

Exploring the readiness and perceptions of undergraduate students towards the use of mobile phones for learning: a study based on undergraduates of the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya

T.M.S. Yatigammana Ekanayake^{1*} and S.M.P. Sethunga¹

*Department of Education, Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya,
Sri Lanka*

**syatigammana@yahoo.com*

It is now recognised that mobile devices add new dimensions to teaching and learning and has become an important educational tool in higher education. Research findings show the potential use of mobile devices in enhancing the teaching-learning processes in higher education institutes. It is recognised that the students' readiness is an important factor to be considered when integrating new technology such as mobile phones into an educational institution. This study explored the readiness, and the perceptions of undergraduate students of the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya towards the integration of mobile phones in enhancing their learning. The objectives were, to (i) investigate whether the students from the Faculty of Arts currently use their personal mobile devices for educational purposes, (ii) identify the perceptions of the students towards the use of mobile phones for teaching/learning and (iii) investigate whether students are ready to adopt the use of mobile devices in the classroom. As the sample, 300 undergraduate students from the third and fourth years were selected purposively. The research approach was mixed methods. Quantitative data were collected by administering a survey and qualitative data were collected by conducting focused group interviews with purposively selected 50 students. Quantitative data were analysed with the use of SPSS. The thematic analysis technique (with NVivo10 software) was used to analyse the qualitative data. According to the findings, all the students (100%) had their own mobile device and 83% of students have been using them for learning purposes. Further, it was found that the students were facing problems when using mobile devices for learning. These include not having adequate competence in exploring the educational potential of mobile devices, technology issues and financial issues. The majority of students (89%) were ready to use mobile devices for their university education and they perceived that the integration of mobile phones would enhance their teaching-learning activities and the efficiency of administrative activities of the Faculty.

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