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## **Do the Undergraduates Have Infrastructure Facilities Necessary for Online Education at Their Personal Dwellings? A Survey in Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Online learning has become a new experience to most of the Sri Lankan undergraduates. Computer, internet and other infrastructure is important for effective online learning. This study evaluated the availability of physical and infrastructure facilities necessary for online education at the personal residences of undergraduates. Data were collected from undergraduates of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna using a content and face validated questionnaire in a Google form. Sample (n=238) composed of Pharmacy, Nursing and Medical Laboratory Science undergraduates who were in their first (37.0%), second (42.4%), third (11.3%) and fourth (9.2%) academic year. Approximately 73% of participants had desktop or laptop computers while others used mobile phones to join online academic activities. Only 53% students had access to good quality internet connection. Headphone and microphone were the most commonly available (75.6%) computer accessories while 42.4% had webcam. Only 9.7% had a printer at their home. A quiet separate place for studies (70%) a separate table and a chair (92.4%) and sufficient stationaries (84.9%) were available. Students having a computer (70.2%) were able to use basic software such as MS office to complete academic activities such as assignment and presentations. 58% had additional reference material. Majority of students (88.5%) were skilled in using online communication modes such as e-mail, WhatsApp and SMS. Students (45.5%) had least confidence in using online platforms such as Moodle a Blackboard. Majority (84.7%) reported confidence in using online platforms such as Zoom and MS Teams. In conclusion, a considerable number of undergraduates have limited computer and quality internet facilities at their residences. Instead, they use mobile phones, which obviously the small screen could affect the learning. Students have less confidence in using online platforms as Moodle. Overall, these could restrict the student engagement in online academic activities and performance in the exams as well. Therefore, special attention should be paid in this group of students in continuing online teaching.

**Keywords:** *Infrastructure facilities, Moodle, Online platforms, Online teaching*