

The Effects of External Factors on Self-directed Learning Readiness of the First Year Business Undergraduates

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Self-directed learning is predominantly important in tertiary education in many ways. Mostly, it shifts the roles of conventional teacher-centric education system to student-centric education system. It has been a need for many years, yet still is not at a satisfactory level. As a promising institute, Faculty of Business, University of Moratuwa pays a higher consideration on identifying factors which facilitate self-directed learning. Hence, this research paper is solely dedicated to examine the effects of external factors on self-directed learning readiness of business faculty undergraduates. The undergraduates show more than 50% readiness to become self-directed in pursuing their higher education needs. Yet, several external factors such as availability of academic infrastructure, academic environment, university sub-culture, course work schedules and students' background and cultural factors have an impact on self-directed learning readiness. A mix method was used to obtain the results. The questionnaire was prepared based on the Self-directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) developed by Guglielmino. It was initially distributed among 86 first year, first semester undergraduates where 78 valid responses were obtained. It measured the level of self-directed learning readiness among business faculty undergraduates based on a Likert scale varying from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). Further, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted to find out more insights pertaining to the study from random undergraduates of the business faculty. Based on the results obtained, it can be concluded that the administration should facilitate undergraduates to become more self-directed in learning by retaliating the external factors.

Key words: *Self-directed learning, Tertiary education, Undergraduate education*