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Paper: Transformability

E-Learning in Information Management education in Sri Lanka: An examination of needs and issues

The proposed study aims to explore and understand the various contextual factors that impact on the application of e-learning in tertiary level Information Management (IM) education in Sri Lanka. Under the vision of higher education in Sri Lanka, IM education is seen as responsible for fostering the development of a high quality market oriented and knowledge based society. As with other developing countries, information can be seen as a fundamental resource for improving the quality of Sri Lanka's governance and promoting socio-economic development (Kularatne, 1997; Meso et al., 2009). However, a number of barriers currently restrict access to IM education by Sri Lankan students and information workers: the provision of education is limited to face-to-face teaching at three institutions in the Colombo area, the country's physical infrastructure makes it difficult for fulltime workers to attend classes without missing substantial work time, and this results in employer reluctance to support education.

In response to a World Bank Report (2007, 2009) the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of Sri Lanka has identified aims to foster transformative change in IM education with the goal of increasing equality of access to IM education through the use of e-learning. However, there is no research that indicates what factors have an impact on the application of e-learning in tertiary level IM education in the Sri Lankan context, and what the barriers or enablers to doing so might be.

This will be an interpretive case research study using qualitative data collection techniques. A preliminary model of factors has been developed based on relevant theories and will be used to guide the proposed research. The preliminary model will be modified based on data from fieldwork to assist IM educators in Sri Lanka to increase equality of access to IM education and to guide decisions regarding quality and the learning process.

Keywords: E-Learning, Information Management Education, Needs, Issues