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**ONLINE LEARNING PREPAREDNESS FOLLOWING COVID-19:
A STUDY AMONG STUDENTS IN AMPARA STUDY CENTER OF
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY SRI LANKA**

S. Lavapirathan

*Ampara Study Centre, Regional Educational Services,
The Open University of Sri Lanka.*

adamp@ou.ac.lk.c

Abstract

After the COVID-19 outbreak, all sectors, including education, have been trying to direct their activities through the online platform. Traditional face-to-face learning has been replaced by online learning within a short period to ensure educational continuity. The main objective of this study was to identify the factors that influence students' preparedness for online learning following COVID-19 pandemic. A structured five-point Likert scale online questionnaires were distributed over three weeks among stratified random sample of 138 undergraduates and postgraduate students enrolled in the Ampara Study Centre of the Open University Sri Lanka with an 89% responsive rate. The software SPSS Statistics version 26 was used to analyse the data that had been collected. Frequencies, percentages, and the chi-square test were used to analyse the demographic factors in the first section of the questionnaire. With the use of the Cronbach's Alpha test, the validity was tested. inferential statistical analysis such as correlation coefficient test, multiple regression test was followed to identify factors that influencing online learning preparedness. The study revealed that technical skill and availability of resources are the major factors that influence the preparedness for online learning while the demographic factors and the technological factors have no influence on this preparedness. Therefore, this study recommends the university should provide additional training for the students to increase their technical skills and awareness of the learning management system. Further, each faculty also needs to ensure lessons are delivered more effectively by making the necessary online learning materials easily accessible to the students.

Keywords: *online learning, online learning preparedness, university students*