recognizing the potential of e-leaning to bring closer the employees, there appears to be some issues to be addressed in delivering e-learning. The present paper is an attempt to examine the attitude of university students towards e-learning and its role in imparting education to them. The paper also highlights the difference in the attitude of perception towards e-learning based upon gender.

KEYWORDS

E-learning, Information and Communication Technology (ITC).

INTRODUCTION

The term e-learning is defined and used differently by different institutions and user groups. It covers a wide set of applications and processes such as computer-based learning, web-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. Web-based or online learning is, therefore, a subset of e-learning delivered through Internet, Intranet, and Extranet (LAN or WAN). In another words, e-learning is basically a method for the delivery of a learning package (information, communication, education and training) using a combination of multimedia with a view to presenting a course of instruction in an interactive format. Thus, e-learning is just one of the many terms which are used in literature and business about e-learning. E-learning comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. The information and communication systems, whether networked or not, serve as specific media to implement the learning process. The term will still most likely be utilized to reference out-of-classroom and in-classroom educational experiences via technology, even as advances continue in regard to devices and curriculum. E-learning is essentially the computer and network-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge. E-learning applications and processes include Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classroom opportunities and digital collaboration. Content is delivered via the Internet, Intranet or Extranet, Audio or Video tape, Satellite TV, and CD-ROM. It can be self-paced or instructor-led and includes media in the form of text, image, animation, streaming video and audio.

Tom Kelly and Cisco (2001), revealed that 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. It may be also defined as the potential to provide the right information to the right people at the right times and places using the right medium. Brandon Hall (2007) defined as the instruction that is delivered electronically, in part or wholly via a Web browser, through the Internet or an intranet, or through multimedia platforms such CD-ROM or DVD." Brandon Hall argues that, as the technology improves, e-learning has been identified primarily with using the web, or an intranet's web. Increasingly-as higher bandwidth has become more accessible-it has been identified primarily with using the Web, or an intranet's web, forcing the visual environment and interactive nature of the web on the learning environment. Learning Circuits (2001), e-learning covers a wide set of applications and processes such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via the Internet, intranet/extranet, audio and videotape, satellite broadcast, interactive TV and CD-ROM. Rosenberg (2001), defined e-learning as the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance." Rosenberg claims that e-learning is based on three fundamental criteria:

1. E-learning is networked, instant updating, storage and retrieval, distribution and sharing of information is therefore possible.
2. E-learning is delivered to the end-user via a computer using standard internet technologies.

E-learning focuses on the broadest view of learning: learning solutions going beyond the traditional paradigms of training.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

E-learning refers to learning and other supportive resources that are available through a computer. E-learning comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching material. The information and communication system, whether networked or not serve as specific media to import the learning process. The term will still most likely be utilized to reference out of classroom and in classroom's educational experiences via technology. The different technology features used in the e-learning systems are not really that new, and have been used sporadically for team management for many years. An advantage of this comprehensive all- in- one system is that they do not usually require expensive hardware and software to operate. Features such as e-mail, discussion boards, live chat, document attachments, digital drop boxes, lists of Web hyperlinks and so on were available in various places at many institutions.

Students can use a regular home personal computer with Internet access. However, just as groups of individuals are not teams unless they are interacting and interdependent (Robbins, 2000), groups of technology tools such as those listed above are not a useful cohesive system unless they are organized effectively. There is a positive synergy that results from these types of electronic tools when they are coordinated together to help yield higher performance through convenience, accessibility, and structure of the design. They are becoming widely used at educational institutions and corporate training programs for Web enhancement of on- campus programs or fully virtual distance learning courses. These systems are not expensive, easy to use, technology stable, upgradeable, and very convenient to use from home or the work site. Given below the definition which show the significance of e-learning.

"E-learning provides the potential to provide the right information to the right people at the right times and places using the right medium."

So, the researcher decided to take this topic as she felt that only through the computer, we can expect better knowledge to students which are very essential for better society and a developed nation. As not much work was done in this area and find out whether the University students were knowledgeable or not, the researcher decided to take up this topic.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives shall be realized through the study:

1. To study the attitude of the university students towards e-learning.
2. To study the difference in the attitude of perception towards e-learning based upon gender.

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 or Online-education are as following:

Jeekim and Bonk (2011) in a recent study revealed that e-learning has become a dominant delivery method in workplace learning setting across organizations of various sectors and of varying areas. Although many organizations are recognizing the potential of e-leaning to bring closer to employees, there appears to be some issues to be addressed in delivering e-learning. It has also been emphasized that technology tools might still be on the periphery of our learning radar screens are about to be adopted widely by those who serve. Thus, there is need to develop an understanding of and familiarity there now, the learners who currently turned to us behind (Signorelli, 2010). Kramer and Seeler (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 work 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 personalised learning. The first is the V-ResORT (Virtual Resources for Online Research Training) The second tool for learning is the Virtual Interactive Platform (Joyes, 2008).

Robertson (2008) proposed that activity theory is a theoretical framework that provides the potential to contribute to change management towards sustainable e-learning. Activity theory provides an opportunity for the assumptions, values and beliefs that underpin each system to be made more explicit. With debate, discussion and critique, expansionist learning becomes possible. Major conclusions of the study are that any change management towards sustainable e-learning must address the power dynamics that occur at the interface of the activity systems and that professional development for teachers must address teacher's beliefs about what constitutes good teaching practice. Sulcic and Sulcic (2007) tried to present online tutoring as a solution to quality issues of e-learning that e-learning providers from all over the world are facing. The study briefly presented different roles of online tutors and the skills needed to perform these roles successfully. The online tutoring system was introduced to support students of e-learning courses at the faculty. The researches showed that tutors can improve study outcomes (although not so much students' grades) and that their activity is well accepted by students (especially part-time students).

E-learning is a form of learning in which the educational process is supported by information and communication technology (ICT). With the gradual introduction of ICT in traditional education, the teaching/learning methods were transferred to traditional education because of their innovative approach to teaching and learning. In this context new forms of learning emerged, varying from computer based learning, online learning, web-based learning, e-learning etc. All these new forms of learning that use ICT can therefore be called e-learning. Modritscher (2006), studied that e-learning and distance learning tend to get more and more important for all kind of organizations, researchers and practitioners are becoming aware of the fact that a simple technology-focused approach does not guarantee successful teaching and learning. Thus, a shift to pedagogy-based initiatives can be observed within the field of e-learning. The study examined the implications of commonly known learning theories on online courses. Siragusa and Dixon (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 WebCT. 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. 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. Garrison & Kanuta (2004) studied the framework which explores how integrating online learning into traditional college classrooms could be transformative for universities. Blended learning represents an opportunity to support deep learning. The authors build on earlier work using community of inquiry model to support why institutions should invest in transforming learning. The paper outlines what colleges and universities need to do to move forward blended learning. 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 a generally positive evaluation of the main elements of the blend and widespread use of the new online features. Schweizer, Paechter &Weidenmann (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

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been conducted among the students of the University of Jammu, state Jammu and Kashmir. This sector was chosen for the study, as it is one of the biggest education sector which deal with the common mass. Also, this study will be helpful in evaluating the attitude of the select students towards e-learning. For the purpose of the given study primary as well as secondary data was used. The Secondary data was collected from various books, journals, published research papers, websites etc. The primary data was collected by means of a questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were given personally to respondents in the university. The questionnaire contained a total of 26 items with 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagreed to 5-strongly agreed. The sample is randomly selected and 200 respondents were personally meet to give their responses. The data collected was mainly primary in nature.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The study deals with the analysis of attitude of students of University of Jammu towards e-learning. The responses from the respondents were subjected to simple percentage method, mean score and ANOVA was used in order to know the gender differences towards e-learning.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

For the purpose of the study about the demographic profile of the students, simple percentage method was used. The results shows that more than half of the respondents were females (54.3%) and rest were males (45.7%). All the respondents have English as their first language (100%). In terms of age, majority of respondents (67%) ranging between 23-27 years. About 22% students have their age between 18-22 years and 11% respondents are between 28-32 years. On the average majority of the respondent (71.5%) spend 6-10 hours on using computer for their educational purposes, 11% respondent use 1-5 hours on computer 9.5% respondent use less than 1 hours and 8% respondent use computer for more than 10 hours in a week for education. It has been also found that 56% respondents spend 6-10 hours per week online, while 28% spend 1-5 hours, 11% spend less than 1 hour while 5% spend more than 10 hours per week online. Also, it has been seen that more than half (57.1%) of the students are social-science graduate, 42.9% are science graduate.

TABLE: SHOWING ATTITUDE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TOWARDS E-LEARNING

S.No.	Items	Mean Scores
1	Ease to access the Internet	4.02
2	Comfort in communicating	3.65
3	Willingly communicate with classmates electronically	3.85
4	Background and experience	4.11
5	Comfortable in written communication	3.71
6	Earlier course on e-learning is beneficial	3.65
7	Self-disciplined	4.14
8	Manage time effectively	3.74
9	Enjoy working independently	4.20
10	Enjoy working with students in groups	3.78
11	Like interaction with teaching assistants	4.45
12	Sufficient computer keyboarding skills	3.62
13	Comfortable in composing text on computer	3.25
14	Comfortable in communicating online	4.22
15	Ask questions and receive quick responses	4.00
16	Face-to-face interaction is necessary	3.74
17	Motivated by internet activities	4.20
18	Discuss with other students during internet activities	4.02
19	Work in groups during internet activities	4.11
20	Collaborate with other students during internet activities	3.95
21	Learning in class and home is same on internet	3.74
22	Practice English grammar on internet	3.60
23	Learning online is more motivating than regular class	3.42
24	Complete course on internet without difficulty	3.51
25	Pass course without teacher assistance	3.82
26	Online course is easy than learning English on internet	4.41

The mean scores of all the items are given above in the table indicate the attitude of the university students towards e-learning. It has been found that mean score of the item students like interaction with teaching assistants has maximum mean score 4.45, followed by online course is easy than learning English on internet (4.41), followed by comfortable in communicating online (4.22), enjoy working independently and motivated by internet activities (4.20), Self-disciplined (4.14), Background and experience and Work in groups during internet activities (4.11) and least in case of the students feel comfortable in composing text on computer in an online environment (3.25). Thus, from the above data it has been revealed that the students of the university of Jammu shows positive attitude toward e-learning as it has been found they are well acquaintance with the process of e-learning.

TABLE 2: SHOWING SUMMARY OF ANOVA: (2×2) FACTORIAL DESIGN

Sources of Variance	SS(Sum of Square)	df(Degree of freedom)	MS(Mean Square)	F-Ratio	Significance
A	28.01	1	28.04	0.41	Not Significant
B	20.41	1	20.41	0.30	Not Significant
A×B	0.03	1	0.03	0.00	Not Significant
Within	3776.4	56	67.43		

Df 1 at.05 is 4.02
Df 56 at 0.01 is 7.12

INTERPRETATIONS

The F- ratio for the main factor A ,(Gender) came out to be 0.41 and the table value for significance are 4.02 and 7.12 at .05 and .01 level of significance against df 1 and 56. Since the calculated value of F is less then table value at .05 and .01, it means there is no difference in the attitude of university students of different gender towards e-learning. Also, it had been seen that the F-ratio for factor B, Stream (Social Science and Pure Science) came out to be 0.30. The value of F for factor B is also less then table value at .05 and .01 level of significance. Hence, we can say that there is no difference in the attitude of university students of different gender and stream towards e-learning.

The F-ratio for Interaction (A×B) came out to be 0.00 which is less then the table value 4.02 and 7.12 against df 1 and 56 level of significance. The value of F for the Interaction is also not significant. It indicates that under joint influence of gender and different stream, there is no difference in the attitude of university students of different gender and stream towards e-learning.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it has been seen that the advent of Information and communication technology has its impact on all the diversified fields including education sector. The present study was an attempt to investigate the attitude of the students towards e-learning, which revealed that in the present context e-learning plays a crucial in the education sector. Also, it has been 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. Hence, the endeavor was successfully done taking e-learning as an important aspect in the education sector.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Research is never ending process. The more on plunges in to it, the ocean of knowledge are open for him. Present investigation has lead to the discovery of some facts related with the attitude of university students towards e-learning. The present study was confined to the sample of 200 students of University of Jammu. Hence, it is suggested that some type of further investigation can be made with large sample. The study may be conducted by taking into account the variety of other independent variables. Also, the attitude of teachers towards the e-learning can be studied. It is suggested that other educational institutions can be taken for study also.

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