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**Impact of Digital Divide on Academic Performance in  
Sri Lankan Universities**

**S.A.D.H.N. Suraweera  
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## ABSTRACT

Technology is changing the way people work, learn, transact, engage in business and communicate. Especially, academics in university today face new learning challenges. As higher education shifts to modern technological methods of teaching and learning, students must also have a high level of competence with computer and internet technologies in order to perform better. This can only be realized if all students have equal access and use technology effectively. However, “Digital Divide” is a dynamic catchphrase, in Sri Lankan universities too.

The main objective of the research is to identify the impact of digital divide on academic performance in Sri Lankan universities. In addition to this objective there are others. Firstly, identifying the academics’ IT usage, secondly, identifying the dimensions of digital divide in academic community and thirdly, identifying the university initiatives in bridging the digital divide. The study aim to test three hypotheses related to this.

The survey method was used as the research method and quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used as the data collection methods. A questionnaire was administrated among academics to gather data for the study. The stratified random sampling method was used in the selection of the sample for the study. Out of 367 respondents responses were obtained from 90% students.

The data analysis of the study revealed that academics did not use effectively computer and internet for their studies. It was also revealed that there was a significant impact of digital divide on academic performance. The academics’ socio economic background, their parents’ employment status, geographic location, degree, study year and faculty were identified as dimensions of digital divide in academic community. Further the study revealed that Sri Lankan university system has strong relationship with socio economic status, technology usage and academic performance.

The need of implementing campus wide computer literacy project, the compulsory course in IT, implementing different databases, teaching information literacy skills as well as implementing an IT solution center and Wi Fi areas in the university premises are among the major suggestions of the study to bridge the digital divide in academic community.