A Study of Factors Influences on Self-Directed Learning of Undergraduates (With Special Reference to Sri Lankan Universities)

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Article Information

Abstract

In 21st century, the ability to engage in self-directed learning (SDL) considered to be essential for university undergraduates to improve and frequently update their knowledge in modern world. The aim of this study is to identify the factors affecting for self-directed learning of management undergraduates in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted in qualitative research design on it way found and appropriates. Thirty management undergraduates from five national universities were selected by using convenient sampling technique. The qualitative data were collected through semi structured interviews. Thematic analysis technique was utilized for the analysis of interview transcripts with the support of NVivo 8 Qualitative Data Analysis software. This qualitative study came up with ten critical factors which effects positively and negatively for self-directed learning of management undergraduates in national universities. Those critical factors were language, interest to subjects/ topics, accessibility of resources, lecturing style and methods, friends' and others' support, time adequacy, student's perception, student's learning style, prior knowledge, student's future goal. Based on the findings, those factors were affecting to undergraduates for engaging in Self-directed learning or preventing from self-directed learning. The result of this research is a significant source for the education policy makers to change university education system to enhance self-directed learning of the undergraduates. Results of this study provide qualitative data to enhance literature related to factors affecting self-directed learning of the undergraduates.

Introduction

Self-directed learning is a learning style under the adult learning theory in Human Resource Development. It is dependent on the learner and the learning environment. It is the most suitable for learners pursuing higher education to getting new and more knowledge. Previous researchers have defined SDL based on their findings. SDL is a process by which learners manage their own learning process from beginning to end (Knowles, 1975) "Self-Directed Learning is any increase in knowledge, skill, accomplishment, or personal development that person who selects and brings about by his own efforts using any method in any circumstances at any time"(Gibbons, 2003).

A student is a learner or anyone who attends an educational institution and actively seeking more knowledge. Students enter universities after finishing their school with Advanced Levels. They come from an environment where teachers provide all notes, handouts, summaries and all things required for learning. Students also expect teacher centered learning at university like at the school. In the initial stage of the university, most of students expect face to face learning with lectures. Some of students have lack of new knowledge as they do not have the reading culture on their own. After finishing the lectures students do not search further more information, knowledge. They usually do not follow self-reading systems. Lecture notes provide limited knowledge to students. This is 21st century where the world has become more globalized with more technology and knowledge. Self-directed learning is essential for the learners in the 21st century as the classroom have been developed with creative and innovative methods of learning. The education system has become facilitators which gives the opportunity to develop student's critical thinking,

creative thinking and innovative thoughts which are required in their working environment. An undergraduate is a person who is consists with a vast knowledge. Self-directed learning conducting is essential for university students to improve their knowledge and update in dramatically changing modern world.

Problem Statement

Previous studies have shown that developing self-direction is essential for success in understanding one's own learning needs, as well as identifying goals for gaining knowledge and the proper resources needed to accomplish these goals (Candy, 1991) .All individuals are capable of self-directed learning but the level of their self-directed learning ability varies due to their individual differences, including learning motivation, self-efficacy, self-esteem, conscientiousness, openness to experience, even intelligence (Long, 2000). Demographic, discipline and personality factors are associated with Self-directed learning readiness in the study. Self-directed learning readiness increases with age, highest level of previous education, and most notably, with increasing scores in each of the 'big five' personality traits (Slater, Cusick, & Louie, 2017). Self-directed learning associated with academic achievement and personality traits (Cazan & Schiopca, 2014; Lounsbury, Levy, Park, Gibson, & Smith, 2009). Self-directed learning has been associated with academic performance of undergraduate and there was a positive correlation between self-directed learning and GPA and also between self-directed learning and course grade (Chou & Chen, 2008).

A preliminary survey about self-directed learning level of undergraduates of Uva Wellassa University which was done by using questionnaires to randomly

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selected 60 students in faculty basis. According to the outcomes, calculate percentages of self-directed learning level of students. In the faculty of management 45% from the sample is doing self- learning by using library and internet. Other 55% of the sample does not self- reference for study and they only using lecture notes. In the both faculty of science and faculty of animal science and export agriculture 80% from the sample is doing self-learning through references in learning. They use both library and internet for doing references, but most of students among them use internet than library. Other 20% from the sample does not references and they only using lecture notes for study. According to overall outcome, the self-directed learning level of students in faculty of management is lower than other two faculties.

It is identified that there is a lack of using self-directed learning method by management undergraduates in Uva Wellassa University although there are resources. Although allocate time period for library usage in time table all students do not use it. There is a performance gap. The researcher hopes to do the research by using also management undergraduates of other universities in Sri Lanka to study about why self-directed learning level is low in management undergraduates. Further researcher hopes to find 'What are the factors determine the self-directed learning of management undergraduates?'. According to that the purpose of this study was to identify the factors determine the self-directed learning of university management undergraduates in Sri Lanka.in the industry

Literature Review

Self-directed learning is one of the most important aspects of adult education and learning (Yuan, Williams, Fang, & Pang, 2012). Self-Directed Learning (SDL) defined broadly as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of other, to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, select and implement learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes"(Knowles, 1975). Wiley (1983) defined self-directed learning readiness as "the degree of the attitudes, abilities, and personality characteristics that the individual possesses for self-directed learning". According to Merriam (2001) Self-directed learning includes self-discipline, autonomy, effective organization, effective communication, acceptance of constructive feedback, engagement in self- reflection, and self-evaluation.

Several researches have been done related to self-directed learning involved in higher education in various sectors, such as medicine, nursing, architecture, web based technology. Self-directed learning influences learners' academic achievement in addition to success in language education (H. Kim & Kim, 2009; S. Y. Kim & Kim, 2005; Lai, 2013). Successful online learners have been found to be those who exhibits self-directed learning skills (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2004). Research conducted by Ramli, Muljono, and Afendi (2018) by using fourth year students of medical program of Tadulako University which result indicate that internal factors are mediator for the influence of external factors to the self-directed learning readiness. According to that external factors have an indirect positive effect on self-directed learning readiness of students through internal factors. Supportive family environment and supportive academic environment are external factors which are positively influence on motivate students to get achievement and increase their interest for learning.

Previous researches studies reviewed that there were many factors have been introduced influencing learners' satisfaction and ability to encourage self-directed learning. A study of a proactive evaluation of a self-directed English language for architecture students by Akaranithi (2007) revealed that, the impacts of educational institutions, learning environments, conducting relevant training, learning strategies and access to appropriate resources have been observed as an external factors influencing for self-directed learners. Learning styles that learners prefer relate to personality traits, motivation and readiness to take responsibility for their own learning, these have been stated as internal factors influencing for self-directed learning. The study conducted by Nurrokhmanti, Claramita, and Utomo (2016) showed that family and friend support, faculty facilities, problems encountered, peer relationships, and the environment influence of parents and friends are external factors influencing for self-directed learning readiness. Previous studies review that motivation played a critical role in influencing learners' autonomous learning readiness (Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002). Internal motivation of the students have important role for student self-directed learning readiness (Nyambe, Mardiwiyoto, & Rahayu, 2015). In the study of Das Carlo, Swadi, and Mpofu (2003) review that Student's family background and cultural factors may influence in students' motivation to self-directed learning. Another research of Leatemia, Susilo, and

van Berkel (2016) shown that Student's background and culture factors might contribute to the difficulties for students in self-directed learning. Number of students with a high level of self-directed learning readiness was lower in senior students compared to more junior students. Problem based learning process, assessments, learning environment, student's life style, student's perceptions of the topics, and mood were factors influencing Asian student's self-directed learning (Leatemia et al., 2016). Problem Based Learning process might support students having greater expectation to adopt the new learning environment and method (Leatemia et al., 2016). Self-directed learning predicts academic achievement. The study year of undergraduate is used as an efficient predictor, self-directed learners of third year students have higher academic performance than first year students (Cazan & Schiopca, 2014). There were factors that student prevent to be self-directed learning in their studying and they were categorized as (1) lack of a sense of responsibility and accountability, (2) poor reading culture, (3) insufficient computer literacy skills, (4) ineffectiveness of orientation program, and limited access to internet (Amushigamo, Amutenya, & Mwaalele, 2017).

Methodology

Research Design

This research was conducted in a qualitative approach. Qualitative research typically develops inductively through in-depth investigation. According to results of the preliminary survey, it was identified the problem, that self-directed learning level of management undergraduates was lower than others. The objective of this research was to identify factors influencing self-directed learning of management undergraduates. In order to achieve this objective, collect qualitative data by using semi-structured interviews for identifying factors influencing on students do or do not self- directed learning. And also data were collected related to undergraduate's experiences with learning activities which they perceived to be self-directed learning within their undergraduate time period.

Population and Sample

The population of the study includes all undergraduates who are following management related degree programs in Sri Lankan state universities. In presently, there are 15 universities in Sri Lanka, which are under the authority of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The sample size was limited to 30 management undergraduates which represented total population. Morse (1994) suggests that approximately 30 – 50 participants adequate for result of qualitative research, while 20 – 30 suggested by Creswell (1998) To reduce bias of this study undergraduate were selected from 5 national universities namely, Uva Wellassa University, Ruhuna University, Wayamba University, Rajarata University and Sabaragamuwa University. The researcher selected 6 management undergraduates from each selected universities. The sample unit of analysis was done in individual basis and a single undergraduate was considered as a respondent for this research study. The sample represents management undergraduates from only third year and fourth year. The researcher uses the convenience sampling technique for the study.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The study based on primary data. Primary data were collected from the sample by using semi structured interviews in qualitative nature. Qualitative researchers usually use "semi-structured" Interview for data collection which involve a number of open ended questions based on the topic that the researcher wants to cover (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2001). The interview was conducted using a conversational style and approximately 15 minutes allocate for interview an undergraduate. Semi-structured interview conversation includes both open ended questions and close ended questions. Open ended questions allow respondents to give meaningful answer and more information including their feelings, attitudes. Through open ended questions allow researcher to better access to respondent's true feelings.

Interview Guideline

Interview guideline was prepared incorporating findings of previous studies and general insight of researches. The semi structured interview guideline is shown below that was used as the structured questions taken at the interview. However several unstructured questions were asked occasionally from the respondents in order to obtain furthermore detailed information additionally shown below.

Firstly, demographic details of undergraduates are collected based on the gender, learning stream, academic year and university. Then the following questions were asked from the interviewees.

Interview questions

Do you prefer to study by yourself through searching studied materials?
If answer is "Yes",
    i.   Why do you prefer to do self-directed learning?
    ii.   What are methods/ ways do you use for self-directed learning?
    iii.   How often do you allocate time (hours) for self-directed learning per day?
    iv.   How do you apply self-directed learning methods in preparation for your examination in the examination period?
    v.   What are consequences have you got from self-directed learning in education compares to others?
    vi.   What are the factors influencing for you to do self-directed learning?
    vii.   How those factors influence on enhancing your self-directed learning skill?
If answer is "No",
    i.   Do you dependent only lectures?
    ii.   Why don't you do self-directed learning?
    iii.   What are reasons or difficulties you have to not to do self-directed learning?

Data Analysis

There is no one right way to analyze qualitative data, and there are several approaches available. Many qualitative analysis falls under the general heading of 'thematic analysis' (Lacey & Luff, 2001). Thematic analysis is a process of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns of qualitative data. Thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool for data analysis, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This technique was utilized for the analysis of interview data from the respondents to identify factors influencing for SDL of management undergraduates. Nvivo 8 is a Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) computer software program. It is support for carried out the analysis process.

Using the NVivo 8 software the transcribed conversations, patterns of experiences and motives were listed using direct quotes or paraphrasing common ideas using the software and corded into nodes. All of the talk that fits under the specific pattern/ node is identified and placed with the corresponding node. Sub themes were created under main themes identifying specific patterns of statements within the theme itself. Nodes/ themes that emerge from the informant's statements are pieced together to form a comprehensive picture of the Self-directed learning. By referring the related literature, the theme statement was formulated to develop the exploratory study results, the factors affecting for Self-directed learning of management undergraduates.

Result and Discussion

The researcher identified factors affecting for SDL of management undergraduates in order to achieve the research objective. There are positively and negatively impact for students to do SDL or not to do SDL. According to Thematic analysis technique these interviews data were transcribed and categorized by using descriptive and open coding technique. Identified factors are categorized into different themes as follows.

Summary of the themes

1. Reading culture
    1.1. Language
    1.2. Interest to subjects or topics
2. Learning environment
    2.1. Accessibility of resources
  2.2. Lecturing style and methods
    2.3. Friends and other support
3. Time adequacy
4. Student's perception
5. Student's learning style
6. Prior knowledge
7. Student's future Goal

Reading culture

Reading culture is a major aspect of improving self-learning ability. Undergraduates can improve or get additional knowledge by searching information through reading. Students tend to read more if they can understand language well and if they have interest to subjects or topics. If they have language problems and not interesting to reading, they do not tend to do adapt additional reading.

Language

Normally in university academic system is conducted in English language. Hence, students tend to read if they can understand English well. In this study students revealed that there is lack of reading culture among students, because of the language problem.

"I have a language problem. All lectures are conducted in English. Pronunciations of some lecturers who are studying at foreign universities are totally different. Some word pronunciation of them is very different, so some words are not clear to us."

"As books are in English language, even refer it is difficult to understand for me. And they are not going into my mind like someone explains it to me. "

Respondent 2, personal interview, 2018

"We have more shortcomings like English. Therefore have to improve English while do the subjects. We studied both O/L and A/L in Sinhala medium but at once have to study English medium in university. So there is no time to do additional things than studying subject and English."

Respondent 21, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

According to above statements of the respondents, review that reading culture is highly affected for the SDL style of undergraduates. Thereby the language is a major aspect and most of the respondents expressed the negative effect of the language for SDL. Because of the language barriers, the undergraduates' resistance to read and their reading culture is diminished due to the language problems. The difficulty of understanding the English language, made the respondents lazy to read more on their studies. According to the findings of Je Ilogho (2015), the reading culture is highly influenced on SDL and the language, which is a component of reading culture, plays a vital role in SDL. As the past scholars found from their research studies, the current research findings also supported to that. It means as cited in literature, the reading culture is highly considerable. Further the current researcher has identified that the language barrier is one of the major issues faced by the university undergraduates to be reluctant to SDL. Language is one of the major barrier to achieve individual goals in Sri Lankan institutions. According to Wickramanayaka (2012) the language problem faced by individual lead to result less performances.

Interest to subjects or topics

Students expressed that, the reading culture is positively influenced for SDL because of the interest of the individuals to the subjects and the subject related matters. If they feel that the topics are interesting and they want to know more on that topic, they tend to read more on that topic.

"I am interested in Banking and finance because it is field that update every day. Therefore I do self- learning to update my knowledge."

Respondent 11, personal interview, 2018

We learn interesting subjects very happily. Those subjects are followed by with the help of downloaded videos from the YouTube in internet that type of one subject is E-Tourism. Another one is hospitality management. I have Tourism management, E-tourism, hospitality management, consumer behavior and marketing subjects. We study those subjects interestingly."

Respondent 23, personal interview, 2018

Some of the respondents think that the university curriculum is not matching with their preferences. One of them expressed that they are engage in learning because they have to pass the end semester examinations. Other than that there is no any interest of learning those subjects and it leads them to reluctant to read.

"In my opinion, there are no interest subjects in the current university education system. As we need to pass the examination we learn, but the learning matters in our university system are not our interested ones. I think, if the subject is interested there is no matter, but if it is not interested we do not self-learning."

Respondent 6, personal interview, 2018

According to the responses of the undergraduates, the researcher has identified that most of them are refuse to read because of the large and heavy scope of the reference books. They stated that in order to find a small subject matter they have to read a large book. Due to the uninteresting nature of the individuals to read that much of large books, they demotivate to read more on subject matters.

"Even, we have additional reading books which are large. So, sometimes……..at that time, to get small knowledge about something, we are not tending to read a large book. Recommended books are large, we have to refer."

Respondent 4, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

The findings stated that both the positive side and the negative side of reading. According to the respondents, when they are having interesting subjects and interesting topics, they tend to read more. But, when the subject matters are not interesting, they are reluctant to read more on the subject and it leads to the diminishing nature of SDL.

Learning environment

When evaluating the learning environment, accessibility of resources, lecturing style and methods, and friends' and others' supports are considered.

Accessibility of resources

According to respondents' statements library facility, Wi-Fi facility for access to internet in university is caused for most of students for engaging in SDL. Some of example statements extracted from transcripts as shown below. Those are indicated how to this factor affect in positively for SDL of students.

"We have Wi-Fi facility and lots of books in the library. Both of them are motivation factors for us."

Respondent 14, personal interview, 2018

Some respondent further explained about advantage gained from using internet for SDL, as follow,

"We have free Wi-Fi facility in faculty. So we get into internet and download videos. We do self-learning as we have free Wi-Fi."

"[...] Look the videos related to the lessons. We have to learn German language. We have to learn it by looking videos in you tube. Then we got additional knowledge than lecture"

Respondent 23, personal interview, 2018

"We look what happen in front office, what happen in housekeeping, what happen in food & beverage through a video and get into mind instantly quicker than lecture. It is better to look videos than hearing lectures. We get a lot of knowledge through lecture. But videos get into mind very easily."

Respondent 23, personal interview, 2018

Another student remarked that, limited accessibility of resources was caused for prevent some students to be self-directed in their learning or reduce their SDL level.

"[....] internet facility is available but difficult to reach it as it is only in the lab. We have lower Wi-Fi facility and we have not free Wi-Fi. So we have to pay google search also. Therefore discourage to do it. There is not Wi-Fi for hostel so we have to go to the lab in the campus for searching. So we have to pay ourselves for searching.

Respondent 15, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

According to Most of respondents out of 30 respondents said accessibility of resources is affecting them to engage SDL in academic of the university. Therefore it is a factor which positively affected to do SDL. Previous researcher review that, the learning context is one of the major factor influencing SDL and the students' motivation the strategies they used to learn, the way that they utilized the resources will highly influenced on that (Song & Hill, 2007). On the other hand it is also a factor affected as negatively for some of them, because difficulties of access to resources such as limited access to internet, lack of books available in library. Kaufman (2003) Indicated that, SDL develop when there is a balance between learner and the environment. But, if it lacks of independence and lack of resources in the environment, it may be not successful. Hence difficulties of access to resources are a barrier to students to engage SDL.

Lecturing style and methods

Most of respondents said that, they move to SDL, if they have given assignments and other similar classroom tests. The lecturers use them to stimulate the undergraduates towards the SDL. Therefore, they assign some assignments to the students to engage in further learning.

"Aa... As we are Business management student lecturers ask question in practical side also and additional question more than the theory. Therefore self-learning is very useful."

"I want more self- learning to write the answer for the assignments and to complete the case study successfully."

Respondent 10, personal interview, 2018

When considering the negative side of the responses, some of the respondents are thinking the negative aspect of lecture patterns and methods. They think that when the lecturers are providing everything, and the exam papers are based on those notes, the students are demotivated to search beyond that.

"Some lecturers give slides only others give printed notes only. We note down important things when slides are presented and other than that do not refer more on the subject matter."

Respondent 9, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

According to the research findings, the lecture patterns and lecture methods have a considerable impact on the SDL. Past literature review that most of the cases the role the teachers' become narrow while the students have to play a wide and big role in learning(Nunan, 1988). The teacher have to just help and guide the students, but the students have to find more based on that guidance and the teachers just support to enhance the skills and knowledge. The students have to be involved highly in enhancing their skills and knowledge (Warschauer, 1998) (Srisa-An, 1998). According to the findings of (Amushigamo et al.) some of the individuals prefer lecture notes and they think that lecture notes will pursue them for SDL, while some of the respondents think the opposite side of that. In contrast, the current research also stated that the two sides of the lecture patterns, styles and methods. Some are demanding and expecting to be given handouts, summaries, notes, and slides that lecturers use during lectures and they think that it will positively influenced on their knowledge enhancement while some are think that such notes are sometimes just skeleton notes (key words) to guide the presentation of the lecturer, and one would argue that they will learn nothing from them.

Friends' and family supports

Some of respondents expressed that their learning environment is supportive to their SDL initiatives.

"Batch mates explain difficult things to us and have close relationship with senior batch. So we can easily collect tute and notes."

Respondent 8, personal interview, 2018

Another student remarked that, the supportive nature of the family members is also a stimulator to SDL.

"My parents provide me all the books that I need to do the self-learning."

Respondent 10, personal interview, 2018

"As my mother works in public library I have a chance to use more books"

Respondent 14, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

Respondents stated that the external parties' support is highly appreciable and it leads them to SDL. As the friends are always support to clarify the unknown things, the undergraduates are feeling easy when searching more on the subject. And as well as the supportive nature of the family members, it is a huge assistance and stimulator to enhance the ability and adaptation to SDL.

Time adequacy

When considering the problematic situation related to the time, almost all the respondents are experiencing time inadequacy and it resulted them to not tending towards SDL. Time inadequacy resulted due to many reasons. Engage in extracurricular activities is a major issue faced by the university undergraduates and it makes them busy with their studies.

"As I allocate more time for sports practicing, I haven't time for study and also then become lazy for study.

Respondent 2, personal interview, 2018

 "We study only lecture notes. Because, we do extra curriculum activities, sports in the university. With doing those activities, we haven't save a separate time to do self-learning for us. Therefore we do not self-learning."

Respondent 25, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

Most of the respondents within the sample were experiencing the time limitations to engage in SDL. Because of the tough schedule of lecturing, extracurricular activities, and other personal matters, the respondents faced difficulties in doing SDL. Previous researches findings review that time was a factor that resist to willingness to be self- directed and there was a perception that consume more time for self-directed learning (Leach, 2000). Time as a cause factor for resistance to learner controlled learning (Clifford, 1999).

Student's perception

Some students thinking patterns about SDL are different. They do not consider more about their own learning. In the university education, most of students still depend on lecture notes handouts, learning materials provided by lecturers. They do not tend to search additional information by using own effort.

 "I haven't sufficient marks to get a class in degree. So Tutes and notes are sufficient to pass examinations. Therefore I do not search more."

Respondent 17, personal interview, 2018

"Lecturers do not ask additional things other than syllabus. Additional things are not coming for examination. Therefore don't want to search more."

Respondent 21, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

Most of time students in the university depend only lecture notes, because they believe and know that lecturers prepare papers for the examination based on only the lecture notes. One respondent remarked that she need only pass the examination, no need to get higher marks and referring lecture notes are sufficient for that, therefore no need to do SDL.

Student's learning style

Students follow different learning styles which were affected as positively to do self-directed learning. Few sample quotes of respondents as below review that how their learning style is affected to their SDL.

"Mmm… use you tube videos more than group discussion. If those not useful, then move to read a book."

"I like visual videos more because there is attractively created visuals and can get new knowledge."

Respondent 12, personal interview, 2018

"In the exam period …… do past papers. Also we have our own short notes. Look the videos related to the lessons. We have to learn German language. We have to learn it by looking videos in You Tube. Then we got additional knowledge than lecture"

Respondent 23, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

They said that normally they watch videos which are improving knowledge. Some of them said that, they do more SDL in the examination period. In the study leave some are studying individually, but some are most like to do group discussion than study in individually. In Tai architecture students prefer to study independently, when working on their project work, however with some guidance of their teachers (Akaranithi, 2007). Therefore undergraduates' learning style can be identified as a motivating factor for SDL. Individual learning styles is a positive influencing factor for SDL and Felder, Felder, and Dietz (2002) stated that individual should implement & maintain different learning style in order to achieve the success. (Maung, Abas, & Abdullah, 2006) stated that the individuals gain more from learning through team working and it benefited more from learning through team working further (Felder & Spurlin, 2005) stated that the individuals can learn more by working with peers and they can grab the knowledge of peers.

Prior Knowledge

After the completion of the Advanced level before entering to the universities, there is a short time period. During that time period, most of students tend to follow professional courses like AAT, CIMA, Charted Accountancy, intention with adding professional qualification. As follow professional courses students have prior knowledge about some subjects when entering into universities. According to extracted sample quotes transcripts, revealed that the prior knowledge of students how to importance when learning in university.

One respondent expressed,

"[…]I have followed several professional courses such as charted, banking, charted security analysis to obtain knowledge. Actually…..that knowledge is very important when I study in the university. Normally I can understand lesson in somewhat extent due to this prior knowledge. Then I encourage searching more"

Respondent 11, personal interview, 2018

Another respondent said,

"I have followed courses like AAT before entering the university. I had prior knowledge about all the subjects learn in university without two new subjects up to second year. So.., I do not need to new effort to learn these subjects. We had learned subjects before, such as Tax, Marketing, HRM, Advanced finance, Finance reporting. Therefore, I do not need search additional knowledge about those subjects."

Respondent 7, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

One respondent reveal that student's prior knowledge get from professional courses is important when studying subjects in university and that is motivate him to search further more knowledge. But another two respondents said that they do not need to search more information about many subjects which they have learned at university, as they have prior knowledge about them. Therefore prior knowledge can be identified as a factor affecting for not to do SDL.

4.1.7. Students' future goal

Based on the future career plans, most of the students within the sample have followed professional courses and some are currently following

professional courses. In order to fulfill the requirements of those professional courses they tend to engage in SDL. Almost all of them have stated that because of their future intention, they tend to SDL.

"I try to go ahead in HR side. Now I follow HR degree in IPM and additional to that I search about HR subject, as I interest it."

Respondent 9, personal interview, 2018

"I do private course on accounting packages."

"Yes, interest means we have to work with computerized accounting systems in the job. So that is interested and essential. Therefore I learn more"

Respondent 18, personal interview, 2018

Discussion

Findings revealed that most of the respondents are engaged in SDL because of their future goals and objectives. They stated that as they need to achieve their career plans, they stimulate to engage in SDL. Some of respondent are following professional courses, with studying in university with intention to achieve future career goals and some are hope to follow professional courses in future. It also caused for some undergraduates to pursuing in SDL.

The study disclosed that how leadership styles of apparel industry impact on employee engagement. Further, the researcher has used the job stress as the mediating variable to identify the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement. When it comes to the summary of the research findings, if the leadership styles are using in Apparel companies, they can increase the employee engagement within the organization. This study found that leadership styles important to increase employee engagement of middle and operational level employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Among the selected leadership styles, product orientation leadership style takes an important place. Another finding is there is a positive relationship between independent variable and mediator, and two positive relationships are having between mediator and dependent variable and independent variable and dependent variable. Further, the researcher has identified that there is a mediating effect of job stress in the relationship between leadership styles and employee engagement in apparel industry in Sri Lanka.

Conclusion

According to findings the researcher can be identified factors influencing to do self-directed learning as well as reasons or difficulties affecting for not to do self-directed learning of management undergraduates by analyzing collected qualitative data. Finally, after the analysis of the study the researcher conclude that; language, interest to subjects/topics, accessibility of resources, lecturing style and methods, friends' and family supports, time adequacy, students perceptions, students learning style, prior knowledge and student's future goal are the factors determine SDL of university management undergraduates.

Recommendations

The result of the study was identified factors influencing student self-direction in learning and review how these factors affected positively and negatively for the self- directed learning. Recommendations described as follow to persuade and improve self-directed learning of undergraduates. These recommendations provided based on responses and suggestions provided by respondents of the sample.

Educators should change the teaching design, lecturing style in higher education entities and motivate students to be self-directed in their learning. The educator should facilitate the opportunity for seminars, group discussions, group projects and should assign more individual and group assignments, case studies. Further educators should change the university academic curriculum by adding interesting subjects, and practical subjects such as, green and social Entrepreneurship, Eco Tourism. Administrator universities should create an appropriate learning environment for undergraduates to engage in self-directed learning by providing free Wi-Fi facility and enhancing library facility. Undergraduates can move to the new learning methods for the self-direction in the learning. They can get additional knowledge from virtual learning, practical training and field visits.

Knowledge and Practical Implications

Throughout the current research findings related to self-directed learning (SDL) will be provide a real guide to the future scholars as it enhance the existing literature on SDL. The results of the study further enlarge the literature related to the factors influencing self-directed learning of university undergraduates. And also the result of this research is a significant source for the education policy makers to change the learning and teaching patterns, academic curriculum and create appropriate learning context in higher education system to enhance self-directed learning of undergraduates. Further, the current study will guide the undergraduates for SDL and the stimulating factors to SDL will persuade them for SDL.

Directions for Future Researches

Future researchers can be conducted the same study by getting more samples and expanding to other regional universities in Sri Lanka. By this study find what are factors influencing self-directed learning of university management undergraduates. This research study also can extend to about what are the methods can be applied to improve SDL of university undergraduates.

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