Impact of e-learning in secondary schools students

Profession, Student

The development oftechnologyand the Internet all over the world during the last decade has enabled new educational delivery methods like E-learning. It is the use of technology to enable people to learn anytime and anywhere. E-learning applications and processes include Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtualeducationopportunities and digital collaboration. stakeholders at different levels, such as researcher, practitioners and institutions understand the value of e-learning [Kira 2009], thus countries all over the world has adapted to this new delivery method, and Fiji as one of the developing countries has also joined them.

The Universities in Fiji have already started using this method and by 2014 Fiji hopes to implement this education method in around 20 secondary school. As online education gains in popularity, it becomes more important to recognize the inherent advantages and disadvantages offered by this medium[Richard Hauser 2012]. Timothy Rodgers [2008] also stated that as the use of e-learning is becoming more and more widespread in higher education it has become increasingly important to examine the impact that this teaching style has on student performance.

There have been a number of researches conducted to prove numerous advantages of E-learning. Firstly, E-learning is cost effective, for example, there are no travel costs. Melissa et al [2011]stated, access to online training is cost effective. Higgins [2012] also supported that by stating that e-learning can be effective for students as they do not need to travel and efficient in terms of time. Majority of the learners being middle aged education professionals and keen on professional development could take course that are offered through e-learning since it does not impinge upon

their work times. Shikha Raturi 2011] Secondly, E-learning has Flexibility, Accessibility, and Convenience. Here the Learners can proceed through a training program at their own pace and at their own place. They can also access the e-Learning course at any time and only as much as they need. The rapid advance of web technology has enable universities to reach out and educate students across time and space barrier [Shu-Sheng Liaw 2008]. Higgins [2012] also supported the claim by stating that e-learning can provide flexibility in terms of time and place. Mary F.

Fortune [2011] states in her research that eLearning is also convenient to learners who have problem withcommunicationskills. Thirdly, E-learning has a lot of exchange of ideas and sharing of knowledge. Higgins [2012] specified that e-learning enhances the efficiency of access of knowledge. Shu-Sheng Liaw [2008] identified that eLearning assists learners in collaborative learning, exchanging ideas and sharing knowledge. The author also stated that in web based system, learners are encourage to exchange ideas, share perspectives, and use previous knowledge in order to decide on the best solution for the problem.

He also specified that knowledge sharing also enhances better teaching and learning. Although there are a lot of positives about ELearning, there are many disadvantages of E-Learning schools, and disadvantages with the ELearning process. The first issue is skills are required for the user to be able to take advantage of the E-learning. That is basic computer knowledge is require for E-learning. Kira [2009] stated in his paper that fifty percent of adults, including the first year University students, have some sort of computer related phobia.

Kushir [2009] discussed in the paper that lack of certain skills or experience might put one at a disadvantage when compared to the experienced once. Lack of operational knowledge and of capabilities narrowed the options of the users in E-learning. [Falloon 2011] Next issue with E- learning is isolation of learners. As stated by Higgins [2012] learners might suffer from isolation and lack of direct social interaction. Further to that point Falloon [2011] added that learners studying at a distance can still suffer from a sense of isolation and disconnect which can adversely affect their performance.

Ease of use of E-learning system is another issue that affects the learners. This is when the learning system interface is not user friendly; learners have problems using the system. Kira [2009] indicated in her work that computeranxietywas influenced by how users perceive ease of use of an information system. Shu-Sheng Liaw [2008] also added to ease of the system as user acceptance towards the system, where learners are concerned about the operating methods and functions. Information Overload is another issue of E-learning.

Students reported feeling overload in the eLearning courses. [Kushir 2009]. His work also stated that some online environments are unnecessarily cluttered with irrelevant stimuli and information or the way in which the relevant information is organized affects how students learn. From the works of the above researchers it can be known that for any popular system there are positive and negative impacts depending on a range of factors such as different kinds of user, different locations of the system, different choice of users and so on.

And as Fiji has recently stepped into this technological advancement of E-learning it will have its own set advantages and disadvantages. However, from the literature review the gap in E-learning was identified as equal Accessibility of the phenomenon by the populace of both rural and urban centers. It was also identified that computer Literacy of participants influenced their mode of learning.