

Student Opinion Towards e-learning: A case in Agriculture Higher Education

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Blended learning combines the properties of both face-to-face and e-learning. It enables universities to gradually transform their study programs with latest technological developments. It is widely accepted that blended learning approaches can create meaningful learning experiences while enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of student learning. According to the ADDIE model, which explains a five phase methodology for instructional design, the first step in designing e-learning material for blended learning environments entails analysing the user requirements. Accordingly, this study was conducted to analyse user perception on e-learning. Data were collected using a pre-tested questionnaire. 182 students, studying in an agriculture higher education institute were selected for the study using stratified random sampling. Stratification was based on the academic year and gender. Data were analyzed using descriptive methods, mainly frequency analysis. Results reveal that majority of the students preferred to have video based e-learning resources when compared to power-point slides or other printable materials (77%), and to submit assignments online than as a printed copy (58%). Many students agreed that e-learning in general provided them with an enjoyable learning experience (77%) which stimulated their desire for learning (75%). Furthermore, students' perception on e-learning usage did not show any association with gender or academic performances. Both male and female students had similar perceptions related to the use of e-learning management system (ELMS). Majority (78%) however, still preferred face-to-face lecture discussions when compared to the ELMS. Some students expressed that they are not confident to face online exams (29%). Few students are in need of more training and exposure to use the ELMS and to face ELMS based exams. It is necessary to study the reasons behind the poor attitudes and offer necessary support to these students to use the e-learning resources effectively. It is recommended to improve the usability of ELMS by adding the results of student assessments, notices, educational videos and more learning resources. The findings of this study can be used in designing and developing e-learning material for a Moodle based e-Learning Management System.

Keywords: Blended learning, e-learning, Perception, Face to face learning