

Use of E-resources among Education Professionals in Sri Lanka: Evaluating the Usage and the Need for Promotion

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Technology continuously develops as societies evolve: it is becoming a part and partial of many things that human beings engage in. But South Asian countries like Sri Lanka do not always show a considerable tendency in utilizing e-resources effectively. Disparities of utilizing internet based learning materials have been reported among different occupations. E-resources can be utilized by the teachers to deliver knowledge effectively, while being up-to-date aware of the current concepts of teaching. Thus we intended to evaluate the use of e-resources in a group of Sri Lankan teachers. This combined qualitative and quantitative (descriptive cross sectional) study was conducted in September 2016 at University of Peradeniya.

Teachers from five schools in Kandy district were selected using non probability purposive sampling. In depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire after obtaining informed written consent. They rated themselves on a five-point Likert scale as how frequently they use e-resources for the educational purposes (5=daily to 1=never). Statistical analyses were conducted using a coding framework with a priori alpha of .05. A total of 24[male (33.3%, n=8), female (66.7%, n=16)] were interviewed. The subjects aged from 24-52 years with a mean of 35.2±8.4 years. Majority (75.0%, n=18) were Sinhalese, followed by Tamils (16.7%, n=4) and Muslims (8.3%, n=2). Majority of the teachers did not access e-resources frequently. The median and mode of the score was 3(=less than once a week, more than once a month). The score was non-normally distributed [skewness=0.125(SE=0.472), kurtosis=-1.272(SE=0.918), Shapiro-Wilk test: $W(24) = .844, p = .002$]. Independent sample Mann Whitney U test revealed that there was no significant difference of the frequency of using e-resources between males and females ($p > .05$). Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient test found a negative correlation between the frequency of e-resource usage and the age ($r_s = -.422, n = 24, p = .04$). More than three quarters (n=16) reported that they were not adequately educated or trained about how to use e-resources to support their teaching learning process. Only two were aware of the online courses. Except three teachers aged ≥ 45 years, all accessed facebook daily.

The results suggest that the majority is competent in accessing internet, especially the young. But there is a need of promoting the usage of e-resources among teachers in Sri Lanka to enhance their continuous professional development as well as for effective delivery of knowledge in the classroom.

Keywords: Teachers, online material, internet, e-resources.

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