AWARENESS OF DISTANCE LEARNERS ON VIRTUAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Virtual learning environments are widely used in education, in many sectors, typically to deliver instructional materials and facilitate communication. In this paper consists as many of 816 distance learners in three Universities (Annamalai University, Madurai Kamaraj University, Bharathidasan University) from Teachers trainees situated in Tamil Nadu, India. The sample has been chosen through stratified random sampling technique. Virtual learning awareness Inventory (VLAI) was constructed and validated by the investigator has been used to collect the data from the distance mode teacher trainees. Analyses of the data were done by using descriptive analysis and differential analysis. The findings of the study revealed that the level of Virtual learning awareness of teacher trainees is average, the sub- samples Gender and Educational qualification of teacher trainees do not differ significantly in their Virtual learning awareness and Locale of the student differ significantly in their Virtual learning awareness.

Keywords: *Virtual learning, Awareness, distance learners, Gender, Locale*

INTRODUCTION

Education helps the child to adjust to this changing world, here the knowledge of technology helps in modernizing society. Education means learning. Learning means change in behaviour. Change comes from learning experiences. Learning experiences can be felt through sense organs. In technical, sense education means, society through its different institutions deliberately transmits its cultural heritage to its young by a process. The accumulated values, knowledge and skills transfer from one generation to another. Education is a product of experiences. Agencies that impart education are school, home, press, radio, T.V, religion cinema. As education has moved from the traditional face-to-face learning of the classroom to the new frontier of digital resources, online lectures and remote collaboration, opportunities for students to learn have increased dramatically. For students with disabilities, there is a clear advantage to this new wholly online e-learning model or blended learning model of education where the virtual learning mixed with face-to-face

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experiences in that they can, in theory, access-learning resources in adapted forms that delivered according to their needs and preferences.

The class rooms capable of replacing partially or totally the conventional education evaluative and teaching and learning functioning of a regular class room by adopting the advanced computer and ICT technologies like the internet, e-mail, online chatting, www, CD-ROM's, DVD's, teleconferencing and videoconferencing. Virtual learning awareness is the conscious experiencing of virtual classroom at the time that it occurs. Awareness is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of virtual classroom. More broadly, it is the state of being conscious of something in the virtual classroom.

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The effectiveness of a piece of information depends upon the medium through which it was imparted. Virtual media change the sensibilities significantly because they tend to generate the senses. Thus the medium is not only the communication but also activates because it arouses the sensory organs and stimulates them to respond actively. Therefore, it is important that the mass media to be utilized in the class room teaching and learning process. So, the students may obtain sensory stimulation as a part of the process of instruction. In the modern era technology innovations were widely used in schools. The computer is an effective tool to do complicated calculations in lesser possible time. Researchers, academician, educational scientists and even students are using computers as calculator. It is observed by many people that computers can be used as a tool in the field of education with great advantage. Virtual learning was achieved through the computer based equipment and proper knowledge. Virtual learning plays an important role in inculcating technological skills to the students in different levels of educational systems in India. Therefore, the virtual learning has high need and importance of distance learners and others. Hence, the investigator felt that there is a need to analyse the virtual learning awareness of distance learners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the present study are:

1. To study the level of distance learners of virtual learning awareness.
2. To investigate whether there is any significance difference between Masculine and Feminine with respect to their virtual learning awareness.
3. To examine whether there is any significance difference between Rural and Urban distance learners with respect to their virtual learning awareness.

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4. To examine whether there is any significance difference between educational qualifications of distance learners UG and PG with respect to their virtual learning awareness.

METHOD OF STUDY

Normative Survey method was use in conducting this study. A survey method deals with the present and it is oriented towards determining the current state of an area of study.

SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

As many of 816 distance learners in three Universities (Annamalai University, Madurai Kamaraj University, Bharathidasan University) from Teachers trainees situated in Tamil Nadu, India. The sample has been chosen through stratified random sampling technique.

TOOLS USED IN THE PRESENT STUDY

Virtual Learning Awareness Inventory (VLAI) constructed and validated by the investigator has been used to collect the data from the distance mode teacher trainees.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The following statistical technique has been used in the present study.

- ❖ Descriptive analysis
- ❖ Differential analysis

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Hypotheses - 1

The distance learners have high virtual learning awareness.

Table - 1

Variable	N	Mean	S.D
Virtual learning Awareness	816	17.52	4.94

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THE LEVEL OF VIRTUAL LEARNING AWARENESS

Norms have been worked out for the awareness of distance learners on virtual learning. The 'Z' scores have been calculated for the conversion of raw scores and interpretation of awareness level and are given in table-1

Scoring Procedure

Sl.NO	Range of 'Z' Scores	Raw Scores	Level of Awareness
1	ABOVE **+** 0.074	Above 21	High Awareness
2	-1.006 to **+** 0.074	Between 14 to 21	Average Awareness
3	BELOW -1.006	Below 14	Low Awareness

From the above table-1, the mean and standard deviation of virtual learning awareness of distance learners is found to be 17.52 and 4.94 respectively and hence the hypothesis is rejected and is concluded that the distance learners have average level on virtual learning.

Hypotheses: 2

There is no significance difference between Masculine and Feminine distance learners in respect of their virtual learning awareness.

Table - 2
Virtual Learning Awareness scores with regard to Gender

Sub- Sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Significant at 0.05 level
Gender	Masculine	166	17.64	4.97	0.36	Not Significant
	Feminine	650	17.49	4.94		

The above Table-2 indicates that the calculated value of 't' 0.36 is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It is concluded that the Masculine and Feminine distance learners do not differ significantly in their virtual learning awareness.

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Hypotheses: 3

There is no significance difference between Urban and Rural distance learners in respect of their virtual learning awareness.

Table - 3
virtual learning awareness scores with regard to Locale of the student

Sub- Sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Significant at 0.05 level
Locale of the student	Rural	359	18.98	4.83	7.72	Significant
	Urban	457	16.37	4.73		

The above Table-3 indicates that the calculated value of 't' 7.72 is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis rejected. It concluded that the rural and urban distance learners differ significantly in their virtual learning awareness.

Hypotheses: 4

There is no significance difference between graduate and postgraduate distance learners in respect of their virtual learning awareness.

Table – 4
virtual learning awareness scores with regard to Educational Qualifications

Sub- Sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Significant at 0.05 level
Educational Qualification	UG	477	17.35	4.96	1.14	Not Significant
	PG	399	17.76	4.92		

The above Table-4 indicates that the calculated value of 't' 1.14 is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It concluded that the educational qualifications of distance learners UG and PG do not differ significantly in their virtual learning awareness.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the important findings of the present study.

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➢ The distance learners have average level on virtual learning awareness.

➢ There is no significant difference between Masculine and Feminine distance learners in respect of their virtual learning awareness.

➢ There is a significant difference between Rural and Urban distance learners in respect of their virtual learning awareness.

➢ There is no significant difference between graduate and postgraduate distance learners in respect of their virtual learning awareness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the level of virtual learning awareness among distance learners is average. By providing training, invited talk, lecture, workshop, conference and seminar on virtual learning may increase the level awareness on virtual learning.

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