Acceptance of e-learning and readiness for self-directed learning among distance learners

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Distance learning and e-learning are rapidly becoming popular modes of studies among students and working adults worldwide. This trend is also visible in Malaysia, with the emergence of several higher education distance learning institutions using e-learning to support its learning activities such as the Open University of Malaysia (OUM) and the Wawasan University. However, an important point of concern to both educators and researchers are the distance learners' readiness for self-directed learning and acceptance of e-learning. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the acceptance of e-learning among distance learners and their readiness for self-directed learning at the OUM. This cross-sectional survey used questionnaires to obtain the necessary data. The questionnaires used to measure distance learners' acceptance of e-learning and readiness for self-directed learning were adapted from the research instruments used by Poon, Low and Yong (2004) and Guglielmino (1977). A total of 112 students from the OUM's branch campus in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia responded to the questionnaires. Most of the students surveyed reported moderate levels of e-learning acceptance and showed modest readiness level for self-directed learning. There was a moderate strong positive relationship between acceptance of e-learning and acceptance of self-directed learning. The findings of this study also indicated that institutions offering distance learning via e-learning should provide some non-credit courses to improve students' acceptance of e-learning and their readiness for self-directed learning.