

## Study of Effectiveness of Online Learning as an Alternative to Traditional Classrooms by Students' and Lecturers' Perceptions

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**Abstract :** This study examines the effectiveness of online learning as an alternative to traditional classrooms, focusing on students' and lecturers' perceptions in the context of courses offered by the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Sri Lanka. This study evaluate the effectiveness of online learning through stakeholder perspectives and develop strategies that benefit both students and lecturers in this educational mode. Focusing on three objectives: 1to assess the perceptions of students and lecturers towards online learning, 2to identify factors that affect the challenges and concern encountered during online teaching and learning, and 3to propose actionable strategies to enhance the effectiveness of online education. The study used a convergent parallel mixed design to gather data from 420 students and 30 lecturers from MEd, PGDE, and BEd programmes. The Chi-Square test was used to identify challenges in online lectures, while theme analysis was used for qualitative data. Data collection involved questionnaires and interviews. This study found that different responses to online learning as a possible digital solution, for students and the lecturing staff regarding the necessity of flexibility and support for learning. However, major issues were recognized, including insufficient interaction, technical problems, and the necessity for didactic adjustment. The Chi-Square analysis identified internet connectivity, digital literacy, and institutional support as significant predictors of these difficulties. Based on these findings, the study suggests strategies to improve online learning, including improving technological infrastructure, fostering interactive and collaborative teaching methods, and providing targeted training for lecturers. These recommendations aim to address stakeholders' concerns and optimize the online learning experience, ensuring its effectiveness in meeting educational objectives. The research enhances understanding of online education in higher education, provides actionable insights for improvement, suggests policy adjustments, and calls for further research to enhance its effectiveness.

**Keywords :** effectiveness, online learning, traditional classrooms, students' and lecturers' perceptions

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