

DISTANCE LEARNERS' AWARENESS ON VIRTUAL LEARNING WITH RESPECT TO FATHERS' EDUCATION, MOTHERS' EDUCATION AND THEIR MARITAL STATUS.

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Abstract:

An attempt has been made in this paper to study the awareness of distance learners on virtual learning. Normative survey method has been used in the present investigation. Stratified random sampling technique has been used in the selection of the sample of as many as 816 distance learners from three Universities (Annamalai University, Madurai Kamaraj University and Bharathidasan University). Virtual learning awareness Inventory (VLAI) constructed and validated by the investigators has been used in this present study. The finding of the study revealed that the Fathers Education and Mothers Education of distance learners show significant difference in respect of their awareness on virtual learning. But the marital status shows no significant difference in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

Keywords: *Virtual learning, Awareness, distance learners, Educated, Illiterate, marital status.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Virtual learning environments (VLE) have recently emerged as an important topic in education theory and practice (Weller, 2007). In theory, a well-maintained VLE should enable students of all learning styles to receive the best possible education, in a way that they may not in an exclusively lecture-based environment which tends to be focused on auditory learners only (i.e. those who learn best by listening (Williams and Fardon, 2005; Vigentini, 2009)). If the resources on a VLE do not cater to the needs of the students – both in terms of their format (text files, audio files, videos etc.) and their content – the VLE is effectively rendered useless as it does not add to the students learning experience. Ideally (for co-located students rather than distance learners) it should contain just enough information to allow students to reinforce their work in lectures and gain a broader and deeper understanding of the subject (Ofsted, 2009), preferably through a range of presentational styles (such as video or audio).

A students experience in the classroom or lecture theatre depends on how well the teaching style fits with their individual learning style. The same issues exist with virtual systems and a variety of resources is needed in order to provide adequately for all learning styles. Many higher education institutions are increasingly fragmented and lacking in cohesion or unity (Whitworth, 2005) and regard VLEs as a way to help overcome the problems introduced by the national increase in the number of students coming to university and the higher workload that this entails for lecturing and support staff (Richardson, 2001). There is, however, a danger that, if the resources available online are too comprehensive, students could cease attending lectures (Bromage, 2003), preferring instead to access lecture materials online and to carry out their studies from the comfort of their homes (Boyle et al., 2008). It can therefore be said that there are three types of VLE: those with too much information (which discourage students from attending lectures), those with too little (rendering the VLE largely useless),

and those with just enough to allow students to reinforce their work in lectures and gain a broader understanding of the subject (Ofsted, 2009).

2. 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, academicians, 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 equipments 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 investigators felt that there is a need to analyze the virtual learning awareness of distance learners.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives have been formulated for the present study.

- a. To study whether there is any significance difference between Illiterate and educated Fathers of distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.
- b. To study whether there is any significance difference between Illiterate and educated Mothers of distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.
- c. To find out whether there is any significance difference between Married and Unmarried distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

4. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- a. There is no significance difference between Illiterate and educated fathers of distance learners in respect to their awareness on virtual learning.
- b. There is no significance difference between Illiterate and educated Fathers of distance learners in respect to their awareness on virtual learning.
- c. There is no significance difference between marital status of Married and Unmarried (Mother Education) distance learners in respect to their awareness on virtual learning.

5. METHOD OF STUDY

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

5.01. *Sample of the Study*

As many as 816 distance learners in three Universities (Annamalai University, Madurai Kamaraj University, Bharathidasan University) have been chosen as sample using stratified random sampling technique.

5.02. Tools Used in the Present Study

Virtual Learning Awareness Inventory (VLAI) constructed and validated by the investigators has been used to collect the data from the distance learners.

5.03. Statistical Techniques Used

The following statistical techniques have been used in the present study.

1. Descriptive analysis
2. Differential analysis

6. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.01. Hypotheses – 1

There is no significance difference between Illiterate and educated Fathers of distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

Table-1
Significance of the difference between the means score of Educated and Illiterate Fathers of Distance Learners in respect of their Awareness on Virtual learning

Sub- Sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Significant at 0.05 level
Fathers Education	Illiterate	354	15.71	4.59	9.62	Significant
	Educated	462	18.90	4.77		

The above Table-1 indicates that the calculated value of 't' 9.62 significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significance difference between Illiterate and Educated Fathers of distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

6.02. Hypotheses: 2

There is no significance difference between Illiterate and educated Mothers of distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

Table-2
Significance of the difference between the means score of Educated and Illiterate Mothers of Distance Learners in respect of their Awareness on Virtual learning

Sub- Sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Significant at 0.05 level
Mothers Education	Illiterate	459	16.47	4.70	7.09	Significant
	Educated	357	18.87	4.93		

The above Table-2 indicates that the calculated value of 't' 7.09 is significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis rejected. It is concluded that there is a significance difference between Illiterate and educated Mothers' of distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

6.03. Hypotheses: 3

There is no significance difference between marital status of Married and Unmarried of distance learners with respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

Table-3

Significance of the difference between the means score of married and Unmarried Distance Learners in respect of their Awareness on Virtual learning.

Sub- Sample		N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Significant at 0.05 level
Marital Status	Married	609	17.41	5.02	1.06	Not Significant
	Unmarried	207	17.84	4.71		

The above Table-3 indicates that the calculated value of 't' 1.06 is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. It concluded that there is no significance difference between marital status of Married and Unmarried distance learners in respect of their awareness on virtual learning.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- There is a significance difference between Father Education of distance learners in respect to their awareness on virtual learning.
- There is a significance difference between Mother Education of distance learners in respect to their awareness on virtual learning.
- There is no significance difference between marital status of distance learners in respect to their awareness on virtual learning.

8. CONCLUSION

Virtual learning has emerged as a useful source for promoting learning and preparing youths to participate in a global economy. The present study gives a clear-cut view about the present position of distance learners awareness on virtual learning. The results of the study reveal that the sub samples of Fathers Education and Mothers' Education shows that significant difference in their awareness on virtual learning. But the sub sample marital status of distance learners does not show any significance difference.

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