Analysis of Factors Influencing the Virtual Learning Environment in a Sri Lankan Higher Studies Institution

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Abstract

A project is commonly acknowledged as a successful project when the aim of the project is achieved positively. A system called Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) was designed among the students and university academic staff to encourage a positive approach in knowledge achievement and support active learning within the university. This study was carried out to analyze the factors influencing the VLE system and explore the relationship between the students and university academic staff on the system. The factors influencing VLE were identified through the literature review and the interviews which were conducted among the university academic staff and the industry experts. A paper-based questionnaire survey was carried out among the students and university academic staff in order to measure the severity of the factors influencing the VLE system. The respondents chosen for this study were the undergraduate students and university academic staff from Vavuniya Campus of the University of Jaffna, who used the above created VLE system. There were 120 responses from the students and 30 responses from the university academic staff. The students and university academic staff were requested to indicate their level of contribution on various factors in the survey questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale and the Relative Importance Index (RII) was calculated for each factor. The severity of each factor was identified based on its RII value. The factors were ranked based on their severity and Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was calculated. It was found that there was 26.9% of positive degree of agreement between the students and university academic staff on the factors influencing VLE. This paper also explores some recommendations to improve the usage of VLE system.

Keywords: Virtual Learning Environment, Learning Management Systems, Learning Tools