

Factors Influence on Student Course Selection : a Case of Trincomalee Campus

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Abstract:- The course selection is one of the most important decisions a student has to make in higher education. Because that decision plays a major role on defining their future. Therefore, they should make the best choice at the very beginning when selecting the course. The objective of the study is to understand the factors, which influence the most of selection of specialization domains among a group of management students of the Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka. This study employed as quantitative research. The respondents in this study were undergraduate students. The sample consisted of 75 respondents from different majoring. The available literature and result of the study supported to establish the background for this problem emphasizing not only how students choose their major field of study but also why many students do not tend to select certain courses. Result of this study shows that the most important in the selection of major subjects are Job related factor and Academic Quality.

Keyword:- Course Selection, Personal, Job Related, Academic Quality, Influence, Nature.

I. INTRODUCTION

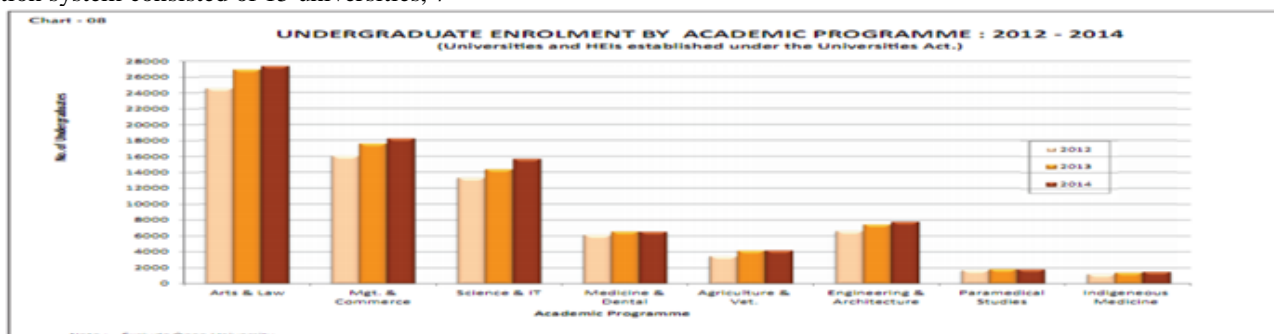
In the globalized milieu, education is considered as an important tool that could be utilized to reduce the challenges in life. The knowledge, skills and attitudes gained through education empower individuals' potential to optimally utilize their human cognizance. This supports to open the doors of opportunities, which enables individual to achieve better prospects in their career growth.

The education system of Sri Lanka is categorized into five parts such as primary (Grade 1 – 5), junior secondary (Grade 6 – 9), senior secondary (Grade 10 – 11), collegiate or GCE Advanced Level (Grade 12 – 13) and tertiary (University) (Kamala Liyanage, 2014). Sri Lankan tertiary education system consisted of 15 universities, 7

postgraduate institutes, 10 other higher education institutes, and 1,138 vocational and technical education and training institutes (Kamala Liyanage, 2014). The university system in Sri Lanka operates within the framework laid down in the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 as amended. Undergraduate education in state universities is free but extremely competitive, limited and standardized, fewer than 10.5% (less than 11,000) of those who sat the general certificate examination (G.C.E A/L) and 16% (less than 16000) students of those who qualify to get admission to state universities. (University Grand Commission Sri Lanka 2013). University Grand Commission classifies the subjects available at G.C.E A/L Examination into six (06) main streams such as 1. Arts stream, 2. Commerce stream, 3. Biological science stream, 4. Physical science stream, 5. Engineering technology stream, and 6. Biosystems technology stream.

The majority of the university students are following Arts degree and second higher percentage of students are attending the Management.

Considering Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka, there are two faculties such as Faculty of Applied science and Faculty of Communication and Business Studies, and unit of Siddha medicine. Communication and business studies faculty divided into two major departments, those are Languages and Communication studies and Business and Management Studies. Department of Business and management studies is offering specialization in Marketing Management (MM), Human resource Management (HRM), Accounting and Finance Management (AFM), and Information Management (INT) from thesecond year of B.Sc. in Management. The students will prefer to choice their career (Departments) as their wishes, however, the Grade Point Average (GPA) will be considered (Trincomalee campus student guide book 2013/2014).



Source:- Undergraduate Enrolment by Academic Programme (2012-2014)

The choice of a major or specialization is one of the most important decisions a student has to make (Begg, Bentham & Tyler, 2008). An incorrect decision at initial stage with regards to the field of education may ruin the academic as well as professional careers of the student. The past records

from Department of Business and Management Studies reveal that the choice of marketing specialization among other specializations have been experiencing a turn down in majors (refer table 1).

	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
AFM	40	38	69	42	30	37	29	20
HRM	22	13	29	13	13	07	24	02
MM	05	-	04	-	-	-	-	10
INM	08	08	-	-	-	-	-	--
Total	75	59	102	55	43	44	53	32

Table 1. Specialization detail
(Source –Department of Business and Management Studies, Trincomalee campus)

Another issue worth mentioning is the changes on the quality of students that are attracted to a bachelor’s degree in marketing specialization. The marketing specialization students from the Faculty of Communication and Business Studies (FCBS) at Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka are facing these two major issues. It is perceived that many talented students select other programs early in their bachelor's; even they prefer marketing course. No research has been made in Faculty of Communication and Business Studies (FCBS) at Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka in order to identify the reasons why students do not wish to select a certain specialization program even they prefer the specialization.

This study is carry-out with the objective of understanding the factors which influence the choice of specialization in a group of management students of the Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study can be considered as quantitative research because researcher interested in identifying important factors and variables associated with the problem. The study population consisted of all students pursuing the undergraduate degree in faculty of Management at the Trincomalee Campus Eastern University of Sri Lanka. The target population consisted of 178 students of Faculty of Management form different state universities in Sri Lanka. The respondents in this study were undergraduate students. The sample consisted of 75 respondents from different majoring.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
PERSONAL	26.4091	3.92379
ACADEMIC QUALITY	33.5000	5.69670
JOB FACTOR	44.0909	5.55414
NATURE	20.1364	3.37068
INFLUENCE	25.0909	7.53979

Table 2. Specialization detail

As for the response of Personal factor, the mean value was 26.40 and the standard deviation was 3.92. According to this result, personal factors influence in the moderate extent to the course selection. The standard deviation of 3.92 is low value. This mean data were spread out over a small range of values.

When considering the Academic Quality, the mean value was 33.5 and the standard deviation was 5.6. According to this result, Academic quality factors influence in the moderate extent to the course selection. The standard deviation of 5.6 is high value. This mean data were spread out over a large range of values. When considering the Job related factor, the mean value was 44.09 and the standard deviation was 5.55. According to this result, Academic quality factors influence in the moderate extent to the course selection. The standard deviation of 5.55 is high value. This mean data were spread out over a large range of values.

As for the response of Nature factor, the mean value was 20.13 and the standard deviation was 3.37. According to this result, Nature factors influence the moderate extent to the course selection. The standard deviation of 3.37 is low value. This mean data were spread out over a small range of values. When considering the Influence factor, the mean value was 25.09 and the standard deviation was 7.5. According to this result, Influence factors influence in the moderate extent to the course selection. The standard deviation of 7.5 is high value. This mean data were spread out over a large range of values.

When considering all factors, mean values, and standard deviation, the researcher identified personal factor, academic quality factor and job related factor, nature factors and influenced factor influence in the moderate extent to the course selection in Trincomalee campus Eastern University Sri Lanka.

Based on the rigorous review of literature it is decided to have the independent variables; Personal interest, Sources of information, Nature of marketing, and Lecturer's style. In addition, according to Agbanu, S.K. et al., 2014, researcher select gender as a factor of influence the course selection. Reasons for researcher select gender as a factor is, most of the females are involve working and population distribution. In Sri Lanka, the current female population is 50.7% and the current male population is 49.3% (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016). Considering those data researcher decided to consider gender as a factor of influence the course selection.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This research utilizes literature and result as an effort to better understand not only how students choose their major field of study but also why many students do not select certain education program. The review results indicate the most important factors in the choice of major are Job factor and Academic quality.

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