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Abstract

This research attempts to answer the question ?Do undergraduates have an intention to do research?? The study took place at the Department of Finance, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka, and the respondents are the final year undergraduate of the department. Following theoretical findings of Sachithra (2015), and Pacifica and Thomson (2011), the study looked at the attitudes of students in doing research within the degree program and the gender differences in the preference for doing research. The quantitative approach is the methodology adopted and used a questionnaire as the data collection tool, and it consists of both open and close-ended questions. Percentage analysis and coding are the main analytical tools used for analyzing data, and supplemented by graphs, charts, and tables. Findings reveal that students' attitudes have a significant impact on their intention to do research. Further, gender difference too affects whether students intend to do research. In conclusion, it can be stated that the male students have a higher preference to do research than female students and the intention to do research varies with the degree program the students follow along with their preferred job in the future.

Index terms— intention to do research, student attitudes, gender difference, undergraduates in finance.

1 Introduction

he study intends to uncover the preference of final year undergraduates' to conducting a research. The specific student group which the study focuses on is the final year undergraduates who are pursuing a special degree in Finance at the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. Finance undergraduates could choose between conducting a research study or engage in an internship as part of their degree program. Thus, it is timely and relevant to know their intention to doing research in the context that it is not a compulsory subject. Within literature, ??achithra (2015) found that undergraduates' beliefs, attitudes, self-efficacy, and motivation about research could influence their interest in doing research and 'there is no difference between male and female undergraduates regarding beliefs about research relevance and its complication. Methodologically the study takes a quantitative approach, and the data collection tool is a questionnaire consisted of both open and close-ended questions. Questions were analyzed using percentage analysis. Data are presented with the use of tables, graphs and charts. Coding was used to analyze the open-ended questions.

2 II.

3 Literature Review

The literature on the intention of undergraduates to do research can be categorized under attitudes and gender of the students. Accordingly following is a review of literature relating to the above categories.

4 a) Student's Attitudes

A study done by Pacifica and Thomson (2011), examined possible differences between premed and non-premed students in their influences to do research and expectations of research. Questionnaire responses from 55 premed students and 80 non-premed students were analyzed. No differences existed in the hope of doing research between

the two groups, but attitudes toward science and intrinsic motivation to learn more about science were significantly higher for non-premed students. Premed students, most of who are pursuing medicine are not motivated to learn more about science, but motivated to help people. They viewed research as a way to help them become doctors and to rule out the possibility of research as a career. Non-premed students participated in research studies to learn more about a specific science topic and gain experience that may be helpful in graduate school research.

Another study was done by ??achithra (2015) in order to understanding the research interest of undergraduates of a B.Com degree programme and to identify the factors that encompass undergraduates' research interest. Acknowledging the prior studies, the study has found that undergraduates' beliefs, attitudes, self-efficacy, and motivation about research could influence their interest in doing research.

5 b) Gender Differences

According to ??achithra (2015), there is no difference between male and female undergraduates regarding beliefs about research relevance and its complication.

However, male undergraduates demonstrate comparatively positive attitudes towards research. Self-efficacy of conducting research is higher in female undergraduates though they compose a negative attitude towards research. Review of literature reveals that studies regarding the intention of undergraduates to do research are not many in number and especially regarding the students specializing in the field of Finance. Accordingly, a gap exists in literature and, this research intends to address this gap and shed light to a grey area.

6 III.

7 The Objective of the Study

This study aims at answering the question "Do undergraduates have an intention to do research?" with a special reference to the final year undergraduates pursuing a special degree in Finance.

IV.

8 Methodology

Methodologically this study takes a quantitative approach and uses a questionnaire consisting of both open and close-ended questions. Quantitative research methods enable the researcher to use a larger sample and to collect data in a relatively shorter period (Rahman, 2017). Within quantitative method, questionnaire is a popular tool for collecting data. It is a well-established data collection instrument in social science research for collecting data on participants' social characteristics, present and past behavior or attitudes and beliefs and reasons for actions concerning the topic under investigation (Bulmer, cited in Bird, 2009).

V.

9 Data, Analysis and Discussion

The study used only primary data collected through the questionnaires. The research population is the final year students following the BSc Finance (special) Degree program. A questionnaire was developed with 16 questions in order to assess the undergraduates' preference for conducting research. A questionnaire was administered via the Learning Management System (LMS) to the total population of 150 students.

Questions included were as follows: personal information, intention to do further studies after graduation, type of employment preferred after graduation, whether completed any professional courses, intention to do a research study in the upcoming semester and reasons and opinion on making the research study compulsory for final year students.

Close-ended questions are analyzed using percentage analysis, and coding is used to analyze the open-ended questions. Data are presented using tables, graphs and charts. Data were analyzed based on following subtopics: personal information, intention to do further studies after graduation, type of employment preferred after graduation, whether completed any professional courses, intention to do a research study next semester and reasons and opinion on making the research study compulsory for final year students. The response rate of the survey lies at 42%. The following section comprises the analysis and discussion.

10 a) Personal Information Gender composition of the Respondents

Although the sample consists of both male and female undergraduates within the degree program majority of the students are females. This gender imbalance is reflected in the analysis of the gender composition given below in Table ?? and Figure 1.

11 Table 1: Gender composition of the Respondents

12 Female Male

Source: Survey Data

13 Classification of respondents based on their native place

The analysis given in Table 2 below is about the native background of the respondents and, it is revealed that 58% of the respondents come from an urban background while 42% belongs to the rural areas.

14 b) Intention to do Further Studies

Whether the respondents intend to do further studies is analyzed and presented below in Table 3.

Percentage analysis reveals that male students intention to do further studies is higher than their female counterparts. More female students than male students completed/follow professional study programs with percentages of 88 and 74 respectively.

15 e) Intention to do a research study as part of the degree program

Only nine respondents, four females and five males respectively prefer to do a research study as part of their degree program. This analysis is given in Table 5 below followed by the reasons given by respondents for their preference to do research. Reasons given by the nine respondents who expressed their willingness to do a research study as part of the degree program are: a research study is important in pursuing further studies, gather a broader knowledge on a specific preferred subject area and ability to relate theory to practice.

In contrast, more than 75% of the respondents who are not intending to do researches bring about the fact that going for internship training is more valuable than doing a research. Other reasons for not intending to do a research are: not interested in doing research, no sufficient time to engage in a research study and conducting a research study is a stressful task.

16 f) Opinion on making the research study compulsory for the degree program

Only a few respondents have expressed their opinion and, the analysis is given below in Table 6. Accordingly, four female students and three male students are of the view that the research study should be a compulsory component of the degree program. Only one female student and one male student have pointed out that it has to be an optional subject. In contrast, 25 respondents namely 17 females and eight males, are in the view that the research study should not be made compulsory for the degree program.

17 Conclusion

Contrasting the findings of Pacifica and Thomson(2011), regarding the intention to do research among medical students due to their interest to serve people, this study reveals that students in Finance prefer internship training to research because internship training becomes an added qualification when applying for jobs. This can be further verified with the use of preference of respondents on the job they are willing to do in the future. Accordingly, the most preferred job of the respondents is the post of Financial Analyst followed by preferences for being an Accountant or a Banker with the least preference for jobs such as Teacher, Researcher, or University Academic. Adding to the same majority of the respondents are of the view that a research study should not be made compulsory for a degree program in Finance. Agreeing with Sachithra (2016), this study reveals that male students' preference for doing research is slightly higher than female students' liking for the same. This finding can be strengthened by the fact that more male students prefer further studies than the female students. Accordingly, intention to do research varies with the degree program the students follow and their preferred job in the future is a valid conclusion. Further, considering the gender implication on doing/ not doing research studies it can be stated that the male students prefer researching than female students.

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Female		Male		Urban	Total	Rural
Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	58%		42%
26(72%)	15(60%)	09(28%)	10(40%)			

Source: Survey Data

Figure 1: Table 2 :

3

Female

Figure 2: Table 3 :

4

		Female		Male	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
		36(88%)	05(12%)	14(74%)	05(26%)
Source: Survey Data					

Figure 3: Table 4 :

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Female		Male	
4		5	

[Note: Source: Survey Data]

Figure 4: Table 5 :

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Female

Figure 5: Table 6 :

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