

Use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a Learning tool by the Undergraduates: A Case of Agriculture Faculty, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

W.P.T. Dilrukshi

Library, Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale, Sri Lanka

ICT capability is fundamental to participation and engagement in modern information society. A recent meta-analysis by the National Institute of Multimedia Education in Japan proved that an increase in undergraduate exposure to educational ICT has a significant and positive impact on increased learning gains for students, creating opportunities for learners to develop their creativity, problem-solving abilities, informational reasoning skills, communication skills, and other higher-order thinking skills. However, there is currently very limited, evidence to support this belief especially within Sri Lankan context. Drawing from this empirical gap this paper seeks to examine the use ICT as a learning tool by the undergraduates. Accordingly, the paper aims at first, identify the frequency of ICT usage for the undergraduate learning purposes and secondly, to identify the undergraduates perception towards the impact of ICT on their educational achievements. A survey was conducted by using a structure questionnaire among the first year undergraduates of the faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka and the sample size was 100. The findings in terms of frequency of ICT usage for the undergraduate learning purposes revealed that majority of students (85%) considered internet/web surfing for seeking information as the main use of ICT in their studies. Further, collecting background data for assignments (78%), accessing scholarly work for research purposes (70), use of MS office package for presentations and assignments (68%), use of the data bases for referencing (41%), communication and networking with others (37%), library online catalogue (14%) are rated as the subsequent uses of ICT in learning. Accordingly, results show that there is a growing tendency of using ICT for undergraduates educational purposes. However, they rarely use library online catalogue for find the books in the library. The findings, in terms of undergraduate perception towards the impact of ICT on their educational achievements showed that the majority (78%) perceived ICT strongly affects their educational achievements while 18% reported moderate impact of ICT and the rest of 4% believe ICT do not have any impact on the educational achievement. Accordingly, it can be seen that these is a common perception among undergraduates that ICT facilitates their educational capabilities. Hence it can be concluded that there is a growing trend of usage of ICT as learning tool for different educational purposes among and undergraduates possess strong perception that ICT as a core facilitator of their educational achievements.

Keywords: ICT, Undergraduates, learning tool, ICT usage, Education