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Attitudinal Status of Post-graduate Students of Social Work Towards E-learning

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Abstract

With the expansion of globalization and the advancement in science and technology, a new competitive global economy is emerging were the nations and citizens are in great need to enhance their knowledge base, skill sets, and capabilities to suit the competitive world for survival. The traditional age-old education system is not sufficient to meet the current needs of the people and hence new advanced way of teaching and learning strategies are required to impart knowledge and skills. In the present tech-savvy world, education is no longer confined to four walls. It has crossed all the boundaries and it occurs anywhere and anytime. This is because of applicability of technology and the accessibility of internet in the educational field. E-learning has grown as a progressive model for higher education. This covers a broad range of different kinds of teaching and learning tools and approaches to meet the needs of both academicians and learners. The purpose of this research is to examine how students feel about using and adapting e-learning for overall academic advancement and success.

Keywords: Attitude, e-learning, social work students, higher education

INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, people have looked for various strategies and techniques to increase education's efficiency and reduce its time requirements. E-learning is one example of this. Information and communication technology (ICT) has evolved with science and innovation to play a major role in our everyday life [1]. Education is no exception to it. There has been immense innovation and emergence of advanced types of electronic devices like iPhones, iPads, tablets, Android mobiles, learning apps, computers, laptops, and others .With the advancement of internet-based technology, colleges and universities frequently utilize e-learning as an instructional tool [2]. E-learning, commonly referred to as internet learning or electronic learning, is the way of learning where the acquisition of knowledge takes place through electronic technology and digital media. E-learning is characterized as "learning that is supported electronically" [3]. The main objective of introducing e-learning in higher education is to (a) get students more involved in the learning process, (b) enhance user accessibility and time flexibility, (c) meet the learning needs or styles of the students, and (d) promote effectiveness and efficiency among students and academician's [4]. Newton (2003) stated three main areas of e-learning: enhances access to education, remodels the quality of instruction and learning, maintains a competitive edge in the changing student market. Online e-learning is a potential substitute for traditional direct instruction. The space, time, and

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resources of online learning have significantly changed the approach to education and learning. It empowers them with needed skills and expertise by providing an opportunity to learn through accessing related resources at a particular time and place that fits their lifestyles [5]. Students' positive attitude towards e-learning results in effectiveness at working independently and improves their work pace. It also enhances their learning strategies where they can experience the development of skills through creative text, PowerPoint presentations and conducting research [6]. A positive attitude will enhance their achievements and enable them to better comprehend their course [7]. According to a study, there is a clear relationship between attitude, behaviour, normative beliefs, and behavioural intention, all of which determine people's beliefs and inclinations to indulge in a particular behaviour [8]. Positive attitude towards usage of particular technology results in high adaptability in their activities [9]. Learning usefulness, operational convenience, and the system's content design are the three important factors. Learners who have a positive opinion of these aspects will be more accepting of its flexibility and application [10].

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The researchers adopted a quantitative research technique wherein descriptive research method was used. The primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, e-learning attitude scale, developed by Dhiman Kar, Birbal Saha, and Bhim Chandra Mondal. The questionnaire consists of 55 items and is scored using a 5-point Likert scale. According to the Cronbach method and the Guttam split half technique, the scale's reliability was 0.78 and its internal reliability was 0.88. Data from 41 respondents were gathered using a simple random approach. The researchers also reviewed secondary online sources like news articles, research papers, publications, and YouTube videos. To analyse the data the researchers adopted descriptive statistical test and SPSS 20.0 software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result in Table 1 indicates that highest proportions of respondents belong to the female category (61%) and remaining belongs to male category (39%). This higher percentage of female participants is a reflection of recent high admission rate in social work education at Kuvempu University (academic years 2020–2021 and 2021-2022) for female candidates.

The result in Table 2 clearly shows that majority of students pursuing higher education in social work come from rural areas, followed by urban areas. Reason for this is high level of awareness among the rural students regarding higher education, professional courses, employability, availability of scholarships, and other facilities.

Measuring Attitude towards E-learning

The information reveals that the average attitude score (given as mean ± SD) for men and women students of social work regarding use of internet for self-study is 4.244 ± 0.489, downloading learning

Table 1. Proportion of students on gender basis.

	F	**%**
Male	16	39.0
Female	25	61.0
Total	41	100.0

Table 2. Students belonging to a particular geographical area.

	F	**%**
Urban	7	17.0
Rural	34	83.0
Total	41	100.0

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contents from internet is 4.244 ± 0.558, the satisfaction level of these downloaded contents is 4.05 ± 0.835) and their method of learning through trial and error from internet for their academics is 4.000 ± 0.775. This shows that students are quite enthusiastic about using and downloading educational content from the internet, which is encouraging for the digitalization of higher education. The mean value for preference of the students for reading e-books is 3.638 ± 0.934, downloading pictures, diagrams for their projects is 3.927 ± 1.034, usage of online library for self-study is 3.732 ± 1.025, different educational blogs for interaction stood at 3.80 ± 0.901. This demonstrates that students' attitudes regarding digital e-learning are relatively positive. The mean value with comfort of online learning use is 3.59 ± 1.095, the issues confronted during its use 3.49 ± 1.143 and transferring of learning materials through e-mail is 3.90 ± 1.020. This clearly indicates average level of attitude of the students. The overall mean of attitude score for both genders reported is 3.878 ± 0.892. This indicates that overall, students have average level of attitude towards e-learning [11].

An independent-sample *T*-test was conducted to compare mean score for attitude of male and female respondents (Table 3). There was no significant difference (*t* (df) =39, *P* = .401) in scores of males (3.806 ± 0.539) and females (3.932 ± 0.404). The magnitude of difference in mean was (0.1251, 95% CI (confidence interval) was –0.1731 to 0.4235) was not significant. Hence, we can state that the data for males and females are homogeneous. Coming to the attitudinal status towards e-learning there is a similarity among both tgenders. Females have a slightly higher attitude that men's regarding e-learning.

Table 4 shows that the Pearson correlation coefficient between gender and attitude is 0.135, which indicates a very low positive correlation and significance of relationship was 0.401 > 0.05 which indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant.

Table 3. Comparison of mean scores among gender.

		N	**Mean**	**SD**	***T***	***P* value**	**MD**
Attitude towards e-learning	Female	25	3.932	0.404	0.89	.401	0.1252
	Male	16	3.807	0.539			0.1252

Table 4. Bivariate analysis: pearson correlation coefficient (gender and attitude).

		Gender	**Attitude**
Gender	(r)	1	0.135
	P value		.401
	N	41	41
Attitude	(r)	0.135	1
	P value	.401	
	N	41	41

Table 5. Bivariate analysis: pearson correlation coefficient (area of residence and attitude).

		Area of residence	**Attitude**
Area of residence	(r)	1	–0.155
	P value		.335
	N	41	41
Attitude	(r)	–0.155	1
	P value	.335	
	N	41	41

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Table 5 shows that the Pearson correlation between area of residence and attitude is –0.155, which indicates a very low negative correlation and significance of relationship was 0.335 > 0.05, which indicates that the relationship is not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

"An attitude, in general, is a mental state that indicates positively that an individual may act in a specific behaviour" [12]. A positive attitude towards e-learning among students indicate its acceptance and adoptability in academic activities resulting in progress and acquisitions in knowledge and specific skill sets leading to employability and professional growth and development. From the above results and discussion, we can come to a logical conclusion that gender and domicile had almost no influence on the attitudes towards web-based learning. All groups' attitudes regarding e-learning were determined to be average, which indicates students are adopting e-learning strategies for academic activities. Having an inclination towards this makes them independent and work at a better pace. Since the study found the attitude of students to be average, the concerned ministry, university, faculties, and academicians have to work towards provisions for appropriate training and development at various levels, awareness generation, and development of expertise in usage, so as to encourage them in effective utilization of the e-learning system [11].

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