

Perception of University Students Towards Online Education During Covid-19

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1. Introduction

In December 2019, the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was first reported in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China. After COVID-19 was classified by world health organization (WHO), as a pandemic disease on March 11,2020 (Almahasees, Mohsen, & Amin, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenged globally. Due to this outbreak, the whole system in the world is beholding an extraordinary double-shock, especially in education system. As an influence of this situation, temporary closures schools for more than one year in order to prevent the spread of this virus. There have been several problems in the education sector during this pandemic season (Priyadarshani & Jesuiya, 2021). The lockdown affected education on several ways and students had stop their studies. According to this situation the education has turned online due to the closure of schools and universities. Therefore, globally universities and schools moved into adopting online teaching and learning programs in order to prevent the pandemic situation and ensure social distancing.

In a resource limited environment such as Sri Lanka also faced many of challenges to continue the education system and Sri Lankan government and universities have decided to conduct online lectures for school and university students. As a result, the university and school life of the students has become limited to e-learning since nearly two years. Accordingly, online learning works as an alternative method for face-to-face education during COVID-19 (Baczek, Baczek, Szpringer, Jaroszynski, & Kaplon, 2021). With this regard, this study is an attempt to understand the perception/acceptance of university students towards online education during this current situation.

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2. Research Methodology

Accordingly, the problem was to identify that How about the perception/acceptance of university students towards online education during COVID-19 pandemic? The target population of this study was undergraduates in University of Kelaniya. For the convenience of the study, twelve departments of the faculty of Social Sciences were selected to collect data. Stratified Sampling method which is one of probability sampling method was selected as the sampling method of this study. For the convenience of collecting data in this study, fourth year students from each department was selected as a case and considered it as the population. The sample of students were selected using stratified sampling method. The data collection for the study has done through primary sources, the use of survey through google form questionnaires. Statistical techniques such as Descriptive statistics, Correlation analysis, Logistic Regression analysis in SPSS used for analyzing data and bar charts, pie charts and graphs used to present data.

3. Result

A considerable number of students have marginal level of knowledge on English language and computer literacy although degree program and prior knowledge on English language has not affected on the level of acceptance of online learning but there was a positive relationship between computer literacy and the level of acceptance of online learning. Similarly, the level of understanding the lecture series by the students and the type of sharing lectures by the lecturers have also not affected on the acceptance of online learning. It has caused to high level acceptance of online learning. That is because the most of the university students have been offered lectures with videos, notes and recordings and 89.7 percent of respondent students have sufficient level of understanding online lectures.

When consider about the technical factors, internet coverage, mode of connecting to the internet, and learning platforms are the factors which majorly affected on the level of acceptance of online learning. The study found that only 25% chance of problems with recharging internet connections, while most use learning platform is Zoom and the mode

of connecting to the internet is smartphone hotspot and Wi-Fi. As such, all of those technical factors have positive relationship between acceptance level of online learning. However, learning device did not effect on acceptance level of online learning because there were none of problems with operating smartphone and laptop, while they are the most famous devices among the students.

Moreover, the research study found that majority of students do not have economic problems that affected on their e-learning. This is because they may not want to spent much money on their learning with the concept of domestic learning. If they have to go to the university everyday it makes expenditure rather than distance learning. As a result of that it has affected on high level of acceptance of online learning. However, 31.8 percent of students have stated that they have economic and social problems when they are attending online lectures. Similarly, 47.7 percent of students have stated that they have internet access problems when they are attending online lectures although 12.5 percent out of the sample have stated that they have no any problems while attending online lectures.

According to the findings, 58 percent of students out of the sample were favorable with online learning due to the pandemic season, while almost students have enthusiasm for self-learning method. Most of them prefer WhatsApp as their self-learning method and 85.2 percent students out of the sample prefer Zoom for their future e-learning method. It means that considerable number of students prefer online learning even in the future.

The majority of students are moderately satisfied with student centered learning due to pandemic season; in other words, majority of students have positive perception towards online learning.

Table 1: Overall perception of the students toward e-learning.

Overall Perception	Percentage
Satisfied	45%
Somewhat Satisfied	42%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	7%
Dissatisfied	6%

Source: Survey Data, 2022

According to the developed regression model, the variables in the regression model are, Degree program, Internet connecting mode, Computer Literacy, Level of understanding, Internet coverage, Confidence with teacher, Quality of lecture notes, Quality of learning environment, Time management, Confidence of self-learning while, Internet connecting mode, Level of understanding the lectures, Internet coverage, Confidence with teacher/lecturer, Confidence of self-learning are the factors for low level acceptance of online learning will be improved.

$P(Y_i)$

$$= \left(\frac{1}{1 + e^{-(15.451 - 0.222x_1 + 0.574x_2 - 2.336x_3 + 3.538x_4 + 2.359x_5 + 3.848x_6 - 1.505x_7 - 1.860x_8 - 1.035x_9)}} \right)$$

4. Conclusion

This study consists eighteen (18) independent variables under five main categories as the factors of demographic, educational, technical, economic/social, and psychological. The research has identified five variables among those factors by means of logistic regression analysis to be considered by the lecturers when conducting the online sessions to enhance the quality of distance learning during COVID-19 and future e-learning as well. However, this study has not mainly covered the internet problem, psychological problems, environmental problems that students face during their online learning. In order to minimize the problems of distance learning inferred from the results, communication service providers should install towers in areas where internet coverage is poor and broadband services should be improved, the lecturers are advisable to create group activities or group assignments during the lecture in order to concentrate the students' mind and even make connections among the students, university authorities must have taken the steps towards establishing a resource of virtual library to access the self-learning facilities for every student and finally, all of the relevant authorities should work out for establishing a new education system that will enable continuous and productive education in each and every student for the near future under any kind of circumstances.

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