

**STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS  
OF ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMMES OF  
NATIONAL ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION SERVICE**

**By**

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The Dissertation was submitted to the Department of Computer Science & Engineering of the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Business Administration.

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## **Abstract**

According to the statistics of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka, every year about 125,000 G.C.E. (A/L) qualified students fall into the category of “higher education opportunity less” due to the simple fact that the conventional university system does not have the capacity. Similarly, there is a large number of professionals scattered around the country who seek higher education opportunities as well as continuing professional development for which no opportunities are found in their respective areas. In addition, most of the employers operating out of Western Province need to train and re-train their employees in various disciplines which also need to be addressed. All these issues constrain opportunities available for continuing education. In this context online learning has been viewed as a way to increase access to higher and continuing education.

Presently, a state-of-the-art network has been established by the National Online Distance Education Service (NODES) in order to facilitate the delivery of online post secondary level programmes developed by the universities and other private and public sector post-secondary educational institutions.

The aim of the study is to find out the perceptions of stakeholders (students, teachers, administrators and experts) on effectiveness of online learning programmes of NODES in Sri Lanka. The study will examine the perceptions of stakeholders drawn from around 17 online programmes of disciplines like Medicine, Information Technology, Accounting, Culinary Arts, Agriculture, Business and Disaster Management, Quantity Surveying, Teacher Education, Library Science. It will also try to find out whether there is a relationship between demographic characteristics of stakeholders like gender, age, marital status, education, employment, income, district and effectiveness of online programs in terms of Accessibility and Quality.

Significance of the study stems from the effort taken to evaluate an initiative taken to address one of the major problems of the country which is to increase access for post secondary education. Also, it would help to improve quality/effectiveness of online distance education programmes to cater to the current demands from the labour market for employees with technical and employable skills.

The research utilized the survey approach and questionnaires were used to collect data from 216 students and 20 tutors/administrators/experts interviewed. Qualitative analysis of interview data and statistical analysis of questionnaire data are presented as the final output of the research.

The findings of this study indicates factors which facilitate and/or obstruct the effective implementation of online programmes to enable feasible strategies for effective implementation to be identified and shared with providers of online learning. Finally, recommendations are made on resolving the identified issues and to extend and improve the effectiveness of online distance education.


## Declaration

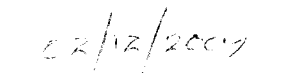
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The work included in this dissertation in part or whole has not been submitted for any other academic qualification at any institution.

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### Supervisors

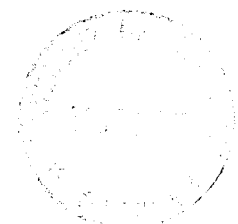
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## List of Abbreviations

BIT – Bachelor of Information Technology  
CEO – Chief Executive Officer  
CMA – Certified Management Accountants  
DEMP – Distance Education Modernisation Project  
FOSS – Free & Open Source Software  
G.C.E. (A/L) – General Certificate in Education (Advanced Level)  
ICT – Information & Communication Technology  
ICTA – Information & Communication Technology Agency  
IIT – Informatics Institute of Technology  
IQSSL – Institute of Quantity Surveyors of Sri Lanka  
LCDVS – Ladies College Department of Vocational Studies  
LMS – Learning Management System  
NODES – National Online Distance Education Service  
NAC – NODES Access Center  
NEC – National Education Commission  
ODE – Open and Distance Education  
ODL – Open and Distance Learning  
OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development  
OUSL – Open University of Sri Lanka  
PGIM – Post Graduate Institute of Medicine  
SLLA – Sri Lanka Library Association  
TVEC – Tertiary & Vocational Education Commission  
UoC – University of Colombo  
UoP - University of Peradeniya  
UoM - University of Moratuwa  
VPN – Virtual Private Network