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

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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

1. 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. 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. Therefore, this study attempts to enumerate a relationship between the hostel facilities and the student's academic performance. For this, two universities of the Eastern Province in Sri Lanka such as Eastern University of Sri Lanka (EUSL) and South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) were selected for study and their hostel facilities were related to the students' academic outcome.

In Sri Lanka there is hardly any research regarding hostel students' satisfaction and their academic performance other than the following few researches related to undergraduates: "Gender and Type of Residence as Determinants of Undergraduates' Academic Performance" (Weligamage, 2007a). The other research is *"Relationship between Type of Residence and Undergraduates' under the theme Social Realities and Natural Environment in Sri Lanka: Insiders' and*

Outsiders Academic Performance" (Weligamage, 2007b) and "Problems Faced by Undergraduates in the Learning Environment: Some Evidences from a Sri Lanka University" (*Perera, 2013*). In addition, the researcher couldn't find any evidence about to what extent the hostel students' satisfaction is established and the effectiveness of hostel students' satisfaction on their academic performance in the universities in Sri Lanka. Therefore, one has to seriously look into the hostel student's satisfaction and its relationship to academic performance to understand the related problems and truly comprehend what is at stake as far as the higher education policy is concerned. Therefore, the researcher has understood that there is a gap to find the degree of hostel students' satisfaction and there is any relationship between hostels students' satisfaction and their academic performance in Sri Lankan Universities.

In specific the following research problems were addressed in this research paper:

1. To examine the impact of hostel students' satisfaction on their academic performance in the Sri Lankan universities.
2. To identify the effectiveness of hostel facilities;
3. To make recommendations related to the factors to be improved to enhance students support services of the hostel.

The objective of the paper is to investigate whether hostel students' satisfaction influence on their academic performance in the Sri Lankan universities.

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Hostel Satisfaction: 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. They further highlighted that students satisfaction with hostel facilities directly depends on whether the rooms are furnished with mattresses and pillows, tables and chairs for studying, wardrobes, air-conditioner or ceiling fans, shoes racks, railings where towels can be hung, mirrors for dressing, waste bins, effective lighting system and adequate electrical outlets. 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). These findings were confirmed by another study carried out by Nurul and Nazirah (2011) that identified students' satisfaction generally being based on the availability and ease of access to Student Hostel Facilities (SHF) that included the following Student residential satisfaction (SRS): The students' actual experience were measured based on perceived satisfaction in following areas: 1. study-bedroom 2. washroom: toilet, bathroom and laundry 3. pantry (kitchenette) 4. common and recreation room, study room computer room, television room meeting room, prayer room *(musallla)* lobby 5. support services vehicles parking lot, cafeteria, mini market and mini bookshop, ATM machine and public phone, CCTV surveillance system, security guards, lifts/stairs, electrical wiring, water supply, garbage disposal and fire safety. Based on the above criteria, they found that the "satisfaction level of residential students leads to a significant relationship between overall satisfaction and loyalty behaviour".

Moreover the Nurul et. al (2010) specified that residential satisfaction among students stems from high-quality facilities, positive roommate relationships,

strong floor communities and quiet study environments in their living accommodations. The study highlighted the importance of roommate cooperation as an important factor that determined the student satisfaction. Taking a little different approach in analysis, Fatemeh, Nadia, Ahmad and Zahra (2010) explored the difference in the satisfaction levels of students living in hostels within the campus and those who lived in hostels outside the campus and found that satisfaction levels vary between these two groups of hostel residents due to the different characteristics of those two hostels. They found that satisfaction with fees charged, distance from university facilities, room safety, room size, hostel security, and hostel facilities were the most important factors which predicted undergraduate students' satisfaction with their hostel.

Muhammad et al. (2011) measured students' satisfaction about hostel and boarding. They used four different variables as 1. availability and condition of rooms, 2. mess and dining, 3. behavior of hostel staff, and 4. overall study environment. In addition, medical facility was measured through four different variables as 1. availability of doctors, 2. availability of medicines, 3. availability of ambulances, and 4. availability of emergency staff and medicines. Sports facilities were measured through four different variables as 1. availability of sports grounds, 2. coaching facilities, 3. availability of sports equipment and 4. sport development opportunities during the off university hours. Thus, it was revealed from a majority of research that the student satisfaction directly depends on how efficiently the hostel is managed and how promptly services are provided. This satisfaction could be related to various aspects as providing accommodation facilities, necessary infrastructure of the hostels, quality of study environments, on the responses student's problems and queries. The fulfilment of the all above components will lead to the students' hostel satisfaction.

Academic Performance: Scottk (2012) describes the general understanding prevalent in the literature when stating that "most people aware 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". James (2005) highlighted that during their presence in the classroom students may learn many things. But, the primary objective is for them to acquire mastery over their academic content related to their curriculum. In order for teachers to know whether students are achieving learning outcomes, the teachers are generally required to not only assess students' knowledge in predefined methods, but also to summarize their assessment into a summery statistic or numerical grade. This is known as "summative" evaluation. As a result of this summative evaluation teachers will place a grade on a grade sheet indicating what level of content knowledge a student had achieved in their examination. This is expressed as Grade Point Average (GPA) score the student obtained. Besides , most of the researchers namely Zimmerman (2003), Maureen (2006), Isak (2003), Blimling (1989), Weligamage (2007) and Turley and Wodtke (2010) worked their way up to measure the students' academic performance by means of grade point average (GPA) of the students.

According to Mushtaq and Khan (2012), most of the researchers around the world used the GPA to measure the students' performance. They use GPA to measure students' performance in a particular semester. Shawn (2001), Ogbebor (2012), and Ali et al. (2000) explained that measure student performance through the results they obtained in a particular subject during a particular year as well as their previous years GPA. Here, 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.

This study attempted to identify 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. Flores-Gonzalez (2005) found that the availability of better classrooms, spacious laboratories certainly emphasizes academic knowledge acquisition among other things while comfortable campus residence, helpful campus administration, or organization offered significant contributions towards positive student outcomes. Consequently, the research found that better learning environments linked with favourable residential facilities can be intentionally designed to promote student educational outcomes. 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."

Hence, all these arguments show that there is a relationship between the hostel student's' satisfaction and their academic performance. These arguments lead to a hypothesis as follows:

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
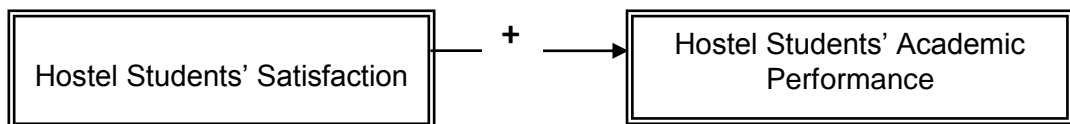
2. METHODOLOGY:

Study Design: The researchers were interested in investing whether hostel student's satisfaction relates to their academic performance. There was no intention of establishing definite cause effect relationship between the two variables. The type of investigation of this study was correlational rather than causal. Because this study attempted to analyze the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable, this study was analytical in nature or purpose. Study was conducted in the natural environment of the university with direct interference by the collect data during the normal flow of work.Hence, the extent of research interference was high as this study was a field study. 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). The sample size larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research ((Sekaran (2004) as in Hussainali and Opatha, (2008)) in this study, 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. Selected

sample size for the study was 367 (n = 367). 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. There was a hypothesis of the study. It was about relationship between two variables, and hence the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation technique was used. The data analysis of this study involved two types of analyses i.e., Univariate analysis (involving one variable at a time) and Bivariate analysis (involving two variables at a time). Under the Bivariative analysis, parametric tests were used because the data were collected on interval scales and data was normally distributed. Pearson correlation coefficient was used by the researchers to reveal the strength of two variables.

The Cronbach's Alpha values for the test reliability for the dimensions of hostel students' satisfaction such as accommodation, Medical Facilities and Location of Hostels, Sports Facilities, Food Facilities, Inmate Cooperation, Library Facilities, Safety Measures are 0.846, 0.838, 0.883, 0.855, 0.776, 0.770 and 0.702. In this study the Cronbach's Alphas were more than 0.70 for all the factors studied and therefore the reliability was assured.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hostel students' satisfaction and their academic performance have been reviewed by the researchers and found that the few dimensions of hostel students's satisfaction must be improved. Based on the result of Univariate analysis, the degree of systematic quality level of each dimension of hostel students' satisfaction and academic performance is as follows (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		

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. A further study can be recommended to compare this GPA with day scholars' performance.

The hypothesis formulated for the study was that hostel students' satisfaction is significantly and positively related to their academic performance. The appropriate statistical test was Pearson Correlation Coefficient in order to test alternative hypothesis. Desired level of significant level was 0.05. 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

The probability value (P= 0.000) is smaller than the desired level of significance (0.05) and the 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. The study found empirical evidence to support the hypothesis of Hostel Students' Satisfaction is significantly and positively related to their Academic Performance.

The objectives of this study have been met as outlined earlier. The aims of this research have been achieved that how students' hostel satisfaction factors affect their academic performance. The recommendations in the light of findings of the research for improving academic performance through hostel satisfactions will uplift the students' academic performance of the Eastern Province universities.

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.

With respect to the accommodation factor, the universities should allocate only the stipulated number of students within each room and the right amount of furniture according to the room size and their requirements. In addition, to make the hostels noise free and conducive to studies during the night and day, the authorities should implement and make students adhere to hostel rules and regulation against disturbances and noise making. In further the universities in the Eastern Province can consider providing apartment type hostel residences for 5 or 6 students to share living in a single block with a kitchen, two toilets and bathrooms, study hall and corridor. This may fulfil most of the shortcomings in present system of university accommodation.

Good quality meal should be provided by canteen. Students are strongly dissatisfied with the food within the universities because poor quantity and quality of food and the poor service of the canteens. Regarding the room and hostel safety the over crowdedness remains the main threat to student safety. Also, there are concerns about safety during the night when they walk from study hall and library alone to their rooms. Therefore, the study recommends that the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) surveillance system to be installed at main entrance, corridors and staircases to be monitored by security and hostel authority to prevent minor or major offences in the hostels. Concerning the library facility, the library authority can setup at least one separate reading room with the facilities needed for studies to remain opened for extended hours than usual. This will greatly fulfil the hostel students' study hall issue. It is also recommended the installation of CCTV surveillance systems to monitor student activities.

As far as the inmate corporation is concerned, sports clubs, intercultural groups, book reading circles, etc. have to be promoted among the hostel students and their participation should be encouraged in these activities. There should be students appointed to look after the cleanliness and hygiene in the hostel in a rotating basis. They would be entrusted with the responsibility to holding biweekly meetings where student issues can be reported. These can also discuss their ideas and promote cultural activities among the students. These committees will be able to coordinate overall hostel sports as well. These recommendations can be focused to upgrade the university hostel facilities so that students' hostel satisfaction will be increased.

4. CONCLUSION

Therefore, there is statistical evidence to claim that there is a relationship between hostel students' satisfaction and their academic performance. The study found empirical evidence to support the hypothesis of hostel students' satisfaction is positively related to their academic performance. A finding derived from univariative analysis if 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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