

## **Freshmen's perceptions of blended learning in higher education; A case of University of Colombo Institute for Agro-Technology and Rural Sciences**

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Global teaching and learning methods have evolved substantially in recent years, where a paradigm shift from traditional face-to-face learning to hybrid systems has been evident in several nations. Accordingly, hybrid systems such as blended learning has been introduced to the Sri Lankan education system in the past years. In many countries, holistic techniques have shown that it is the most efficient system. The objective of this study is to investigate freshmen students' perception of blended learning in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted at University of Colombo Institute for Agro-Technology and Rural Sciences, one of the major institutes in Sri Lanka that have been implementing blended learning for undergraduate students for several years. The population for the study was chosen among the undergraduates in their first year at the institute. A sample was chosen using a simple random sampling procedure, with a sample size of 100. To determine the association with the dependent variable (perception of undergraduates), distinct dimensions were chosen for each independent variable (student-instructor interaction, resources in course modules, and completion of course objectives). To obtain primary data, a pre-tested questionnaire was administered using the institute's Learning Management System. Secondary data were gathered from previously published publications. The data were then analyzed using the SPSS (26) statistical software suite. The results for selected constructs were analyzed using reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and significance values. The reliability levels of the various variables are all acceptable. Selected variables; student-instructor interaction, resources of the course module, and completion of course objectives exhibited a strong positive correlation with undergraduate perception.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, Freshmen, Instructor, Perception and undergraduates

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