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ATTITUDE OF UG STUDENTS TOWARDS E-LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

E – learning is a learning /teaching tool in education and is now emerging as the advance paradigm for higher education. Hence, the present study was conducted to find the attitude of students towards e-learning. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The study was conducted among the first year undergraduate students of Agriculture College & Research Institute, Coimbatore. The study inferred that majority of the students were found to have moderate to highly favourable attitude towards e-Learning. The independent variables viz., gender and purpose of internet usage had a positive and significant contribution towards the e-learning attitude.

KEYWORDS: *E – Learning, Paradigm, Programmes, Favourable, Attitude*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

E – Learning refers to the use of electronic media and information and communication technologies (ICT) in education. E–Learning is broadly inclusive of all forms of educational technology in learning and teaching. E–Learning is a learning /teaching tool in education and is now emerging as the advance paradigm for higher education. The term E–learning covers a broad spectrum of pedagogical tools and approaches that continues to evolve to meet the needs of students and educators. The internet and its applications in education have significantly influenced learners on how to learn. In this regard, learners' attitude towards e-learning has to be studied as attitude has an important role in analyzing consumer behavior because it is known the fact that there is a strong connection between attitude and behavior. Attitudes are the ways in which an individual thinks, feels and acts. E–learning attitude is defined as the "knowledge, feeling and action of an individual towards learning through electronic media". E–learning attitude means a mood or personality that may show approval or disapproval of E–Learning. Specialists have discovered that attitude indicates in certain degree the possibility of adopting certain behavior. A favourable attitude of learners towards E-Learning shows a greater probability that they will accept the new learning system. Against this background, the present study was undertaken to study the students' attitude towards e-Learning.

METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. The study was conducted among the first year undergraduate students of Agriculture College & Research Institute, Coimbatore that offers different undergraduate degree programmes viz., B.Sc., (Agriculture), B.Tech (Biotechnology), B.Tech (Bioinformatics), B.Tech (Agricultural Information Technology) and

B.S.(Agri Business Management). As on 30th June, 2017, a total number of 277 students were studying first year in the above mentioned degree programmes. A sample of 60 students accounting to 20 per cent of population was selected for the study using proportionate random sampling method. To study the students' e- learning attitude, a scale developed by Anita (2015) measuring three dimensions of e-learning attitude viz., perceived utilization or usefulness, perceived interactions and perceived adoption was used for the study. The attitude scale consisted of 30 statements of which 15 statements were positive and 15 statements were negative. Questionnaire was used for collecting information on the attitude of students towards e-Learning. Percentage analysis, correlation and multiple regression analysis were carried out for meaningful interpretation of the data generated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

E-learning Attitude of the Students

Students' e-Learning attitude was studied under three aspects viz.,(i) Perceived Utilization or usefulness, (ii) Perceived Interaction and (iii) Perceived Adoption and the findings are presented in Table.1

Table 1

S. No.	Category	Number	Percentage
Attitude towards Perceived Utility			
1.	Less favourable attitude	11	18.30
2.	Moderately favourable attitude	40	66.70
3.	Highly favourable attitude	9	15.00
	Total	**60**	**100.00**
Attitude towards Perceived Interaction			
1.	Less favourable attitude	8	13.30
2.	Moderately favourable attitude	40	66.70
3.	Highly favourable attitude	12	20.00
	Total	**60**	**100.00**
Attitude towards Perceived Adoption			
1.	Less favourable attitude	11	18.30
2.	Moderately favourable attitude	41	68.30
3.	Highly favourable attitude	8	13.30
	Total	**60**	**100.00**

From the Table 1, it was found that more than two –third (66.70 %) of the students reported that they had moderately shown favourable attitude towards the perceived utility of E-Learning, followed by 18.30 per cent reported as less favourable attitude and 15.00 per cent reported as highly favourable attitude. Regarding perceived interaction, more than two–third (66.70 %) of the students reported that they had moderately favourable attitude followed by 20.00 per cent of the students reported as highly favourable attitude and 13.30 per cent reported as less favourable attitude. With respect to the attitude towards perceived adoption, more than two –third (68.30 %) of the students reported that they had moderately favourable attitude followed by 18.30 per cent reported as less favourable attitude and 13.30 per cent reported as highly favourable attitude.

This may be because the students spent much of their time every day in internet for entertainment and edutainment purpose as they found internet as the comfortable media and felt highly satisfied using computers. This might be the reason for having moderate to high favourable attitude by majority (80.00%) of the students. These findings are in accordance with the findings of Mehra & Omidian (2011).

Association and Contribution of Students' Profile and their Attitude towards E – Learning

To study the relationship between the students profile and their attitude, 23 independent variables viz., gender, age, nativity, marks secured in higher secondary, parents education and occupation, family income & type, experience in computer usage, computer knowledge level, computer courses undergone, computer possession at home, internet connection at home, computer facility at college, computer accessibility at college & hostel, enjoying time with computer, mistakes while using computer, comfortable Media, Internet usage and purpose of Internet usage were selected. The results of correlation and multiple regression analysis were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis between Students' Characteristics and their Attitude towards E – Learning (n=60)

S. No.	Variables	'r' Value	Partial Regression Coefficient (b)	Std Error	't' Value
X1	Gender	0.302*	0.293	3.967	2.110*
X2	Age	0.125	0.111	4.019	0.677
X3	Nativity	0.081	0.062	5.042	0.352
X4	Marks secured in higher secondary	-0.120	-0.043	0.038	-0.249
X5	Father's education	0.211	-0.147	2.556	-0.664
X6	Mother's education	0.298*	0.383	2.639	1.869
X7	Father's occupation	0.039	0.046	2.080	0.259
X8	Mother's occupation	0.285*	-0.119	3.186	-0.524
X9	Family income	0.145	-0.030	2.559	-0.182
X10	Family type	0.194	0.190	5.954	1.096
X11	Experience in computer usage	0.104	-0.097	0.760	-0.545
X12	Computer knowledge level	0.235	0.037	4.887	0.187
X13	Computer courses undergone	0.097	0.041	5.561	0.270
X14	Computer possession at home	0.204	-0.034	5.207	-0.181
X15	Internet connection at home	0.188	0.260	5.468	1.310
X16	Computer facility at college	-0.025	0.120	7.303	0.604
X17	Computer accessibility in college	0.102	.000	4.086	-0.003
X18	Computer facility in hostel	-0.179	-0.143	5.240	-0.947
X19	Enjoying time with computer	0.207	0.077	3.698	0.458
X20	Mistakes while using computer	0.266*	0.130	4.290	0.778
X21	Comfortable Media	0.143	0.111	2.093	0.710
X22	Internet usage	-0.106	-0.163	2.691	-0.905
X23	Purpose of internet usage	0.418**	0.398	2.195	2.723*

From Table 2, it could be inferred that out of 23 variables, only one variable I.e., purpose of internet usage (X_{23}) alone had a positive significant relationship at one percent level.

It is obvious that when different purposes of an individual are met through internet in a very compatible way, then the attitude of an individual towards internet will be highly favourable. Hence, a positively significant relationship would have resulted. These findings on association of purpose of internet usage with e–learning attitude are in accordance with the findings of Mehra & Omidian (2011).

Gender (X_1), Mother's education (X_6), Mother's occupation (X_8) and mistakes made while using computer (X_{20}) had a positive and significant relationship with attitude at 5 % level of significance.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the E-Learning attitude of the students had positive relationship with purpose of internet usage, gender, mother's education and her occupation. Therefore, these variables deserve more importance in introducing e-learning approach.

In this study, majority of the respondents were female. They might be restricted to interact in a society to certain extent. They could use internet for various purposes with less or no restrictions. The social and psychological information needs are satisfied. This would result in increase in attitude. So, a positively significant relationship would have resulted.

When mothers were educated, they could guide and monitor their children to use internet for good purpose. As a result, children may develop a habit of using internet effectively and efficiently. Habit is the result of attitudinal and behavioural change. This would result in increase in the attitude. So, a positively significant relationship would have resulted.

Similarly, when mother of the students were employed, they could spend money for additional requirements such as internet usage viz., purchase of hardware and its accessories, subscription for internet brand band connectivity. This would result in increase in internet usage which might result in increase in awareness. So, a positively significant relationship would have resulted.

Another variable namely mistakes made while using computer (X_{20}) exhibited positive and significant relationship. If mistakes are made repeatedly, it shows that the students were not having enough capacity or talent to work with computer applications and may possessed low interest to use computer and internet features. It is seen that majority of the students rarely made mistakes. This shows that students possessed enough capacity and interest in using internet, which might result in increase in attitude.

These findings on association of mistakes made while using computer with e – learning attitude are in accordance with the findings of Link & Marz (2006)**.**

The results of multiple regression analysis revealed that all the independent variables together explained 51.00 per cent contribution in the dependent variable namely e-learning attitude. The F value of 1.516 was found to be significant of the 23 variables taken for multiple regression analysis, only 2 variables had significant contribution towards e-learning attitude. The independent variables viz., gender and purpose of internet usage had a positive and significant contribution towards the e-learning attitude.

The prediction equation is as follows:

$$Y = \mathbf{a} + 0.293^{*} (X_1) + 0.111 (X_2)^{NS} + 0.062 (X_3)^{NS} - 0.043 (X_4)^{NS} - 0.014 (X_5)^{NS} + 0.383 (X_6)^{NS} + 0.046 (X_7)^{NS} - 0.119 (X_8)^{NS} - 0.030 (X_9)^{NS} + 0.190(X_{10})^{NS} - 0.097(X_{11})^{NS} + 0.037 (X_{12})^{NS} + 0.041 (X_{13})^{NS} - 0.034 (X_{14})^{NS} + 0.260 (X_{15})^{NS} + 0.120 (X_{16})^{NS} + 0.000 (X_{17})^{NS} -0.143 (X_{18})^{NS} + 0.077(X_{19})^{NS} + 0.130 (X_{20})^{NS} + 0.111 (X_{21})^{NS} - 0.163 (X_{22})^{NS} + 0.398^{*} (X_{23})$$

The prediction equation revealed that a change in gender would increase the attitude level by 2.110 units when all others are kept constant ***ceteris peribus.*** The probable reason might be that as majority of the students were female and came from rural background, they might have more restrictions to interact within the society. The internet and its different applications would help them to know about events and news happening around them in the society, to have entertainment and to update their scientific knowledge, which might result in influencing the attitude.

A unit increase in purpose of internet usage would increase the attitude by 2.723 units when all others are constant. This may be because most of the students used internet for both education and entertainment purpose. As their demands and needs were fulfilled through internet, they may have favourable attitude towards e-learning.

CONCLUSIONS

The study inferred that majority of the students were found to have shown moderate to highly favourable attitude towards e-Learning. Hence, implementation of e- learning approach in educational technology should be considered to meet out the demands of learners and educators as well.

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