



Students' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of the Use of Edmodo as a Supplementary Tool for Learning

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Abstract:

Utilizing Virtual Learning Environments as a supplementary tool for motivating and empowering independent learning and innovative teaching is becoming a crucial part of a 21st century education. Edmodo is one example of social learning site which is now being used by professors and students in many institutions of higher learning in the country. However, there are still limited researches in the Philippines about the impact of using Virtual Learning Environments as supplementary tools for learning. This research focuses on the effectiveness from students' perspective of the use of Edmodo as a supplementary tool for learning social science courses. Data were collected with a mixed-methods research paradigm. Altogether 200 college students responded to a questionnaire intended to analyse students' perceptions regarding the main research inquiries of the study. From the said population of respondents, 35 students voluntarily participated in the focus group discussions and interviews dealing with their experiences using Edmodo. Overall, the findings affirmed that majority of participants considered Edmodo as an effective supplementary tool for their learning.

Key Words: edmodo; 21st century education; virtual learning environment; blended learning; 21st century education

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

21ST century education requires educational administrators, teachers and students to use technology for the advancement of learning and teaching. Nowadays, many academic articles, virtual learning environments and other educational tools which are available in the internet for free can be accessed by ordinary people. Students to be more specific frequently used the internet or to be more

particular social networking sites. (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, and Espinoza 2008).

One of these platforms is Edmodo also called as the "Facebook for Education". In a recent survey posted in Centre for Learning & Performance Technologies, Edmodo was ranked as one of the top learning tools in the internet by five hundred plus professionals from 48 countries worldwide. (<http://c4lpt.co.uk/top100tools/>).

In the Philippines and other countries, teachers and professors in schools and higher institutions of learning are using numerous virtual



learning environments such as Moodle, Quia, Edmodo and other related sites to supplement face to face classroom discussions. (<http://www.ibo.org/ibworld/may2011/learningwithoutborders.cfm>). The popularity of the following virtual learning environments paved the way to numerous researches on the impact of using these platforms on students' academic achievement or learning.

Currently, there are still few researches in the Philippines about the impact or advantages of using virtual learning environments in the field of education and student learning. Therefore, it is interesting to note how students perceived virtual learning environments especially when it comes to their comprehension, retention and learning motivation on their courses. It is also vital to know the advantages and disadvantages of using social networking sites and virtual learning environments as perceived by students.

1.2 The Participants

The participants are students of Prof. Edulag – a Social Science professor of Centro Escolar University – Makati. All of these students have Edmodo accounts because one major requirement for Dr. Edulag classes is to answer online quizzes, assignments and discussions. 27% of the participants were males and 74% were females. Majority of the participants were first year college students. (54%).

1.3 Aims of the Study

The aims of this paper are to know the participants' perceptions about the use of Edmodo as supplementary tool for learning; to know their perceptions regarding the advantages and disadvantages in using the said learning environment; and to reveal participants' views on utilizing Edmodo as a classroom collaboration tool.

1.4 Research Questions

The aims of this study were investigated through the following research questions:

- 1.) Based on the perceptions of the participants, is Edmodo an effective supplementary tool for learning?
- 2.) What are the advantages and disadvantages of using Edmodo as supplementary tool for learning?

1.5 Review of Literature

In the field of educational technology, recent studies have proven many benefits of using the Internet for providing stronger motivation for learning among students.

The Internet allows cost-effective information delivery services, collaborative and distance education, more than has ever been imagined (Clyde, 1995; Todd, 1997). 21st century students are very knowledgeable

A number of researches have been written on the effectiveness of virtual learning environments at the higher institution level. The said advantages are as follows: convenience, accessibility and flexibility. (Colorado & Eberle, 2010; Osciak & Milheim, 2001). However, the said effectiveness may vary considering the internet facilities of the school, level of enthusiasm among students on the use of social networking sites in education and the knowledge and skills of teachers when it comes on online learning.

A study conducted by Brady et al. on effectiveness of an education-based social networking sites or virtual learning environments in education supported the idea of a great potential of these online educational platforms as a supplementary tools for a face-to-face class. (Brady et al. 2010).

There are many educational activities that can be done in virtual learning environments such as online assignments, discussions, and other tasks. For example, computer based assignments are very crucial in assessing students' progress. Computer based assignments are an effective way of ascertaining students' understanding of concepts. Students also learn more quickly, demonstrate greater retention, and are better motivated to learn when they work with computers (Koert, 2000).

Teachers' knowledge on applying theories on effective implementation of online learning is very



crucial as well. According previous researches on the educational technology, the benefit to students of using new technologies is greatly dependent, at least for the moment, on the technological skill of the teachers and the teacher's attitude to the presence of the technology in teaching. (Gregoire, Bracewell, and Lafarriere 1996); (John and Sutherland, 2004)

Another important point is the over-all acceptance of students on the online activities given by the teacher. According to Haddad and Drexler (2002), an effective teaching/learning process must stimulate intellectual curiosity and offer a sense of enjoyment that will move the students from the passive role of recipients of information to the active role of builders of knowledge.

Based on the brief review of literature presented, virtual learning tools or environments could provide great impact on the way students' view 21st century learning.

2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used triangulation approach in gathering data of the research. Survey questionnaire was used as the main research instrument of the research. Moreover, the researcher also conducted interview to some participants and researched related literature about the current research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings from the current research support those of previous studies on the impact of virtual learning environments on the perceptions of students regarding its usefulness on their learning and education, as well as the benefits and limitations of using virtual learning environments and social networking sites within educational settings.

Table 1. Students' Perceptions about the Effectiveness of Edmodo as a Supplementary Tool for Learning

Statements	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree
1. Assignments, quizzes and other online tasks given by teacher in Edmodo help me to improve my learning and comprehension skills about the course.	80%	19%	1%
2. The quality of my work in online activities (e.g. online discussions, quizzes, and other activities) in Edmodo significantly improved because of the feedbacks coming from my classmates and teacher.	71%	26%	4%
3. The reference materials (e.g. internet articles, online videos, power point files, etc.) posted by my teacher are useful in understanding the contents/topics of the course better.	83%	15%	3%
4. The use of Edmodo is a good learning tool to supplement face to face discussions in class.	77%	21%	3%

On Table 1, 80% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that the online activities in Edmodo



helped them in improving their learning and comprehension skills about course. On the other hand, only 1% of the participants strongly disagreed or disagreed about the said statement. It goes to show that majority of the participants perceived Edmodo as an essential educational tool in improving their learning and comprehension skills. This was also the perspective of majority of participants who joined the interview and the focus group discussion. However, 19% participants answered neutral. One possible explanation for this is not all students are open to idea that aside of activities in the face to face instruction, they are still required to take quizzes or to do activities online.

When it comes to the impact of feedbacks coming from students and teacher posted in Edmodo on improving the participants' quality of work in online activities, 71% of the participants recognized that this mechanism for collaboration has a positive impact on the quality of their works/outputs. 26% of participants answered neutral about impact of feedbacks on the improvement of their works.

On the statement regarding the usefulness of reference materials posted by the teacher in Edmodo, a significant number of participants (83%) considered the said reference materials as vital in understanding the course better. Participants also perceived that Edmodo is a good learning tool to supplement face to face discussion. The positive responses among the participants on the last two statements clearly supported the notion that Edmodo is a good educational tool especially on easy access of reference materials posted by the teacher and other teachers around the world.

Table 2. Students' Perceptions about the Advantages of the Use of Edmodo as a Supplementary Tool for Learning

Statements	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree
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1. Edmodo allows me to easily interact/participate with my classmates and teacher about assignments, group tasks and other course activities.	75%	24%	2%
2. Edmodo is convenient to use especially in submitting assignments, taking online quizzes and doing other course activities.	81%	17%	3%
3. Edmodo allows me to easily access reference materials on the course provided by the teacher.	76%	21%	4%
4. Online activities and discussions in Edmodo motivate me to learn more about the course	69%	25%	4%

Based on Table 2, the highest percentage points given by the participant (81%) is the fact that Edmodo is convenient to use in submitting assignments, taking online quizzes, etc. The second highest percentage (76%) is regarding the benefit of Edmodo in easily accessing reference materials provided by the teacher.



On the question whether online activities in Edmodo motivated them to learn the course, 69% of the participants affirmed that the said activities allowed them to be motivated in studying the course.

Based on these results, majority of participants strongly agreed and agreed that Edmodo is indeed a great platform as a supplementary tool for learning because of its features and benefits such as active participation in online class activities, easy to use features in submitting online tasks, easy to access reference materials and increase of student motivation because of online activities and discussions.

Table 3. Students' Perceptions about the Disadvantages of the Use of Edmodo as a Supplementary Tool for Learning

Statements	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neutral	Strongly Disagree or Disagree
1. Online activities such as quizzes, assignments and discussions in Edmodo are time consuming on the part of students.	68%	25%	7%
2. Students with no access on the internet could be left behind especially on the course activities and discussions in Edmodo.	80%	17%	4%

3. Students can easily be able to share and access other student's files/answers.

This could lead to ethical issues in cheating and copying of others' work.

75%	20%	6%
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4. The procedure of Edmodo is difficult to understand and to follow for students

53%	26%	21%
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According to the 80% of participants, the main disadvantage of using Edmodo in class is not all students have access to the internet. As a result, some students could be left behind on the lessons or activities posted by the teacher in Edmodo. Another downside of using Edmodo is students can easily view or copy the works of their classmates because it can easily be access in the said educational platform site. One disadvantage in using Edmodo as perceived by 68% of the participants is online activities in Edmodo are time consuming.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results, Edmodo is a good supplementary tool for learning because it allows students to improve their learning through an active participation in online discussions and tasks. The most important finding of this study is that Edmodo appears to be a wonderful learning platform which is so simple that observations and data show a high level of acceptance and response by the participants.

Furthermore, the majority of the participants agreed that Edmodo is a good learning tool to supplement face to face discussions and a good collaboration platform for students and teachers. However, there are also some disadvantages using Edmodo such as time consuming, difficulty in following the procedures of Edmodo, plagiarism of



other works and not all students have access to the internet.

Other researchers could verify or study the impact of virtual learning environments to students and teachers as well using different research variables such as the role of teacher skills on the effectiveness of blended learning. Moreover, researches could also study different benefits and challenges of virtual learning environments of various universities in the country such as University of the Philippines – Open University, Adamson University, De La Salle University and other institutions of higher learning in the country.

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