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INTENTION TO DO RESEARCH IN UNIVERSITIES - A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Research has become the order of the day as survival and growth of organizations depend on new knowledge. Universities are a terrain for research as knowledge of students and teachers are pooled and facilitated by the existing infrastructure. Within this backdrop universities are expected to involve in research more and more but in contrast universities are concentrating more on teaching and practical training. Thus it is significant to identify attitudes towards research, role of supervisors in motivating research and gender differences in determining the level of research at universities. A significant number of studies highlight that student's attitudes towards research is a significant determinant in their decision to do research. Accordingly undergraduate and postgraduate students' beliefs, attitudes, self-efficacy, and motivation about research influence their interest in doing research. There are indications of female students' low involvement in research especially at the postgraduate level. Irrespective of the level of study academics have to play a key role in promoting research in universities.

KEY WORDS: *Research, Universities, Attitudes, Gender, Role of supervisors*

JEL: 123, 120

INTRODUCTION

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary research is 'studious inquiry or examination; especially: investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws.

Today we live in a continuously changing environment, and to be in par with the changing situations it is essential to have new knowledge. As the above definition highlights creation of new knowledge is the aim of research. Thus research has become the

order of the day as survival and growth of organizations depend on new knowledge. Much more than any other institution universities are a terrain for research as knowledge of students and teachers are pooled and facilitated by the existing infrastructure. With the increasing need and relevance of research the expectation is to conduct more and more research with in universities to serve the needs of the organizations within the ever changing environmental conditions. In contrast it is an alarming finding by Sachithra (2015), a trend in universities to adhere more to teaching and practical training rather than concentrating on research. Thus

it is timely and relevant to assess certain criteria such as attitudes towards conducting research that determine the degree of involvement in research by the universities.

It is worthy to note that we as writers came across with a difficulty in conducting this literature review as we could not find many articles written in this regard. It made us understand the significance of our study. Thus we thought of completing the article with the few existing literature so that we contribute to shedding light into a grey area.

Accordingly this study focuses on the existing literature on research conducted at undergraduate and post graduate level in universities and aims at identifying attitudes towards research, role of supervisors in motivating research and gender differences in determining the level of research at universities.

LITERATURE SEARCH

The discussion mainly focuses on attitudes of students towards involving in research, gender differences in conducting research and the role of supervisors in motivating students and their contribution within the research process. Effects of these different aspects at postgraduate and undergraduate level research involvements are discussed in two separate sections to understand differences if any at the two levels.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Attitudes

A significant number of studies were found in relation to student's attitudes towards research.

A study done by Lara Brongo Pacifici, Norman 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 expectations of 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, while not motivated to learn more about science, were motivated to help people, which is why most of them are pursuing medicine. 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 to learn more about a specific science topic and gain experience that may be helpful in graduate school research. The difference in the reasons students want to do undergraduate research may be used to tailor undergraduate research experiences for students planning to go to graduate school or medical school

Another study was done by Sachithra (2015). with the intention of understanding the research

interest of undergraduates of B.Com degree programme and to identify the factors that encompass undergraduates' research interest. Acknowledging the prior studies, the study identified that undergraduates' beliefs, attitudes, self-efficacy, and motivation about research could influence their interest in doing research.

Russell, Hancock and McCullough, (2007).found that the inculcation of enthusiasm is the key element—and the earlier the better. Thus, greater attention should be given to fostering research in Bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics of elementary and high school students.

Gender Differences

According to Sachithra (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 negative attitude towards a research.

Role of The supervisor

Vincentas Lamanaskas, Dalia Augienė, (2014) found that a sufficiently favourable environment is created in universities for carrying out undergraduate students' scientific researches. However, seeking to develop students' scientific research activity, it is necessary to modernize the studies, bringing them nearer to scientific activity, to search for new study forms and methods. It was also found that lecturer's experience and attention to student's scientific activity often has a decisive influence on student.

According to Russell, Hancock and McCullough, (2007),the large number and variety of students surveyed represented a variety of colleges and universities. Many types of undergraduate research experience fuel interest in Bachelor's degree in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics careers and higher degrees. No formulaic combination of activities optimizes the undergraduate research opportunities. Undergraduate research opportunities, nor should providers structure their programs differently for unique racial/ethnic minorities or women.

Lack of motivation dispirits the undergraduates' research interest and thus, academicians stand a significant role to play. With that understanding, academics may reinforce their discussion about the importance of conducting research and its relevance on making academic and professional career choices. Identifying factors that encompass undergraduates' interest towards conducting research assist academics to strengthen

their discussion about importance of research activity while modifying students' interest (Sachithra 2016).

A study done by Linn et al (2015) revealed that undergraduate students need mentors who are capable of orienting them to the practices and concepts of the lab in scientific research so that they will gain the total benefit of engaging in research.

It was found by Madan (2013) that most of the undergraduates in their first year are not aware that they have research as an option within their degree program and how to get involved in it. At this juncture it is the advisor/supervisor who can help these students to open the door to a research experience by explaining the process and future employment opportunities. Thus the advisor/supervisor has the capacity to ignite a passion for research.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Attitudes

A study done in relation to postgraduate students' attitudes towards research found that the male students perceived research relevance to the life significantly better compared to the female students. The study concluded that there is a dire need to revise the teacher education programs for developing positive attitudes in the students toward research. (Sadia Shaukat et al, 2014).

A study on master in education by Intzar Hussain Butt, Jahan Ara Shams, (2013) found that student teachers have a negative attitude towards research. A significant difference was found in the attitudes with respect to the type of program and prior areas of specialization. The paper demonstrates a clear need for focus on research into student teacher attitudes towards research

Gender Differences

Finding by Shaukat et al, (2014) highlights that the male students held positive attitude towards research at the postgraduate level.

ROLE OF THE SUPERVISOR

By assessing students' attitudes towards the research, teacher educators may be able to recognize what postgraduate students' attitudes towards research modifications to behaviors, attitudes and skills are required to assist the learning of research and foster a deeper appreciation of this subject in students (Shaukat et al, 2014).

There are certain findings which are common to both undergraduate and postgraduate level and such findings are given below.

According to Abid and Ahmed (2015) a significant difference cannot be found between female and male students on the measure of research attitude irrespective of whether they study at undergraduate or postgraduate level. However on the measure of achievement motivation and self-concept

there is a significant difference between female and male students.

A study conducted by Darwin et al (2016) in relation to cultivating a research culture in higher education institutions in Philippine has found that the faculty members' involvement in research and research activity in higher education institutions still prevails at a minimum level.

CONCLUSION

It is important to conclude that attitudes play a key role in conducting research whether the students are at the undergraduate or postgraduate level. Thus this is an eye opener for universities to think of ways and means to develop positive attitudes in students regarding conducting research. Taking prompt action in this regard is essential as changing attitudes is time consuming.

Gender differences in research involvement has contradictory findings. According one study, at undergraduate level there is no differences in gender in pursuing research but at the post graduate level male students are more interested in research. Less involvement of female students at the postgraduate level may be due to family commitments of females as wives and mothers. Thus it is important to encourage female students by providing them extra support to get involved in research. But another study found there gender does not affect students' research involvement. These contradictory findings might be having the roots in the cultural differences in the study settings.

Role of the supervisor in research plays a key role in harnessing research activities in universities irrespective of the level of study. This is again an important conclusion as it makes the academics understand the significance of their role in fostering research within universities. Thus academics should be self-motivated as researchers and also should be role models to students who set examples and guide the students in conducting research.

It is significant that future research in assessing the research involvement in universities address the following issues. Effective strategies to promote research both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Reasons underlying the gender differences in conducting research and barriers faced by academics in promoting a research culture in universities.

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