Students' Acceptance, Experiences and Satisfaction of Online Learning: A Case of Study of Library and Information Science Students at the University of Zambia

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Abstract

Higher education institutions have been challenged by major changes in their various learning, teaching and research environments. Today's students grow up with the Internet, World Wide Web and various related digital devices. Consequently, their behaviours differ significantly from those of previous generations. Therefore, it is critical for educational practitioners and curricula designers to recognize these differences and to develop educational programmes that are appropriate for the characteristics, behaviours, and learning styles of these students.

Second year students undertaking a compulsory full course, LIS 2010: Information Processing, popularly known as Cataloguing and Classification (formerly known as Organization of Knowledge or), were taught using the Moodle e-learning platform. A questionnaire was administered to the students at the end of the academic year to solicit for information regarding their experiences, levels of satisfaction, and perceptions regarding the use of Moodle in their learning. The results were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 23. Overall, the perceptions of students were very positive. The majority of the students found e-learning interesting, enjoyable, pleasurable, and convenient. The majority of the students also felt that e-learning increased their satisfaction with the university learning process and therefore were also of the view that e-learning increased their academic productivity and the quality of learning as it integrated all forms of media. The majority of the students were satisfied with the Moodle e-learning platform and found the institutional Moodle website understandable, attractive and appropriate for e-learning. The majority also were of the opinion that the Moodle e-learning site created a positive experience and a sense of competency for them. Furthermore, the majority of the students reported that the Moodle e-learning platform enabled them to participate more actively and complete their assignments on time. Furthermore, the majority of the students felt that they achieved better results in the courses which combined online learning and classroom mode of learning. Furthermore, the majority of the students felt that the materials provided on the Moodle site well-organized, adequate, suitable for their needs, and regularly edited. The study however, established that students did not use Moodle for communication purposes. Major challenges students encountered while using the platform included poor/slow Internet connectivity, restricted access to Moodle, lack of timely feedback from lecturers, difficulties in uploading assignments, logging problems, frequent failure of the Moodle sever, inadequatetraining in the use Moodle, and lack of technical support.

Keywords: E-learning; Moodle, Virtual learning environments; Higher education; Modern teaching strategies; University of Zambia

Introduction

In this day and age Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become indispensable in the teaching and learning process. ICTs are critical tools used in data collection, processing, storage, retrieval and dissemination. They are vital tools in knowledge creation, knowledge management; which are essential components of the teaching and learning process.

Different terminologies are used to describe computer applications used in the learning and teaching process. Examples of these terminologies include e-learning systems, learning management systems (LMS), course management systems (CMS), and virtual learning environments (VLE). These e-learning platforms enable students to access course contents in different formats (e.g. text, image, sound), as well as interact with their lecturers and/or colleagues, via forums, chats, video-conference or other types of communication tools (Sanchezand Hueros, 2010). These platforms allow lecturers to create online courses, provide a variety of assessment activities (such as assignments, tests and examinations) and to conduct work groups and learning communities (Paulsen, 2003). An e-learning platform provides an integrated support for six different activities: creation, organization, delivery, communication, collaboration and assessment (Piotrowski, 2010).Research has shown that, by using e-learning platforms, students increase their academic productivity.

The Moodle e-learning platform

The Moodle e-learning platformis one of the most widely used open-source e-learning platforms in higher education and regarded as one of the easiest platforms to use (Paulsen, 2003; Piotrowski, 2010; Mahmoud, 2008; Santo et al., 2003). It enables the creation of a course website (Cole and Foster, 2008). This platform allows for exchange of information among users who could be geographically dispersed, through mechanisms of synchronous (chats) and asynchronous communication (discussion forums) (Costaa, Alvelosa, and Teixeiraa, 2012). It has easily configurable features, allowing the creation of student assessment activities such as quizzes, online tests, assignments, and examinations. It also allows students to manage their tasks with their timetable (Mahmoud, 2008; Itmaziet al., 2005).

Moodle offers a wide variety of complementary tools to support the teaching and learning process. Teachers can also improve the Moodle platform by implementing web-based peer assessment (Costaa, Alvelosa, and Teixeiraa, 2012). This enhances the student cognitive skills and helps them to construct their own knowledge, and promotes the development of positive attitudes towards team work. By means of this platform an interactive way of action between teaching staff and students is provided. Within this virtual environment students learn by direct, collaborative participation, where both students and teaching staff can have synchronised or non-synchronised access to the platform. Moodle can be successfully used both in the educational system, and in private or public institutions. Moodle can be used in universities in various purposes, both in full-time and part-time learning, e-learning or blended learning, both in the initial and continuous formation.

Since Moodle is open-source e-learning platforms, it can be installed on a server in order to be accessed from any computer connected to the Internet. It has a simple and logical interface, organised by modules; as a result, it can be easily used by users that do not have very advanced digital competences as well (Costaa, Alvelosa, and Teixeiraa, 2012).

Oproiu (2015) identified the following advantages of using the Moodle e-learning platform in learning activities:

- Teaching staff have a more facile contact with the students that applied for the course, by the virtual classes created.
- It may constitute an environment where courses, topics of laboratories and seminars or necessary bibliography can be posted.
- A space where students' data can be easily dealt with (virtual secretariat) may be constituted.
- It provides knowledge assessment and self-assessment opportunities by online testing.
- It enables good communication and socializing by means of chat or forum, both between trainees and with the teaching staff. Individual communication with the teaching staff can be achieved or topics can be debated on by all members that access the platform.

Statement of the Problem

Students' perceptions and satisfaction with online learning platforms have drawn a lot of attention from educational practitioners and researchers. However, an empirical study of students' experiences, perceptions and satisfaction with online learning is yet to be found in the library and information science discipline. Moreover, most of the previous studies are were predominantly undertaken in the developed countries. Thus, this study addresses this gap in previous studies.

The Moodle e-learning platform has been implemented within the University of Zambia in recent years, even though its use has not become compulsory. Since attendance by full-time students is compulsory for all courses that take place within the University of Zambia, the Moodle e-learning platform is used alongside traditional teaching methods. However, it is not known how much Moodle contributes to making the learning and communication process between students and the teaching staff more efficient. Thus the aim of this study was to investigate students' experiences and use of the Moodle e-learning platform.

Objectives of the study

This study aimed to capture students' experiences and use of e-learning using the Moodle learning platform. The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To establish the students' perceptions towards online learning
2. To investigate the extent to which students found Moodle ease to use
3. To establish students' level of satisfaction with Moodle
4. To investigate challenges students' encountered while using Moodle

Significance of the study

It is hoped that, the findings of this study will be used to encourage both lecturers and students use Moodle as a learning platform at the University of Zambia and other institutions of higher learning in Zambia and Sub-Saharan Africa. It is also hoped that this study will inspire researchers to conduct further research in the usage of e-learning platforms by both lecturers and students in African institutions of learning.

Literature Review

Literature was reviewed in relation to use of students' experiences and perceptions with regard to their use of Moodle e-learning platform in the university teaching and learning process. The literature review indicates that there has never been a study of this type done in Zambia and that studies in this area are overall limited. In a study by Oproiu (2015) it was found that although the majority of the students were aware of the availability of Moodle in their university they rarely used it for study. Furthermore, the study revealed that most of the students found the application beneficial and were willing to use it as long as they were taught how to use it. More importantly, it was observed that teaching staff have the role of creating activities that motivates students to use the application.

Hölbland Welzer (2010) investigated students' communication habits and usage of the Moodle e-learning platform. The research indicated that students were not as eager as their lecturers to use most of the features of platform in their courses and studies. Forums, chats, blogs, wikis, and other similar elements were in high percentage unused by the students. The major reasons students indicated is that they were not aware of the features; consequently they believed they had no use for them. Overall, students were satisfied with Moodle and e-learning in general. Furthermore, students were aware of the benefits e-learning and were therefore welcomed further implementations of e-learning into the teaching practice.

Keller and Cernerud (2006) studied "perceptions of students towards e-learning in university education at Jönköping University in Sweden. A total of 150 students with at least two years of using e-learning platforms on campus were surveyed. The main findings and conclusion from this study were that "the strategy of implementing the e-leaming system at the university was more important in influencing students' perceptions than the individual background variables". The study also revealed that having access to the e-learning platform on campus is not necessarily a benefit to students. The further revealed that students who had "previous knowledge of computers and students with positive attitudes to new technologies were all less positive to e-leaming on campus than other students.

Koohang (2004) investigated users' perceptions toward e-learning courseware usability. This study was done in a university in the USA and focused on variables of age, gender, prior experience with the Internet, and the amount of time the e-learner spent on the e-learning courseware. The findings of the study reveal that there is no significant difference for age and gender in using e-learning platforms. However, student's earlier experience with the Internet and the amount of time they spent on the e-learning platform significantly influence their use of e-learning technologies. Moreover, the research shows that students who had prior experience with the Internet perceived the e-learning platform a lot more positively.

Methodology

The questionnaire-based investigation was used in the present empirical research. The questionnaire applied to students had 12 items, most of them closed items and was administered to second year students taking a Library and Information Science course, LIS 2010: Information Processing. This is a compulsory course in which Moodle platform was used to administer study materials, assignments and other learning materials. Ninety-four students answered the questionnaire, which was aimed at highlighting the students' perception regarding the interaction with new environments and learning techniques, particularly Moodle learning platform. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 23.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the study. In this the usage of the Moodle platform by the students UNZA pursuing a Bachelor of Library and Information Science (LIS) is considered, through the analysis of the results obtained from a questionnaire applied to 100 of them. The section is organized according to the study objectives, namely: characterization of the participants, general characterization of the use of the Moodle' platform and characterization of the use of the Moodle' tools.

Demographic profiles of the participants

A hundred questionnaires were distributed to LIS students enrolled in a second year course, LIS 2010: Information Processing. Ninety-four questionnaires were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 94%. Table 1 shows that 39 (41.5%) of the participants were females while 55 (58.5%) were males. Eleven (11.7%) of the participants were aged 20 years or less; 70 (74.5%) were aged 21-25 years; 9 (9.6%) were aged 26-30 years; and 4 (4.3%) were aged above 30 years. The average age was 22.94 years; the youngest was aged 18 years while the oldest was aged 41 years. The majority (81.9%) of the participants were regular students while 18.1% were studying enrolled in the evening (parallel) program. The majority (59.6%) were accommodated on campus; and 40.4% were accommodated off-campus (11.7% in boarding houses and 28.7% in their own houses).

Table 1: Demographic profile of the participants

Variable	Values	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Females	39	41.5
	Males	55	58.5
Age	≤ 20 years	11	11.7
	21-25 years	70	74.5
	26-30 years	9	9.6
	31+	4	4.3
Mode of Study	Regular	77	81.9
	Parallel (Evening)	17	18.1
Residential status	On campus	56	59.6
	Boarding house	11	11.7
	Own house	27	28.7

A. Students' perceptions towards online learning in general

The first objective of this study was to investigate students' perceptions regarding online learning in general. To obtain students' perceptions, respondents were asked to indicate their whether they agreed or disagreed with series of statement measuring: the extent to which

a) The extent to which they found online learning interesting,
b) The extent to which they found online learning fitting with their learning styles, and
c) The extent to which they found online learning contributing to their academic productivity

Extent to which online learning is interesting to students

Respondents were asked to a series of questions evaluating the extent to which they found online learning interesting. The results are presented in Table 2. The majority (77.7%) of the students agreed that online learning was interesting; 64.9% agreed that online learning was enjoyable; 47.3% agreed that online learning was pleasurable while 37.6% were neutral. Furthermore, 59.6% agreed that taking online courses was convenient while 25.5% disagreed and 14.9% were neutral. Furthermore, 73.4% agreed that adopting ICT and e-learning increases student satisfaction, while 8.5% disagreed and 18.1% were neutral. The majority (72.3%) agreed that they were interested in taking courses that are offered online.

These findings corroborate the findings of Hölbl and Welzer (2010) who reported that general opinion of students towards e-learning was very positive. In their study the established that students believed that Moodle offered a good and interesting approach to contemporary teaching and learning. Students also expressed their beliefs that e-learning is very useful, but it cannot replace face-to-face learning completely. It must be noted that in this study a percentage of students, ranging from 11.7% to 37.6%, were neutral in number of questions. This could be an indication that reasonable number of students were not yet certain of the importance of e-learning platforms in the university learning and teaching process.

Table 2: Students 'perceptions regarding online learning (n=94)

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
Online learning is interesting	9.6%	12.8%	77.7%	100.0%
Online learning is enjoyable	11.7%	23.4%	64.9%	100.0%
Online learning is pleasurable	15.1%	37.6%	47.3%	100.0%
Taking online courses is convenient	25.5%	14.9%	59.6%	100.0%
Adopting ICT and e-learning increases student satisfaction	8.5%	18.1%	73.4%	100.0%
I am interested in taking courses that offered online	16.0%	11.7%	72.3%	100.0%

Extent to which online learning fit with students' learning styles

The study revealed that 40.4% agreed that using online courses was compatible with the way they liked to learn, 35.1% disagreed, and 24.5% were neutral. The majority (73.4%) agreed that their computer literacy was sufficient for the successful online learning, 7.4% disagreed while 19.1% were neutral. Furthermore, 47.9% agreed that using online courses fits well with their life styles, 28.7% disagreed while 23.4% were neutral. The majority (71.3%) reported that they felt confident to use online learning platforms,11.7% disagreed while 17.0% were neutral. About 61.7% agreed that they were able to skilfully use online learning platforms, 20.2% disagreed while 18.1% were neutral. Furthermore, 57.4% agreed that they had the resources, knowledge and

ability to use online learning platforms, 21.3% disagreed while another 21.3% were neutral. Lastly, 75.5% agreed that they believed that convenience is an important feature of e-learning, 16.0% disagreed while 8.5% were neutral.

Table 2: Students 'perceptions regarding online learning (n=94)

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
Using online courses is compatible with the way I like to learn	35.1%	24.5%	40.4%	100.0%
My computer literacy is sufficient for the successful online learning	7.4%	19.1%	73.4%	100.0%
Using online courses fits well with my life style	28.7%	23.4%	47.9%	100.0%
I feel confident to use online learning platforms	11.7%	17.0%	71.3%	100.0%
I am able to skilfully use online learning platforms	20.2%	18.1%	61.7%	100.0%
Using online learning is entirely within my control	33.0%	25.5%	41.5%	100.0%
I have the resources, knowledge, and ability to use online learning	21.3%	21.3%	57.4%	100.0%
I believe that convenience is an important feature of e-learning	16.0%	8.5%	75.5%	100.0%

Online learning contributing to increased academic productivity

Table 3 presents results on students' perceptions regarding whether online learning contributes to increased academic performance. The results revealed that 36.6% agreed that taking online courses increased their productivity, another 26.9% disagreed while 36.6% were neutral. On the other hand, 61.7% agreed that they expect to be proficient in using online LIS courses, 9.6% disagreed while 28.7% were neutral. Furthermore, 75.5% agreed that e-learning increased the quality of learning because it integrates all forms of media, 7.4% disagreed while 17.0% were neutral.

Table 3: Students 'perceptions regarding online learning (n=94)

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
Taking online courses increases my productivity	26.9%	36.6%	36.6%	100.0%
I expect to be proficient in using online LIS courses.	9.6%	28.7%	61.7%	100.0%
E-learning increases the quality of learning because it integrates all forms of media (print, audio, video)	7.4%	17.0%	75.5%	100.0%

B. Students' level of satisfaction with the Moodle e-learning site

The second objective of the study was to investigate students' level of satisfaction with the UNZA Moodle e-learning site. The results are presented in Table 4. 48.9% agreed that the site has an attractive appearance, 24.5% disagreed while 26.6% were neutral. 41.5% agreed that the site has a fast browsing speed, 23.4% disagreed while 35.1% were neutral. 46.8% agreed that the design is appropriate for online learning, 13.8% disagreed while 37.2% were neutral. 46.8% agreed that the site conveys a sense of competency, 14.9% disagreed while 38.3% were neutral. 62.8% agreed that the site creates a positive experience for them, 11.7% disagreed while 25.5% were neutral.

These results indicate that although Moodle is considered the easiest e-learning platform to use and has easy features, there a considerable number of students who found the Moodle website not clear and not easy to understand (18.1%), unattractive (24.5%), the design not appropriate (13.8%), and the site not conveying a sense of competency to them (14.9%). Furthermore, these

Table 4: Students' level of satisfaction with the Moodle website

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
My interaction with the site is clear and understandable	18.1%	25.5%	56.4%	100.0%
The site has an attractive appearance	24.5%	26.6%	48.9%	100.0%
The site has a fast browsing speed	23.4%	35.1%	41.5%	100.0%
The design is appropriate for online learning	13.8%	37.2%	48.9%	100.0%
The site conveys a sense of competency	14.9%	38.3%	46.8%	100.0%
The site creates a positive experience for me	11.7%	25.5%	62.8%	100.0%

C. Extent to which students found Moodle interface ease to use

The third objective of the study was to investigate the extent to which students found Moodle interface ease to use. Table 5 presents the results. The majority (60.6%) agreed that they found the Moodle e-learning site easy to use, 13.8% disagreed while 25.5% were neutral. 56.4% agreed that their interaction with the site was clear and understandable, 18.1% disagreed while 25.5% were neutral. 50.0% agreed that they found the site easy to navigate, 16.0% disagreed while 34.0% were neutral. 53.3% agreed that navigating Moodle was intuitive, 9.6% disagreed while 35.1% were neutral. 50.0% agreed that they liked the interface of Moodle, 14.9% disagreed while 35.1% were neutral. The results further revealed that 30.9% agreed that they often had a problem accessing Moodle and course materials, 55.3% disagreed while 13.8% were neutral. 23.4% agreed that they often had a problems opening files on Moodle, 55.3% disagreed while 30.9% were neutral. 55.3% agreed that when they encountered a technical problem they knew they could contact the Moodle administrator, 23.4% disagreed while 21.3% were neutral.

Table 5: Extent to which students found Moodle interface ease to use

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
I find the site easy to use	13.8%	25.5%	60.6%	100.0%
I find the site easy to navigate	16.0%	34.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Navigating Moodle is intuitive	9.6%	35.1%	55.3%	100.0%
I like the interface of Moodle	14.9%	35.1%	50.0%	100.0%
Often I have problem accessing Moodle and course materials	55.3%	13.8%	30.9%	100.0%
Often I have problems opening files on Moodle	68.1%	8.5%	23.4%	100.0%
When I encounter a technical problem, I know I could contact the Moodle administrator	23.4%	21.3%	55.3%	100.0%

Extent to which students used Moodle as a communication tool

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the extent to which students used Moodle as a communication tool. Table 6 presents the results. The results revealed that only 30.1% agreed to the statement that "it was easy to communicate with lecturers through Moodle", 47.3% disagreed while 22.6% were neutral. Only 16.0% agreed that to the statement that "through Moodle I communicated with other colleagues in their course", 64.9% disagreed while 19.1% were neutral. Only 26.6% agreed to the statement that "Moodle enabled Forums discussions", 52.1% disagreed while 21.3% were neutral. However, 56.4% agreed to the statement that "lecturers used Moodle to communicate with students regularly", 22.3% disagreed while 21.3% were neutral.

Table 6: Extent to which students used Moodleas a communication tool

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
It was easy to communicate with lecturers through Moodle	47.3%	22.6%	30.1%	100.0%
Through the Moodle I communicated with other colleagues	64.9%	19.1%	16.0%	100.0%
Moodle enabled Forum discussions	52.1%	21.3%	26.6%	100.0%
The lecturer used the Moodle to communicate with students regularly	22.3%	21.3%	56.4%	100.0%

D. Extent to which students found Moodle as a useful learning tool

The fifth objective of the study was to establish the extent to which students found Moodle a useful learning tool. Table 7 presents the results. The results show that 38.3% agreed that Moodle helped them to organize their learning process better, 28.7% disagreed while 33.0% were neutral. 48.9% agreed that they achieved better results in courses which combined online and classroom mode of learning, 19.1% disagreed while 31.9% were neutral. 44.7% agreed that Moodle enabled them to participate more actively and complete their assignments more regularly than in exclusively classroom courses, 25.5% disagreed while 29.8% were neutral. 75.5% agreed that it is important and useful to have unlimited access to all materials, 13.8% disagreed while 10.6% were neutral.

Table 7: Extent to which students found Moodle a useful learning tool

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
Moodle helps me to organize my learning process better.	28.7%	33.0%	38.3%	100.0%
I achieve better results in the courses which combine online and classroom mode of learning.	19.1%	31.9%	48.9%	100.0%
Moodle enabled me to participate more actively and complete my assignments more regularly than in exclusively classroom courses.	25.5%	29.8%	44.7%	100.0%
It is important and useful to have unlimited access to all materials.	13.8%	10.6%	75.5%	100.0%

E. Extent to which students found course content on Moodle useful

The sixth objective of the study was to investigate the extent to which students found the course content on Moodle useful for their study. Table 8 presents the results. The results reveal that 69.1% agreed that the materials provided on Moodle were adequate, 17.0% disagreed while 13.8% were neutral. Furthermore, 64.9% agreed that the learning materials and activities in the e-course were well organized, 11.7% disagreed while 23.4% were neutral. 56.4% agreed that Moodle learning materials were more suitable for students' needs, 12.8% disagreed while 30.9% were neutral. 51.1% agreed that lecturers edited content and managed e-course activities regularly, 22.3% disagreed while 26.6% were neutral.

Table 8: Extent to which students found Moodle useful

	disagree	neutral	agree	Total
The materials that were provided on Moodle were adequate.	17.0%	13.8%	69.1%	100.0%
The learning materials and activities in the e-course were well organized.	11.7%	23.4%	64.9%	100.0%
Moodle learning materials are more suitable for students' needs.	12.8%	30.9%	56.4%	100.0%
The lecturer(s) edited content and managed e-course activities regularly	22.3%	26.6%	51.1%	100.0%

F. Challenges students face when using Moodle

The seventh objective of this study was to identify challenges students encountered when using Moodle. Fourteen challenges were identified (Table 9). Topping the least was poor/slow Internet connectivity around the University campus, mainly due to small bandwidth (38.9%). This was followed by restricted access to Moodle (Moodle could only be accessed on campus through EDUROAM (16.8%), students found it difficult to access Moodle on their mobiles, particularly outside campus); difficult to upload assignments and to download learning materials (11.5%); lack of feedback from lecturers (12.4%); difficult to upload assignments (11.5%); logging problems, mainly due to forgetting passwords (4.4%); frequent failure of the Moodle server (3.5%); electricity load shedding, this affected particularly students who lived outside campus (2.7%); Internet was expensive, particularly to students who accessed Moodle through their mobile phones outside campus (1.8%); lack of skills to use Moodle (1.8%); course content not frequently updated (.9%); difficult to browse Moodle site (.9%); lack of access computers (.9%); and Moodle administrators not accommodative to students' complaints (.9%).

Table 9: Challenges students face when using Moodle

NS		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	poor/slow Internet connectivity	44	38.9	38.9
2	restricted access to Moodle; only available on campus	19	16.8	55.8
3	lack of feedback from lecturers	14	12.4	68.1
4	difficult to upload assignments	13	11.5	79.6
5	logging in problems	5	4.4	84.1
6	frequently failure of Moodle server	4	3.5	87.6
7	lack of skills to use Moodle	3	2.7	90.3
8	load shedding (electricity)	3	2.7	92.9
9	Internet services expensive	2	1.8	94.7
10	lack of computers	2	1.8	96.5
11	course content not frequently updated	1	.9	97.3
12	difficult to browse Moodle	1	.9	98.2
13	lack of access to computers	1	.9	99.1
14	Moodle administrators not accommodative	1	.9	100.0
	Total	113	100.0	

The findings of this study corroborate the findings of Hölbl and Welzer (2010), who observed that most of the challenges encountered by students when using Moodle were technical in nature.Hölbl and Welzer (2010) furthermore observed that technical issues were mostly caused by hardware and software limitations of the employed servers. The issues include: connection problems, slow response in case of many users connected to Moodle, difficulties when opening or downloading specific types of files in certain browsers, etc.The issues include: connection problems, slow response in case of many users connected to Moodle, difficulties when opening or downloading specific types of files in certain browsers, etc.

These results reveal that the majority of the students at UNZA use their personal digital devices, mainly laptops and smart phones, to access the Internet resources. Furthermore, these students heavily depend on the University network to access the Moodle and cannot afford to use private networks. Therefore these students use Moodle within the University premises.

Conclusion

This study aimed at investigating students' experiences and perceptions regarding the Moodle e-learning platform and its use in their studies. Overall, the perceptions of students regarding the adoption of the e-learning platforms in the university teaching process were very positive. The majority of the students surveyed were interested in e-learning. Furthermore, the majority of the students sampled found e-learning interesting, enjoyable, pleasurable, and convenient. The majority of the students also felt that e-learning increased their satisfaction with the university learning process. Majority of the students were also of the view that e-learning increased their academic productivity and the quality of learning as it integrated all forms of media.

The majority of the students were satisfied with the Moodle e-learning platform as they the Moodle site clear and understandable, attractive and appropriate for e-learning. The majority also were of the opinion that the Moodle e-learning site created a positive experience and a sense of competency for them. Furthermore, the majority of the students reported that the Moodle e-learning platform enabled them to participate more actively and complete their assignments more regularly. Furthermore, the majority of the students felt that they achieved better results in the courses which combined online learning and classroom mode learning. Furthermore, the majority of the students felt that the materials provided on the Moodle site well-organized, adequate, suitable for their needs, and regularly edited.

The study however, established that the majority of the students found difficult to use the Moodle as a communication tool. Other challenges students encountered while using the platform included poor/slow Internet connectivity, restricted access to Moodle, lack of timely feedback from lecturers, difficulties to upload assignments, logging problems, frequent failure of the Moodle sever, inadequate/lack training in the use Moodle and lack of technical support.

In must be observed that the Moodle e-learning platform was introduced to only second year LIS students in the School of Education. The researchers would like to agree with Graham (2006) who observed that blended learning systems change the way the learners learn but also change the way the teachers teach. We furthermore agree with Zuvic-Butorac et al. (2011) who observed that this process of transformation cannot happen overnight and is expected to last for some time. However, it is hope that the introduction of e-learning will bring improvements in the in organization, planning and management of the learning and teaching processes at the University of Zambia.

Recommendations

The study presents the following recommendations:

1. The University management must improve the ICT infrastructure in the university, particularly with regard to improved bandwidth.
2. Technical support must readily available to both the lecturers and students.
3. The University management should provide thorough training to both the lecturers and students.
4. Lecturers should invest more effort in course preparation, implementation, and provision of timely feedback.
5. Continuous and careful monitoring of students' satisfaction should be encouraged in order to ensure the success, feasibility and viability of e-learning, as a supporting educational tool in the university learning and teaching process.

Future research

Research should be conducted to investigate factors underlying the use or not, of the Moodle e-learning platform by the academic community.

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