

**RESEARCH INTEREST AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS- SPECIAL REFERENCE WITH SOUTH EASTERN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA****Fathima Shameera Abdul Wahid¹, Sabaretnam Sajiharan², S. Rilukshika³**^{1,2,3} Computer Unit, Faculty of Arts & Culture, South Eastern University of Sri Lanka¹ shameerawahid77@gmail.com, ² sabasajiharan@gmail.com**Abstract**

Research is a systematic gathering of information to help to find answer a question or solve a problem. Research is going on right now all over the universities in the world. Research plays a crucial role in an undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate study programmes in all over the world. Many undergraduate degree programs require students to develop a basic understanding of research methodology. Undergraduate students' participation in hands-on research is widely believed to encourage students to pursue advanced degrees and careers in science, technology, social sciences, engineering, and mathematics and every fields. Undergraduate research experiences help them for their higher studies as well as it help them to do experiments and discussions to find out an answer for unsolved problems. In South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, all faculties conduct the research conferences and symposiums. However, Undergraduate Students participation is very low. Few students only participated in this symposium; therefore, we do this study to find reasons behind it. Additionally, the research interest on undergraduate had been examined through online survey. Moreover, we use primary and secondary data collection methods to collect the data. As conclusion, this information is beneficial for academics for the development of future research in the field.

Keywords; Interest, Research, Undergraduate Students**INTRODUCTION**

Research is defined as a careful consideration of study regarding a particular concern or a problem using scientific methods. According to the American sociologist Earl Robert Babbie, "Research is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict and control the observed phenomenon. Research involves inductive and deductive methods." There are two types of mostly usable research methods. That are Inductive research methods and deductive methods. Inductive research methods are used to analyze the observed phenomenon whereas; deductive methods are used to verify the observed phenomenon. Inductive approaches are associated with qualitative research and deductive methods are more commonly associated with research. One of the most important aspects of research is the statistics associated with it, conclusion or result. It is about the "thought" that goes behind the research. Research is conducted with a purpose to understand (Robert Babbie)

Many undergraduate degree programs require students to develop a basic understanding of research methodology. Unfortunately, methods courses are typically unpopular with students because the course material is complex and technical in nature. In South Eastern University of Sri Lanka, undergraduate students can follow general or special degree courses. Special degree starts their second year. Special degree students' must needs to do a research to complete their degree program. However, general degree students it has not needed. In addition, all the undergraduate students learn research methodology subject in their third year-end semester. Therefore, general degree students do not get any chance to do a research. Because when they study the research methodology subject, it is the time to leave them in university.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the light of the information revolution and the scientific challenges of the 21st century, the uses and popularity of research and innovation are increasing day by day and people interest on doing research all over the world. On



the other hand, the world is heading towards knowledge economy and a lot of money invest on the research and innovation. Moreover, in South Eastern University they conduct a research conferences and symposiums every faculty of the university annually. However, in those conferences undergraduate students' participations are very low. Therefore, it is worth to investigating the effectiveness and the role of undergraduates' participation in the research studies. Moreover, identify the issues and challenges when they are going to do a research and to analyze the use, usefulness of research for undergraduate study courses.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Russel S. Hathaway Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda Sandra and R. Gregerman (2002) did a research under the heading of the Relationship of Undergraduate Research Participation to Graduate and Professional Education Pursuit: An Empirical Study. In their study, they investigate the relationship of undergraduate research participation to pursuit of graduate education and other activities. They collect Data from 291 survey respondents who provided information about their post-undergraduate education pursuits and activities. End of their study, they found that the research participants were significantly more likely to pursue graduate education and additional research activity.

Christopher R. Madan and Braden D. Teitge, (2013) did a research on The Benefits of Undergraduate Research: The Student's Perspective. Their paper looks forward, offering the students' perspective on how academic advisers can advocate for undergraduate research and engage junior and senior undergraduates in research, as well as how advisers can promote undergraduate research within the faculty. Through their study they find that, the benefits of undergraduate research are numerous and far-reaching, the majority of articles on the topic focus on a retrospective viewpoint of undergraduate research initiatives at specific universities. In addition, they found that the junior students do not know that research is an option for them. so they recommended that the advisors must involve with the students and make aware and guide them to do a research.

Joanna John and John Creighton (2011) did a research under the title of Researcher development: the impact of undergraduate research opportunity programmes on students in the UK. Their target population were 366 students from different universities in UK. They collect data from an online survey. End of the study, Results suggest UROP makes a significant contribution to the research capabilities and confidence of participating students, boosting their understanding of both research and their own subjects. Whilst offering considerable benefits to student learning, there is no evidence that UROP schemes on their current small scale attract additional students to postgraduate research, since the majority that participate are already interested in postgraduate study.

METHODOLOGY

ஆநவாழ்னாழ்மடமபல ளை ய அழளவ உசரஉயைட ியசவ முக ய சநளநயசஉா. ஐடு வாளை ளவரனலஇ றந ராயந ரளநன ிசைஅயசல யனெ ளநஉழனெயசல னயவய உழுட்டநஉவழைடு அநவாழ்னன. றுந ரளநன ிசைஅயசல னயவய உழுட்டநஉவழைடு அநவாழ்ன யள வைநசனநைறடு பசமுரி னளைஉரளளழைடு யனெ னுரநளவழைடுயசைந. ஐடு யனனவைழைடுஇ றந ரளநன வாந சநளநயசஉா ியிநசளஇ வைநசநெவஇ சநனநைறநசள சநிழசவ யனெ கநநனடியஉம கசமுஅ வாந ரளநசள யள ளநஉழனெயசல னயவய உழுட்டநஉவழைடு அநவாழ்ன. வாந ிழிரடயவழைடு முக வாளை ளவரனல ளை வாந 120 ரனெநசபசயனரயவந ளவரனநெவள முக ளுழுவா நுயளவநசடு ருனெநசளவைல முக ளுசை டுயமெய.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this paper are;

- To identify the benefits of the undergraduate research experience.
- To identify the reasons that undergraduate not participated in the research conferences and symposiums.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this section, the survey results are presented and analyzed through excel software. We were selected the population is youth Undergraduate students of SEUSL. The total number of students participated in this survey was 120. The ratio of females to Males participating in this survey was 71.67: 28.33, respectively. We were given 12 questions in the questionnaire. The all responses were analyzed using excel software. The results of some important questions are given below in tabular format.

Table1: Statistic on did you do any research paper?

Question 1: Did you do any research paper?		
Answer options	Response percent	Response Count
Yes	23.33%	28
No	76.67%	92
Answered Questions		120

Table2: Statistic on do you like to do research in future?

Question 2: Do you like to do research in future?		
Answer options	Response percent	Response Count
Yes	48.34%	58
No	23.33%	28
Maybe	28.33%	34
Answered Questions		120

The results from Question 03, in which 48% of the respondents urged that they have an interest to do the research.

Table3: Statistic on how do you know about research?

Question 3: How do you know about research?		
Answer options	Response percent	Response Count
Through Lecturers	50.83%	61
Through Seniors	34.17%	41
Through Motivational Programmes	15.00%	18
Others		
Answered Questions		120

Table4: Statistic on what is the reason to do the research?

Question 4: What is the reason to do the research?		
Answer options	Response percent	Response Count
For the higher studies	51.67%	62
To gain Knowledge	23.33%	28
To Improve research skills	10.00%	12
To connect with professionals and researches	15.00%	18
Answered Questions		120

Table5: Statistic on do you think that research is an important part of an undergraduate Programme.

Question 5: Do you think that research is an important part of an undergraduate Programme?		
Answer options	Response percent	Response Count
Yes	35.83%	43
No	13.33%	16
May be	24.17%	29
I don't have any idea	26.67%	32

The results from Question 05, in which 35.83% of the respondents urged that the research is most important part of their undergraduate course. Below are, quoted from the survey responses:

- research experience allows undergraduate students to better understand on published works
- learn to balance collaborative and individual work
- determine an area of interest
- jump start their careers as research
- whenever going to do further studies it is add an advantage
- exposure to an area of research helps students to explore career fields
- it will make ways to find opportunities to find, present and publish the own ideas
- can get more knowledge in the specific field

The benefits of the undergraduate research experience.

Research is a most important part of the any degree programs in the every universities in the world. So its equal chance to all undergraduate and graduate students in the world to do a research in their degree program. Some undergraduate students who have the idea to continue their master and master of philosophy they have interest to do the research. The following chart show that the undergraduate students who did the research and present it on conference on previous three years.

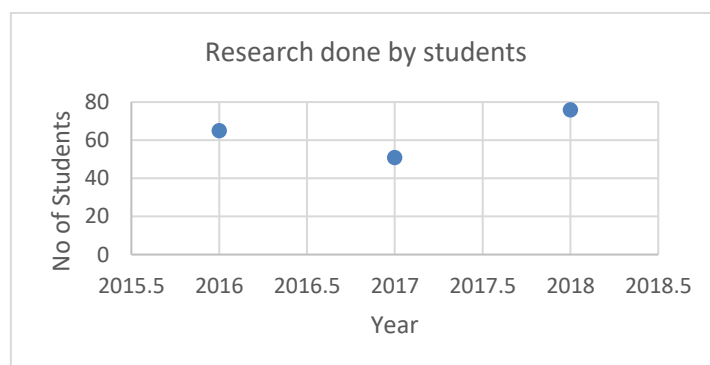


Figure1: Research done by students

This chart shows that the interest of doing research of students. In 2016, more than 60% of the students were participated in the research sessions. Because they conduct the Undergraduate Research Conference with the collaboration of IDAS project. The next year it is slightly decrease the number of students who did the research. Also through this study, we found that the undergraduate students who did the research on their undergraduate degree programs who are willing to continue their masters degrees.

There are numerous benefits for the undergraduate students to who involved in the research work. Research experience allows undergraduate students to better understand on published work, learn to balance collaborative and individual works. it also helps students to improve their critical thinking and problem facing and solving skills with oral written and communication skills. Also it a great platform to give and share their opinions and ideas about the related subjects and they can find out something new from their research work. Research works helps prepare the undergraduate students to become a professionally successful in their field of work. A recent survey of employees demonstrated that research skills and aptitude gained through the research are highly value added in the workplace. Moreover, some companies ask that when they recruit the employees, they ask their previous published research works and for that, they give extra points. So even to get job undergraduate students with a degree plus they must need or have a research help them to get a job easily.

When students do the research, its helps them to learn and get extra knowledge apart from the study. In addition, they got a chance to interact with well knowledgeable professors and the professionals and can get their ideas and



suggestions to improve them. As well as it motivates students future. Because they would find their passion in their particular topic or interested area.

Reasons that undergraduate not participated in the research symposiums.

Through the study, we found that, the reasons for not participated in the research symposiums.

- They don't know anything about the research
- Don't take any necessary action to know about the research
- Cannot understand the process or steps of the research paper
- Don't have any idea about research
- Like to do research but don't know how to start
- It is difficult to identify a problem and research heading
- When present the research paper audience may ask questions
- Stage fear : Fear or shy to present the paper among the audience
- For the general degree students, it is not so important to do a research
- It get along period of time to get and analyze the data
- Most of the time, when the presenter present the research paper audience criticize them rather than encourage.
- There are no people who ask or motivate to do a research
- Most of the seniors told that, it is not so important to complete the degree Programme.
- Financial problems. To present their study they ask to pay. so it's a problem for the undergraduate students.
- There are no any motivational or research opportunity programmes were held in the university premises.
- There is a subject called research methodology, in 3rd year, 2nd semester, so there is a no time to do a research, because after the second semester we leave from the university.
- There is research forum in faculty of Islamic studies and Arabic languages. It is restricted for only FIA students. Other faculty students do not get any chances to get the membership or to learn anything about the research

FINDINGS

End of the study we found something related to the research interest on undergraduates are,

- Students do not know that research is an option for their course.
- Most of the fresh undergraduate really don't know anything about the research
- Most of the students like to do the research, but they do not know the process of the research
- Students shy or fear to talk with their senior students and lecturers
- They did not participated any research forum or research related seminars, workshops or programmes
- They think that research is not so important to complete their degree programmes
- Financial problems cause to barrier for some undergraduate students
- Students did not find the right person to get or know more about research and guidance
- There is a Research Methodology subject in the third year-end semester. Therefore, when they get the knowledge about research, they do not have enough time to do a research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

End of the study we give some recommendation to the students and staff to do a research.

- Senior students must help their juniors to do research
- Lecturers or other mentors make aware the importance of a research and help students to do a research



- Students, meets their lecturers and get idea or knowledge about research
- Students union or other students organizations take necessary steps to start a research forum or conduct the research related programmes
- Must help the students who face in financial problems. Most interested students go back because of the payment.
- Career guidance unit can take steps to conduct the research related programmes, it is ,may be a chance for the interested students to do the research
- Research related activities or subject, wants to be do in first two years of the degree Programme
- Lecturers should provide students to some guidance to get involved in researches.

CONCLUSION

Research is a systematic gathering of information to help to find answer a question or solve a problem. Research is going on right now all over the university in the world. Independent research with the goal of creating a publicly accessible product is beneficial for all undergraduate students regardless of discipline of future career plans, even help their higher studies and the process of doing a research will help their whole life. When undergraduate students presented their research finding to their lecturer, colleagues or for the public, they develop their public relations with oral written and communication skills. So doing research is more beneficial for the undergraduate students and their future carrier. Also through this study, we find the reasons to not do research and finally we recommend some ideas to enhance and increase the interest on research. It has revealed that among undergraduate students engagement on research work is on low level. Moreover, if the suggested recommendations will implement on future it may be raise the interest on research and related works among undergraduate students.

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