IMPACT OF HOSTEL STUDENTS' SATISFACTION ON THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SRI LANKAN UNIVERSITIES

UL. Mansoor[1] and MAM. Hussain Ali[2]

[1] Welfare Unit,
[2] Department of Management
South Eastern University of Sri Lanka
mansoorseusl@gmail.com, hussainali31@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate the impact of hostel students' satisfaction on their academic performance in Sri Lankan Universities. The selected sample for the study contained 367 final year hostel students from two universities in Eastern Province, Sri Lanka using random sampling method. A questionnaire survey was administered. The level of measuring variables was interval and the relevant statistical techniques for these measures were univariate analysis, and bivariate analysis. One hypothesis was tested to assess the empirical relationships among variables. The overall average hostel student's satisfaction was 3.29 with significantly greater P values and the average GPA of the hostel students was 3.054 with significantly greater than the normal pass. Looking at the overall association among the variables it was observed that there is a significant positive correlation between the student's GPA and overall satisfaction factors (r.= 0.632). Finally, these findings may lead to making some recommendations to improve the present level of satisfaction of students in hostels which might lead to an increase in their academic performance.

Keywords: Hostel Students' Satisfaction, Hostel Facilities, Academic Performance, University Hostel, Eastern Province

INTRODUCTION

The government of Sri Lanka faces a momentous challenge every year to accommodate and maintain the hostel facilities in the universities. Within the higher education sector, there is a large increase in the student intake every year. Therefore, the importance of hostels facilities for university undergraduates has substantially increased. Since, it is believed that the facilities provided in the hostels for the students have some impact on their academic performance. In Sri Lanka there is hardly any research regarding hostel students' satisfaction and their academic performance. The lack of satisfaction in the hostels have motivated many generations of students to take action against the unsatisfactory conditions and many unfortunate incidents of student militancy was originated in the hostels (Weeramunda, 2008). Further, lack of general knowledge, experience, maturity, lack of practical skills and analytical ability as well as ill-equipped teaching, classroom environment, financial difficulties, poor residential facilities and lack of communication between students and teachers have been identified as main factors handicapping students from fully enjoying the benefits of university education (Ariyawansa & Perera, 2005 as in Perera, 2013). These show the need for depth research on Hostel Students' Satisfaction in universities of Sri Lanka. The objective of the paper is to investigate whether hostel students' satisfaction influence on their academic performance in the Sri Lankan universities.

In Toyin et al. (2013) the study measured how students are satisfied with hostel facilities. It considered the students' residential satisfaction on their satisfaction with the hostel facilities in relation to their needs, requirements and experiences. Nurul et al. (2010) also identified factors related to the accommodation satisfaction. These are the availability of study-bedrooms, washrooms (i.e., bathrooms and laundry rooms),

pantry, leisure rooms (i.e., study areas, computer centers, television lounges, meeting rooms, and a 'musallla', or a prayer room for Muslims).

Scottk (2012) describes the general understanding prevalent in the literature when stating that "most people know that academic performance generally refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies, but there are quite a number of factors that determine the level and quality of students' academic performance". John and Kahn. (2002) goes on to argue that if any researcher wanted to measure college students academic performance for college admission or for scholarship grants, the appropriate tool is only their GPA. According to these all previous studies, GPA is an exact measurement to evaluate students' academic performance.

In attempting to measure factors related to the university students' satisfaction with their hostels and how such factors are associated to their academic performance. According to Flores-Gonzalez (2005), student experiences in both the in-class and outside of their class environment, on and off the campus contribute to educational attainment and personality growth. Zahran (1972) noted that "superior student housing promotes students interactions between roommates of different backgrounds and specializations that contributes to wider students' knowledge and student outcomes."

Hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between hostel students' satisfaction and their academic performance. The following conceptual framework can be developed (see Figure. 01):
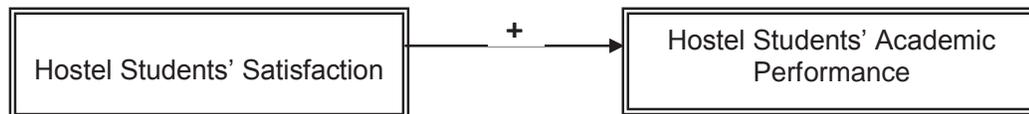

Figure 1 Schematic Diagram of Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The researchers were interested in investing whether hostel student's satisfaction relates to their academic performance. The study focused only the final year students including general final year students. The total final year hostel students population of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) is 412 (SEUSL Annual Report 2013). The total final year hostel students' population of the Eastern University of Sri Lanka (EUSL) is 293 (EUSL Annual Report 2013). 367 questionnaires, amounting to 52% of the total students population, were distributed among the hostel students (214 for SEUSL and 153 for EUSL). Thus, as stated above, the sample size was calculated as a random selection of the sample containing 52% from the total population. Structured questionnaire was developed and distributed among the selected students in the two universities in Eastern Province in Sri Lanka. It was possible to collect 341 from these two universities. According to the Cronbach's Alpha values for the test reliability was assured.

Mean and standard deviation for hostel students' satisfaction is 3.28694 and 1.33452 respectively and mean and standard deviation for the students' academic performance is 3.0548 and 0.44934 respectively. The overall average hostel students satisfaction was 3.29 and Confidence Interval (CI) is (95 % CI 3.26, 3.31) which is significantly greater than the neutral value 3 ($P < 0.000$). This implies that students are satisfied with facilities provided in the hostels but not strongly. The average GPA of the hostel students was 3.054 (95 % CI 3.00, 3.10) which is significantly greater than the normal pass ($P < 0.001$). No significant difference in GPA was observed between the two universities. This average GPA comes under the Second class lower division and this

implies that the hostel students get Second class lower division as average. (See Table: 1 and Table: 2):

Table: 1 Descriptive statistics for Hostel Students' Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Hostel Students' satisfaction Total responses	341	3.28694	1.33452
Valid N (listwise)	341		

Table: 2 Descriptive Statistics on the Perception of Students' Academic Performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students' Academic Performance total_responses	341	3.0548	.44934
Valid N (listwise)	341		

(Source: Sample Data) SPSS 16.0

The results of the correlation test are given in the following table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between hostel students' satisfaction and their academic performance

Pearson Correlation coefficient	0.632
Sig. (Two-tailed)	0.000
N	341

(Source: Survey Data) SPSS 16.00

The probability value (P= 0.000) is smaller than the desired level of significance (0.05), the found correlation coefficient (r= 0.632) is statistically significant. Hence alternative hypothesis can be accepted while rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is statistical evidence to claim that there is a strong relationship between Hostel Students' Satisfaction and its Academic Performance. Therefore, increasing the intake in the universities in the Eastern Province without necessary steps taken to improve the substantial distribution of these factors will result in negative performance in their academic performance. Consequently, the study finds that accommodation, food, inmate cooperation, library facilities, safety & security strongly influence on the students' academic performance.

CONCLUSION
Therefore, there is statistical evidence to claim that there is a relationship between Hostel Students' Satisfaction and its Academic Performance and the level of Hostel Students' Satisfaction in the universities is moderate implying that it greater degree of improvements are needed to reach the level of very high. This study identified seven factors relevant to students' satisfaction on the hostel facilities. These seven factors are accommodation, medical facilities & location of hostels, sports facilities, food facilities, inmate cooperation, library facilities and, safety & security. Out of these seven factors, five factors significantly influence on the academic performance of the students. These factors are accommodation, food facilities, inmate cooperation, library facilities and safety & security. These five factors have to be improved in the university hostel in future for the high level of hostel students' academic performance. Areas for further research can focus such as this study can be extended to cover all universities under the UGC in a macro level study will cover all the dimensions, which affects the students' academic performance and the study can cover all other first, second and third year students for carrying out further studies from the viewpoint of all students.

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