Undergraduates' Perception on Online Exams: A Case of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

As online learning has become vital in current formal educational settings in Sri Lanka universities, online examinations are emerging as inevitable assessment methods. However, there are limited studies on how students perceive online exams in the Sri Lankan context. Hence, the current study aimed to identify students' perceptions of online exams within Sri Lankan university education. Stratified random sampling technique was utilized to select 100 undergraduate students from each batch of Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. The scale-covered major themes; validity and reliability, teaching and learning, practicality and security, production and adoption that influence the undergraduate perception of online exams. Primary data were analyzed using SMART PLS 3.0 software using bootstrapping re-sampling method (using 500 samples). The study revealed that the majority (83%) have no prior experience on online exams. Results further indicated that the factors that influenced undergraduates' perceptions on online exams differed in terms of their batch. Accordingly, validity and reliability have a positive influence on the students' perception of online exams of all four batches; 1st year (p=0.000), 2nd year (p=0.016), 3rd year (p=0.000) and 4th year (p=0.000) respectively. Students' perception of teaching and learning has a significant and positive influence on 2nd year (p=0.000), 3rd year (p=0.013) and 4th year (p=0.001) students' preference for online exams. Only 3rd year students (p=0.000) have a positive perception towards production and adoption of online exams while only 4th year students (p=0.000) have a positive perception towards practicality and security of online examinations. Therefore, administrators should ensure that the test measures related to content and testing conditions are similar for each learner to enhance the validity and reliability of online exams. Moreover, the study recommends including courses that raise the computer literacy rate would increase the knowledge base of learners and thus, improve the online exam experience.

Keywords: *Online exams, Perception, Undergraduates*