Sri Lankan youth and their disclosure to computer literacy: Review

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Abstract

Computer literacy is essential for success in the developing world (Hindi et al., 2016). The global acceptance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has majorly captured the area of education, as it plays a predominant role in creating well qualified generation (Godamanna et al. 2013). Furthermore, computer literacy is an important variable in economic growth and promoting development in 21st century (Tharanganie et al., 2011). The objective is to study is to explicate the degree of computer literacy and exposure to the internet among Sri Lankan youth. Qualitative data analyzing models was mostly used in data analyzing in prior surveys. There are some findings derived from prior surveys. The highest proportion age group of computer literacy is students when consider about age and economic activity of youth. Among them, highest proportion belongs to 18-24 years age group. In considering about sex and age group, percentage of male respondents with computer knowledge is higher than the female respondents. Approximately 60% of the male respondents were computer literate when compared to the 55% of computer literate females. The computer literacy among unemployed population, the highest proportion represents by age group 25-29 among other youth agers. In conclusion, computer literacy of youth in Sri Lanka mainly distributed among male population than female population. Further 25-29 age group has well qualified computer literacy than other youth agers. Improving skills of computer literacy is necessary step that must be taken due to effect of globalization at present.

Key Words: Computer literacy, Youth, Information Technology

Introduction

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The global acceptance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has majorly captured the area of education, as it is an important method to create a technology equipped generation (Godamanna et al. 2013). Computer capabilities are essential for success in the developing world (Hindi et al., 2016). Computer literacy is essential in present world and especially youth are expected to possess adequate knowledge and skills in using information and communication technologies (ICT) (Kozina et al., 2012). Furthermore, some researchers states that the computer is essential for quality education. Thus having good computer knowledge improves the quality of their study programs (Tharanganie et al., 2011). Furthermore, information technology plays a predominant role in economic growth and promoting development and nothing to do during the second half of the 21st century that has touched so many lives, than the computer (Tharanganie et al., 2011).

Some researchers state that many higher educational institutes consider computer literacy a top educational goal such as improving work ability of youth generation. Computer literacy can be defined in many ways (Kozina et al., 2012). Reynolds and Fletcher-Janzen points out those thedifferent educational levels have differing computer needs. Computer literacy is a mixture of awareness such as knowledge of what computers are and how they work and ability to interact with computers (Tharanganie et al., 2011). It means computer literacy involves conceptual knowledge related to basic terminology like as social, ethical, legal, and global issues and skills necessary to perform tasks in word processing, database, spreadsheets, presentation, graphics, and basic operating system functions (Tharanganie et al., 2011). Mason and Mc Morrow (2006) suggested there are two distinct components to computer literacy, awareness and competence. Awareness means that a person has understanding of how computers affect their day today life and competence requires that a person be able to exhibit a hands-on expertise with a software application. Both of these components should be evaluated when looking at computer literacy (Jenkins, 2008). Hence the computer literacy is important qualification especially in job market and many fields.

As a developing country like Sri Lanka it is important to have a strong foundation of information technology in order to take opportunities offered by globalization (Silva et al., 2013). Therefore, during the past, all governments

attempted to improve computer literacy among Sri Lankan youth through various policies and programmers (Silva et al., 2013). As a result of it, computer literacy developing programs launched regional wise such as Nenasala, Vidatha Resources Centre for the purpose of improving computer literacy skills especially among youth (Kapadia, 2005). Improving skills of computer literacy is urgent step that must be taken due to effect of globalization at present.

Results

A survey in 2009 with random sample of 3000 households distributed in 22 accessible districts. Household members aged 15-29 years were taken as youth in this study. Only one eligible youth in a selected household was interviewed, selecting randomly. The survey derived some results about Sri Lankan youth and their exposure to computer literacy.

Table 1: Percentage of youth with computer literacy by age and economic activity (2009)

Economic activity	15-17 Years(%)	18-24 Years (%)	25-29 Years (%)
Student	62.4	88.6	68.8
Employed	25	47.5	45.6
Unemployed	41.3	61.6	49.4
Household Work	50	31.5	28.8

Source: Sri Lankan Youth and their Exposure to Computer Literacy (2013)

Figure 1: Percentage of youth with computer literacy by age and economic
activity (2009)
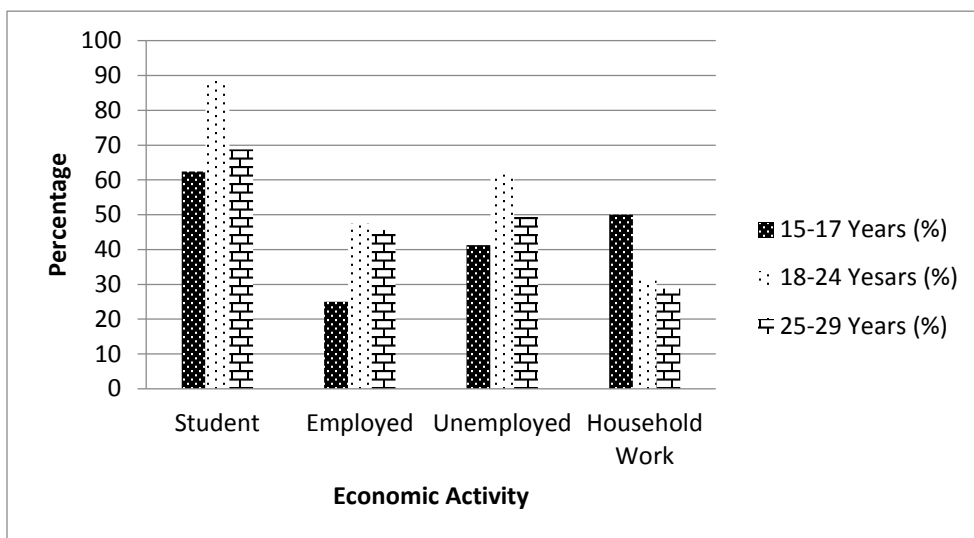
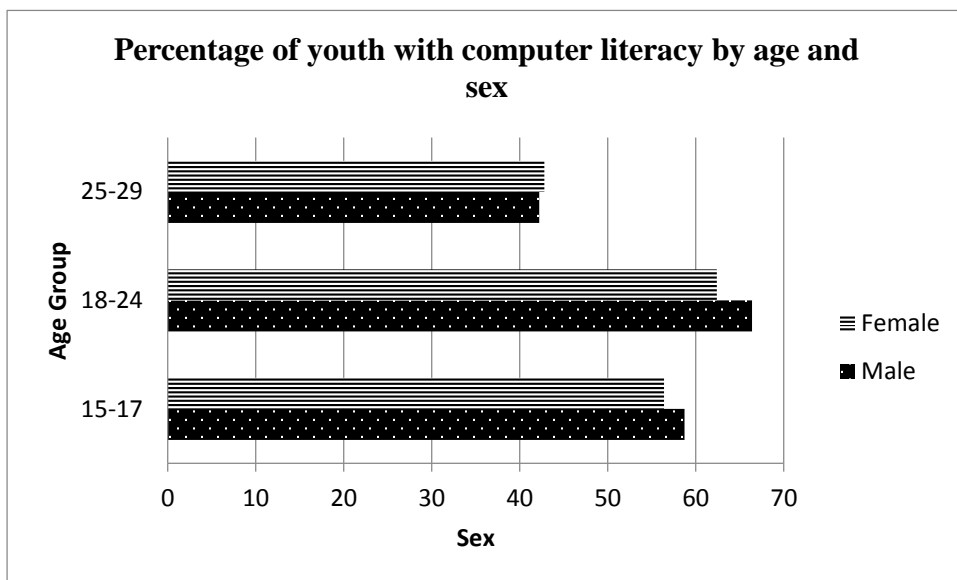Source: Sri Lankan Youth and their Exposure to Computer Literacy (2013)

According to the figure highest proportion age group of computer literacy is
students. Among them, highest proportion belongs to 18-24 years age group.
The lowest proportion represented by employed and most of them belong to
15-17 years age group. When consider about percentage of them, computer
Literacy youth group aged 15-29, concerning occupation was that the highest
proportion of youth 34% was students, while 23% claimed to be unemployed
and 11% were engaged in household activities.

Table 2: Percentage of youth with computer literacy by age and sex

Age Group	Male	Female
15-17	58.7	56.4
18-24	66.4	62.4
25-29	42.2	42.8

Source: Sri Lankan Youth and their Exposure to Computer Literacy (2013)

Figure 2: Percentage of youth with computer literacy by age and sex

Percentage of youth with computer literacy by age and sex

(Bar chart showing computer literacy percentages by age group and sex)

Age Group (y-axis):
- 25-29: Female ~43, Male ~42
- 18-24: Female ~62, Male ~66
- 15-17: Female ~56, Male ~58

X-axis (Sex): 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70

Legend: Female, Male

Source - Sri Lankan Youth and their Exposure to Computer Literacy (2013)

According to the above graph, percentage of male respondents with computer knowledge is higher than the female respondents. Approximately 60% of the male respondents were computer literate when compared to the 55% of computer literate females and this pattern is recurrent in all the age-groups except the 25–29 age group.

The survey Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka in 2014 derived some results about computer literacy of youth. The Department of Censes and Statistic of Sri Lanka [DCSSL] conducted surveys on computer literacy in 2004, and 2006/2007. In 2009, a third Computer Literacy Survey (CLS) was conducted for further results. A nationally distributed sample of 10,150 households with 31,302 persons aged 5 – 69 years were enumerated for this issue of the CLS and all the districts were covered other than those in the Northern Province.

Table 3: Computer literacy among unemployed population (Aged 15 – 69 years) by age group – 2014

Age group (Years)	Computer literate population (%)
15-19	64.8
20-24	73.7
25-29	75.9
30-39	61.3
40-69	43.5

Source: Department of Census and Statistics – 2014

The unemployed youths (15 – 29) have high proportion of computer literacy. Further, Sri Lanka Quarterly Labor Force Survey reports higher unemployment rates among youth (aged 15 – 29 years). The computer literacy results reveal that among unemployed many have at least some ICT skills. For example among aged 25-29 unemployed group, every three out of four are computer literate.

Conclusion

Computer literacy of youth in Sri Lanka mainly distributed among male population than female population. Further 25-29 age group has well qualified computer literacy than other youth agers. The highest proportion age group of computer literacy is students when consider about age and economic activity of youth. Among them, highest proportion belongs to 18-24 years age group. The computer literacy among unemployed population, the highest proportion represents by age group 25-29 among other youth agers.

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