

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH AS A SUBJECT IN HOSPITALITY UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Research is an important and essential part of any industry or institution. It helps in discovering new ground breaking facts about existing subjects and systems. Research is an important part of undergraduate curriculum.* **Objective:** *To understand the importance of research as a subject in hospitality under-graduate courses.* **Methodology:** *Data was collected by means of a questionnaire which was filled by the hospitality undergraduate students (n=200).* **Results:** *The findings of the study revealed that 76 % of respondents accepted that research is an important subject for undergraduate, 54% respondent accepted its benefits in skill developments. Among all respondents only 21% respondents showed interest in becoming researchers in future. Overall the students felt the importance of the subject. However, very few showed interest in pursuing research as a career.* **Conclusion:** *There is a need to sensitize students to increase the awareness and promote research not only as a subject but as a culture.*

Key Words: *Research, Researcher, Academic Importance, Personal and Social Enhancement.*

INTRODUCTION

Research is a careful study of a subject, especially in order to discover new facts or information about it as defined by oxford. Research can be also termed as the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions. (Oxford, 2012)

Critically analysing and clearly articulating a problem can yield highly innovative solutions and opportunities. Researchers that ask correct questions and define the problem with more rigors can create or formulate strategic advantages and unlock truly ground breaking solutions that can be better termed as innovation. Inquiry is an important component of education. The need of education is realized when one understands their inability to infer. Starting research at an early age has its own merits and demerits. With experience researchers develop an understanding of system and eventually evolve over time, the quality of work gets improved and the error margin and its occurrence are reduced (Madan, 2013).

It was observed that at various levels, research being an important part of the undergraduate curriculum, the seriousness and enthusiasm towards the subject was limited. The importance of the subject is vast

not only in the curriculum but also in their personal and social development. Research enables the students to analyse problems, produce data for their sources and to devise and implement possible solutions. The subject also teaches to build a way of thinking and questioning the system what, why and how for various problem statements. Research not only helps to devise a problem statement; it also develops the following aspects of the individual:

1. **Psychological aspects:** Inter and intra personal development of an individual on an intellectual level. It also puts mind on a vigorous exercise of reasoning, questioning and analysing one's observation.
2. **Social aspect:** It helps the students to develop a stature among the society. It also allows one to meet different kind of people and in understanding their mind-sets. It also gives a development to visualizing and inferring ideals.
3. **Philosophical aspect:** The skill to question and reason makes the research to develop and look into existing systems, enhance error correction chances and to make suitable reforms.
4. At a high level, working on research is awesome because the students get a chance to preview and invent the future. In classes, summer internships, and *most* full-time jobs one will get after graduation, are either studying the past or doing work that will be immediately used in the present or near future. In industry, the main priorities for junior employees are to deliver projects with near-term value in the coming week, month, or year. Only in a research one can prototype high-risk ideas that are five, ten, or even twenty years ahead of the state-of-the-art in industry. Sure, every individual researcher gets to work on only a small, specialized part of a bigger research problem. But just getting the chance to participate is an interesting opportunity. One of the main purposes of college is to expand the intellectual horizons, and hands-on experience in a research lab is a good way to do so. The broader ideas one will be exposed to in a research lab might transfer over to future professional life in unexpected ways, even if one don't end up working in the same subfield.
5. A more concrete benefit of doing research is the chance to rapidly improve technical skills in a realistic setting outside of the classroom. This makes the researcher learn new programming languages, libraries, tools and techniques on-demand to meet project requirements. This sort of hands on knowledge can't easily be taught in textbooks or classes, since it requires an authentic setting where people are doing real work and not just present with known results. If all works out, working on research will feel like a super intensive yet satisfying lab class where one complete an innovative project that one is proud of. The student will also get to practice writing up and presenting the work to an audience, which is great training for many kinds of jobs. The researcher might also get credited as a co-author on a published research paper, which is important if one

want to pursue a Ph.D. in the future. And best of all, since working as an apprentice, usually get one-on-one mentorship from a more senior researcher. This sort of personalized interaction rarely happens in even the smallest and most intimate of university classes.

6. One final benefit is the potential for professional advancement. If one do compelling work, then the research advisor can write recommendation letters and make personal referrals to get either a good job in industry or admitted into graduate school. (Denecke, 2006)

Below are some suggestions to the undergraduate students mentioned by Gonzales and Cammack (2013) on “The benefits of Research in Undergraduate Education”

Pick a topic that excites, and make sure to develop a project that is reasonable and doable at the undergraduate level. If not passionate for the project, then don't get trapped by it. Start project early, be persistent and find suitable research mentor. Ensure project is well designed, subject to be narrow and with a time frame. Ideas are challenged and such set backs are often frustrating.

For those undergraduate students who are not required to conduct research in their academic experiences, it is strongly recommended to get involved in research project. There is no substitute for the pedagogical rewards earned through conducting original research. These activities are an essential component of any science, and lends itself to intrinsic lifelong value.

As often, the undergraduate experience is greatly enriched by obtaining research experience early. Recently this has been demonstrated empirically and discussed at length in a variety of disciplines, including but not limited to engineering (Narayanan, 1999), Medicine (Murdoch-Eaton et al., 2010), Biology (Reynolds et al 2009), Physiology (Desai et al., 2008), Neuroscience (Frantz et al 2006), Psychology (Dickson, 2008), as well as in multidisciplinary discussions in prestigious journals (e.g., Carrero-Martinez, 2011; Russell et al 2007). However, there are numerous benefits of involving research as a curriculum in undergraduate programs. It helps in developing an insight towards the world of reasoning and improvement, the ability to think out of the box and question the system of its reasons.

The subject helps the student to investigate the existing definition of a subject and dive deep into the core of the subject. It not only develops an insight but also, a better understanding of various other phenomena attached to the topic and its core ideal. This eventually ends up improving the standard of understanding and performance of a student in college irrespective of the core stream.

This study helps us to understand the importance of research as a subject in under-graduate hospitality courses and to understand the existing system and propose necessary reforms in order to convey the importance of this subject and the reason of its practice.

Objectives:

1. To study the importance of research as a subject in undergraduate courses.
2. To understand the awareness among students towards research as a subject.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted among hospitality colleges in Delhi. The subjects were undergraduate students (n=200). The participants were in the age group of 18 to 22. For the present work questionnaire was formed and research methodology used was quantitative with purposive sampling. The research instrument used was questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions to evaluate and examines successful practices for understanding the culture of research in undergraduate as well as the awareness and interest in research as a subject. Only completed questionnaire were accepted for data analysis. Statistical analysis included frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 200 student respondents. The age group of respondents was 18 to 22. All of them were asked a set of 10 questions based on research, importance of research in academics and career building and also taken the feedbacks for future. The analysis of questionnaire is as follows :

Table 1: Importance of Research in Academics

S. No.	Parameter discussed	Response	
		Yes n (%)	No n (%)
1.	Is Research Important	152 (76)	48 (24)
2.	Awareness towards research	140 (70)	60 (30)
3.	Research helps in improving education quality	124 (62)	76 (38)
4.	Research helps in Inter/Intra personal skills	120 (60)	80 (40)
5.	Extra advantage in recruitment for research students	110 (55)	90 (45)
6.	Better job opportunity	100 (50)	100 (50)
7.	Research club in college	0 (0)	200 (100)

S. No.	Parameter discussed	Response	
		Yes n (%)	No n (%)
8.	Research subject should be introduced	160 (80)	40 (20)
9.	Any research paper published	40 (20)	160 (80)
10.	Research helps in career enhancement	120 (60)	80 (40)

Most of the respondents among students i.e. 76 % accepted that research is an important subject for undergraduate students whereas the rest 24% did not agree. However, the next question notifies that 30% i.e 60 students out of 200 are not even aware about the research component of curriculum, thus the importance of guiding and counselling the students towards research as a subject further increase. From the analysis, it was observed that 62% and 60% respondents accepted that research helps in improving education quality and inter and intra personal skills respectively. It was requested by 55% students that research students should be given extra advantage at the time of recruitment whereas 45% totally disagreed. Exactly half of respondents agreed that research can help them to find better jobs.

Among all respondents only 21% respondents showed interest in becoming researchers in future. When the students were asked about existence of any Research club in college, all of them said No, but they got motivated to have one in future. 80% of the respondents agreed when they were asked whether to introduce a research subject in their curriculum or not? It was a very important feedback to be received. However, 20% of the students already have research publications in journals. Finally when the last question was asked that whether “Research helps in career enhancement or not”? Majority of respondents i.e 85% gave the response in favour and rest 15% against. Based on the result analysis it was observed that research is a very important subject and it is an essential part of the curriculum.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that majority of students felt the importance of research as a subject even though the awareness was subjected to the exposure given by the institute or curriculum. Students accepted that research as a subject is not only for the academic, but also helped in improving individual personality and the ability to get better job. Special facilities like research clubs and workshops will help students to develop the research culture in the institution. Students also showed interest in promoting culture and spread the awareness among other students. Hence, research is a very important part of the curriculum and should be promoted not only as a subject but also as a culture.

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