

UNDERGRADUATES' PERCEPTION TOWARDS DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE STATE UNIVERSITIES OF SRI LANKA

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Distance learning has come a long way and opened new vistas in the field of education. With distance learning opportunities growing at a high rate in many tertiary institutions, there is a need to ensure that prompt feedback on assignments is integrated with the instructional design process of distance learning. Some universities offer distance education courses to cater for the new avenues in the educational field. Based on this contemporary outbreak, a need is felt to carefully study the distance education which made a remarkable transition from traditional tertiary education after closing the higher education institutions in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Investigating learners' perceptions, attitudes and willingness to try distance learning can provide guidance and recommendations for considering expanding the use of distance learning formats. A survey was distributed among management undergraduate students in state universities in Sri Lanka. The descriptive statistics provide summaries. The results of this study showed that the most crucial items necessary for quality distance learning education were positively perceived. However, two key items were negatively perceived, namely; Other services necessary for distance learning such as library services and technical support are available and the tasks and assignments given are easily understood and facilitate learning. The findings of the study can be used by academics as well as policymakers to accelerate distance learning.

Keywords: *Distance Learning; Perceptions; Undergraduates*
