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INTERNET USAGE AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN EASTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Nowadays, the Internet is an essential thing among the students' life. In this descriptive research study, a sample of undergraduate students from different campuses of Eastern province was studied, to analyse the undergraduate's internet usage and to compare the usage between Government and Private sector students. A total of 247 students' data were collected and required statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software. The study results exposed that majority of the students need the internet to their lifestyle. 91.9% of students go online for their educational purpose. Students face many problems in using the internet because of internet slow, power failure and high rate. Therefore, the study recommends that both government and private colleges should provide required high-speed free connection and Government should concern to improve the current state of power in the country and to grant the lowest cost for the browsing.

Keywords: Academic, Campus, Internet, Students, Undergraduates

Introduction

The internet is generally used by students in several countries in their day to day life. Nowadays, it can be used anytime wherever you are with many devices. Therefore, Internet use has become a way of life for undergraduate students for their academic purpose (Bashir, S., Mahmood, K., and Shafique, F., 2008).

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out in different colleges of Eastern province to analyse the undergraduate's internet usage and to compare the usage between Government and Private sector students.

Methodology

The study was undertaken using stratified random sampling technique by chosen up samples from the respective stratum of the corresponding colleges South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, ICBT Campus Batticaloa and BCAS Campus Kalmunai. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the students and in these, the usable questionnaires were 247. So the

sample size was 247. This study has been carried out to analyse the undergraduate's internet usage and to compare the usage between Government and Private sector students. Also, descriptive test statistics were applied. And required statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software. Further, 5% of the significant level was used in this study.

This research study test the following hypotheses:

- H_1 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Important of the internet to Survival.
- H_2 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Reasons for Internet using (Education, Entertainment, Communication, Update Yourself, Downloading, Shopping, Other reasons).
- H_3 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Reasons for Internet use in academic.
- H_4 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Internet usefulness in academic per suit.
- H_5 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and How much influence in academic.
- H_6 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Training Source.
- H_7 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and How Long Use (years).
- H_8 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Hour/ Day.
- H_9 : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Spend/ Month (in Rs.).
- H_{10} : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Place.
- H_{11} : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Email Service.
- H_{12} : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Sleep loss.
- H_{13} : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Just Few Minutes.
- H_{14} : There is a relationship between demographic variables and Affect rest time.

*Demographic variables: Gender, Age, Part-time work, Institute type, Course & Year of study.

Results and Discussion

The personal demographic profile of the students is shown in Table 1. Majority of respondents were females (51%), Aged at 22 years old. The results show that 39.7% of the Sinhala students and 39.3% of Muslim students participated in this study. 16.6% of the students were Hindus while only 4.5% was Christians. Most of them are studying at the Government campus. And, 44.1% of the respondents were physical science students, 28.7% of them were from biological sciences. 22.7% of students were in IT/ Computer Science field and 3.6% were in the engineering field. Additionally, the respondents were asked about their education level, 36.8% of the students were in the second year, 32.4% were in the final year while 30% of them were first-year students. Most of the students didn't do any part-time work and they are interested in sports, reading and playing.

Table 1. Demographic variable

Variables	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	49.0
	Female	51.0

Age*		<i>Mode: 22 years</i>	
19 – 20 years	22	8.9	
21 – 22 years	83	33.6	
23 – 25 years	129	52.2	
25 +	11	4.5	
Religion			
Buddhism	98	39.7	
Muslim	97	39.3	
Hindu	41	16.6	
Christian	11	4.4	
Institute Type*			
Government	180	72.9	
Private	66	26.7	
Course*			
Biological Science	71	28.7	
Physical Science	109	44.1	

IT/ Computer Science	56	22.7
Management	1	0.4
Engineering	9	3.6
Year*		
1	74	30.0
2	91	36.8
Final	80	32.4
Part-time work*		
Via Internet	6	2.4
Other	34	13.8
No part-time work	204	82.6
Hobby***		
No Hobby	8	3.2
Read –Write	76	30.8
Sports	63	25.5
Art Paint	21	8.5
Other	121	41.0

Note: *N#247 due to unmarked fields by respondents
 ***Multiple choice questions

Table 2 shows the usage of the Internet among undergraduate students. 98% of students need internet for their survival. The highest percentages for the sources of access are Smart Phone (88.3%) and laptop (59.5%). The highest percentage usage was for educational purposes (91.9%) (Bavakutty, M. and Salih, T.K.M., 1999), also using internet for Entertainment (66.8%) and downloading (57.9%) respectively. It shows that more social media and new technologies have provided space and applications of amusement to society as well as disguised kind of things for desirability to the society for using the internet and spent a lot of time. And also, 57.5% of students use the internet for communication purpose. 40.9% of students have been using the Internet for over 4 years. Most of them have been using around 2 hours per day as well as only 23.5% use less than one hour. The results indicate that the majority of respondents access the internet daily (Jagboro, K.O., 2003).

Table 2. Usage of the Internet

Variables	Frequency	%
Important to Survival*		
Yes	242	98.0
No	4	1.6
Devices***		
Smart Phone	218	88.3
Laptop	147	59.5
Tablet	21	8.5
PC	37	15.0
Other	3	1.2
Reason for Internet***		
Education	227	91.9
Entertainment	165	66.8
Communication	142	57.5
Update Your self	97	37.3
Downloading	147	57.9
Shopping	58	23.5
Other	26	10.5
How Long Use (years)*		<i>Mode: 4.2 years</i>
< 1	7	2.8
1 – 2	63	25.5
3 – 4	70	28.3
> 4	101	40.9
Hour/ Day*		<i>Mode: 1.8 hours</i>

< 1	58	23.5
1 – 3	111	44.9

4 – 6	36	14.6
>6	36	14.6

Note: *N≠247 due to unmarked fields by respondents
 ***Multiple choice questions

The Figure 1 represents the influence of internet in academic among private and government sector students and the private sector students use internet more for the assignment works. In Table 3, the majority of the students use the internet for the examination preparation (32.8%) and assignment works (25.5%). Furthermore, 62.3% of the students agreed that their academic performance has been improved by using the internet but 4.5% of them said that their GPA has been declined because of internet usage. Most of the students have rated that internet usage in academic is average (71.3%) while only 4.9% of respondents rated it as low. Only IT/Computer science students use the internet at high level for their academic purposes (8.6%).

Figure 1. Reasons for Internet use in Academic

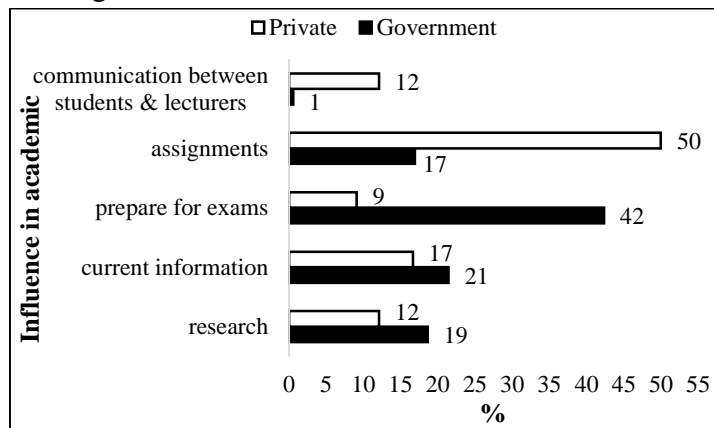


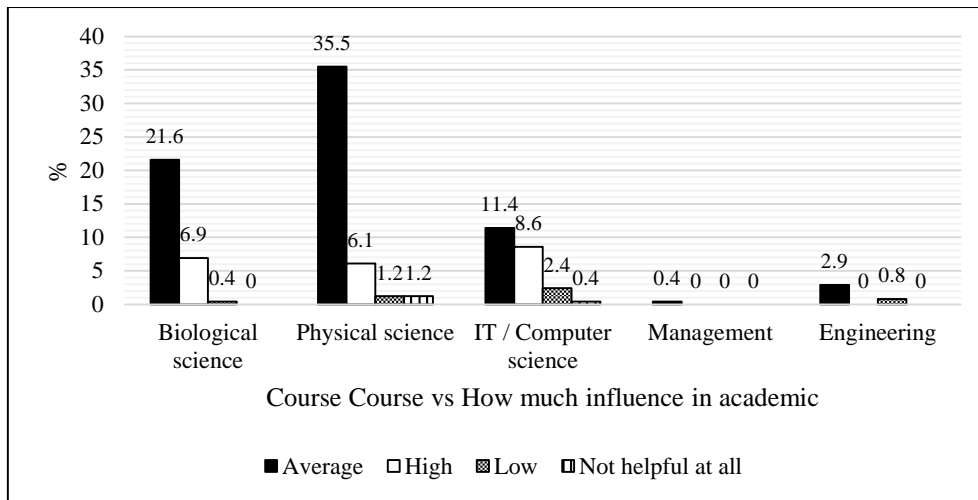
Table 3. Influence of Internet in Academic

Variables	Frequency	%
Reasons for Internet use*		
Research	42	17.0
Access to Information	49	19.8
Prepare for Exam	81	32.8
Assignments	63	25.5
Communication between Lecturer and student	9	3.6

Useful in Academic*		
GPA Improved	154	62.3
GPA declined	11	4.5
None	72	29.1
Rating of the Internet for academic pursuit*		
Average	176	71.3
High	54	21.9
Low	12	4.9
None	4	1.6

Note: *N≠247 due to unmarked fields by respondents
 ***Multiple choice questions

Figure 2. Course vs How much influence in academic



Students were asked about where they obtained talents to use the Internet. 58.3% of students specified that they've learned the capabilities by self-learning. The undergraduate students are generally attracted most with Dialog (51.4%) and Mobitel (46.6%). As well as they mostly use the internet in campuses (42.5%) and their home (37.2%). Students say that they face many problems in using the Internet but they mainly mentioned the low speed of Internet (89.5%) (Ibegwam, A., 2002). They also face the problem because of the power failure (17.8%) and high rate (17.8%) when using the internet. But 18.6% of students spend more than 1,500 rupees per month for the Internet and most of them spend around Rs.388 per month. Mostly they use the Google search engine for their browsing (96.4%) while only 13.8% of students use Yahoo (Search Engine Watch, 2007). 91.5% of students are using Gmail at the same time, no one is using Hotline as an e-mail service. Only 1.6% are using Yahoo. The students use the internet for working easily (71.7%).

Table 4. Access to the Internet

Variables	Frequency	%
Training Source*		
Self-Learn	144	58.3
From Friends	63	25.5
From Relatives	7	2.8
From Teacher	8	3.2
By Training Programme	6	2.4
Other	8	3.2
Internet Service Provider***		
Dialog	127	51.4
Mobitel	115	46.6
Airtel	44	17.8
Etisalat	14	5.7
Hutch	18	7.3
SLT	36	14.6
Other	11	4.5
Frequent Place*		
College	105	42.5
Home	92	37.2
Library	21	8.5
Cybercafé	2	0.8
Relative/ Friends	1	0.4
Other	20	8.1
Problems while use internet***		
Slow	221	89.5
Power Failure	44	17.8
Poor Computer Skills	16	6.5
High Rate	44	17.8
No Device	8	3.2
Spend/ Month (in Rs.)* <i>Mode: Rs.388</i>		
< 500	97	39.3
500 – 1000	69	27.9
1000 – 1500	27	10.9
1500 – 2000	23	9.3

> 2000	23	9.3
Search Engine***		
Google	238	96.4
Yahoo	34	13.8
Ask	11	4.5
MSN	4	1.6
Other	24	9.7
Email Service*		
Gmail	226	91.5
Hotmail	0	0.0

Yahoo	4	1.6
Outlook	3	1.2
Other	6	2.4
Advantage***		
Easy of Work	177	71.7
Time Saving	124	50.2
Searching tool	131	53.0
Authenticity of Info	56	22.7
Earning	29	11.7
Other	36	14.6

Note: *N#247 due to unmarked fields by respondents
 ***Multiple choice questions

And Figures 3 and 4 explicit the comparison between the government and private sector students for the frequent internet usage place and cost for the internet usage per month. Private students use the Internet at their home than using in campuses and they spend over the 1000 rupees more than the government sector students.

Figure 3. Frequent use place

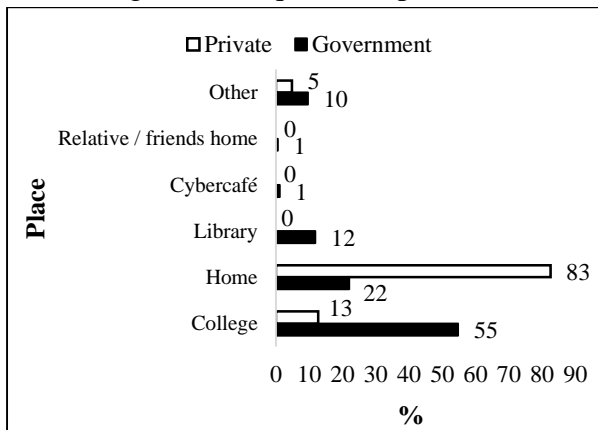
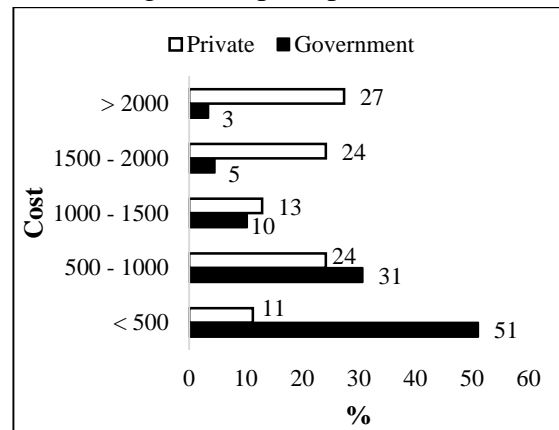
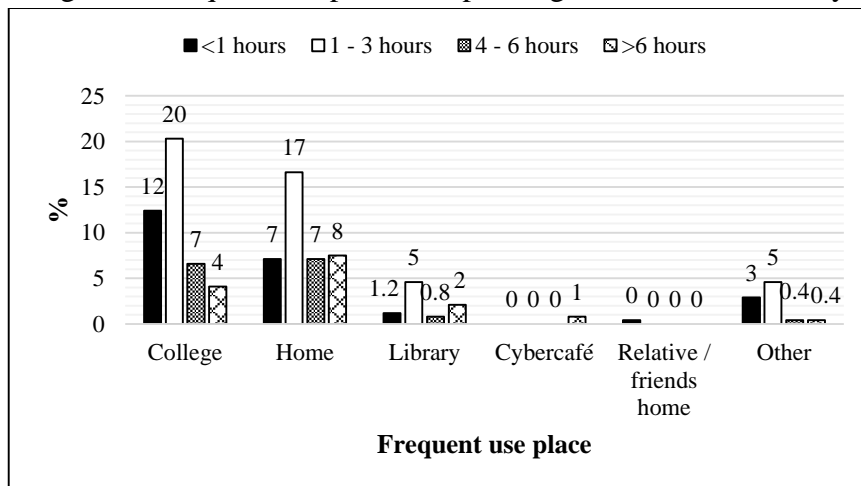


Figure 4. Spend per month



In Figure 5, about 20% of the students use Internet at their college for 1-3 hours per day and about 17% at their home.

Figure 5. Frequent use place vs. spending hours on Internet/day



At least of them says that they always lose sleep, they never find themselves saying just few more minutes when online and they strongly agree with the rest time is affected by the internet.

Figure 6. Sleep loss vs Just few minutes

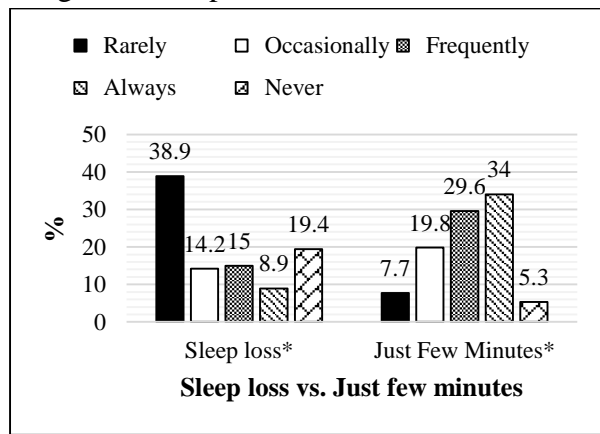
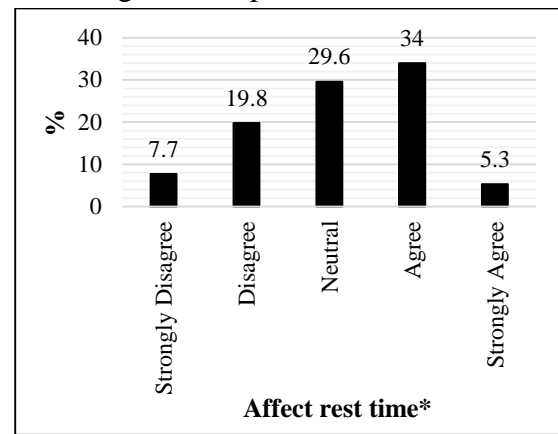


Figure 7. Impact of the Internet



Note: *N=247 due to unmarked fields by respondents

Table 5 shows the relationship between gender wise and communication, shopping, training source, how long use (years), hour/day, spend/month (in Rs.), place, sleep loss and affect rest time. And part-time work is significantly related to how long use (years), hour/day and affect rest time. As well as, there is no relationship between institute type and education, entertainment, communication, update yourself, downloading, useful in academic and email service. But the course of study is significantly related with entertainment, communication, reasons for internet use in academic, rating of the internet for academic pursuit, training source, how long use (years), spend/month (in Rs.), place, sleep loss and just a few minutes. And the year of study is also considerably interrelated with education, reasons for internet use in academic, rating of the internet for academic pursuit, spend/month (in Rs.) and place.

Table 5. Relationship with demographic variables

Values	Gender	Age	Part-time work	Institute type	Course	Year
	χ^2 (P-value)	χ^2 (P-value)	χ^2 (P-value)	χ^2 (P-value)	χ^2 (P-value)	χ^2 (P-value)
Important to Survival	0.920 (0.337)	4.251 (0.236)	4.631 (0.099)	4.772 (0.029*)	8.177 (0.085)	4.251 (0.119)
Reasons for Internet						
Education	0.703 (0.402)	2.879 (0.411)	0.559 (0.756)	1.552 (0.213)	6.446 (0.168)	10.368 (0.006*)
Entertainment	0.344 (0.558)	8.083 (0.044*)	0.115 (0.944)	0.373 (0.542)	9.590 (0.048*)	1.111 (0.574)
Communication	6.062 (0.014*)	2.452 (0.484)	1.466 (0.481)	0.399 (0.528)	13.037 (0.011*)	1.576 (0.455)
Update Yourself	1.364 (0.243)	7.574 (0.056)	3.264 (0.196)	2.393 (0.122)	7.857 (0.097)	2.727 (0.256)
Downloading	0.060	4.330	1.189	1.292	7.091	3.084

	(0.807)	(0.228)	(0.552)	(0.256)	(0.131)	(0.214)
Shopping	6.649 (0.010*)	1.738 (0.628)	3.205 (0.201)	6.360 (0.012*)	7.152 (0.128)	2.240 (0.326)
Other	6.748 (0.009*)	3.975 (0.264)	7.920 (0.019*)	3.548 (0.060)	7.125 (0.129)	2.994 (0.224)
Reasons for Internet use in academic	6.395 (0.172)	47.404 (0.000*)	9.891 (0.273)	55.327 (0.000*)	69.177 (0.000*)	23.850 (0.002*)
Useful in Academic	3.083 (0.214)	2.944 (0.816)	3.080 (0.544)	2.038 (0.361)	8.207 (0.414)	8.942 (0.063)
Rating of the Internet for academic pursuit	1.689 (0.639)	26.534 (0.002*)	12.324 (0.055)	17.154 (0.001*)	31.329 (0.002*)	20.743 (0.002*)
Training Source	20.510 (0.001*)	28.195 (0.020*)	2.302 (0.993)	22.959 (0.000*)	40.262 (0.005*)	17.971 (0.055)
How Long Use (years)	19.451 (0.000*)	19.078 (0.025*)	4.200 (0.650)	17.092 (0.001*)	22.258 (0.035*)	10.317 (0.112)
Hour/ Day	14.320 (0.003*)	15.142 (0.087)	20.716 (0.002*)	12.573 (0.006*)	16.353 (0.176)	2.811 (0.832)
Spend/ Month (in Rs.)	26.973 (0.000*)	50.057 (0.000*)	28.397 (0.000*)	64.493 (0.000*)	84.345 (0.000*)	22.168 (0.005*)
Place	16.782 (0.005*)	46.017 (0.000*)	0.930 (0.447)	73.537 (0.000*)	77.120 (0.000*)	36.893 (0.000*)
Email Service	3.996 (0.262)	16.733 (0.053)	10.413 (0.108)	2.695 (0.441)	9.709 (0.642)	4.263 (0.641)
Sleep loss	9.600 (0.048*)	16.616 (0.165)	8.537 (0.383)	20.902 (0.000*)	32.472 (0.009*)	5.812 (0.668)
Just Few Minutes	8.024 (0.091)	30.878 (0.002*)	14.307 (0.074)	12.657 (0.013*)	(0.014*)	11.852 (0.158)
Affect rest time	11.235 (0.024*)	13.096 (0.362)	17.265 (0.027*)	13.137 (0.011*)	18.656 (0.287)	13.248 (0.104)

Note: * fail to accept null hypothesis of there is no relationship at 5% level

Conclusions and Recommendations

Using the descriptive study, the undergraduate's internet usage and the comparison of the usage between Government and Private sector students were analysed. IT/Computer science students use Internet more. Students have problems using the Internet because of slow internet, power failure and high price. And they use the internet at home also like colleges that's why they spend over 1500 rupees per month. But there is no relationship between institute type and reasons for internet using except shopping, useful in academic and email service. Therefore, this study recommends that, campuses should provide required free high-speed Wi-Fi for the students' academic purpose and it should organize specialized training programmes regarding the awareness on the internet. As well as, the Government should show the interest in improving the current state of power in the country and it should review the cost of browsing favourably.

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