HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

Attitudes of Undergraduate Students Toward Pursuing Postgraduate Courses: A Demographic Analysis in Bengaluru

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Abstract

University Education is the prime point for the all-round development of country. It offers Post Graduate Courses and Research in different disciplines which significantly contribute to the development of the country. The attitude of the undergraduate students becomes pivotal in pursuing postgraduate courses. Hence, the present study was undertaken to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate students in Bengaluru toward pursuing postgraduate courses, with a specific demographic analysis of gender, location, academic stream, and family type. The study involved a quantitative descriptive survey method. Undergraduate students studying at Colleges in Bengaluru city are the population of the present study. A sample of 100 undergraduate students was selected through purposive sampling. The researcher constructed and content validated Undergraduate Students Attitude Scale Towards Pursuing Postgraduate Courses. The study found that both male and female students have equal level of inclination towards pursuing postgraduate courses. However, science students, rural students and joint family students respectively found to have more inclination towards pursuing postgraduate courses than arts students, urban students and nuclear family students. Overall, the study found out that undergraduate students in Bengaluru are found to have highly favorable attitude toward pursuing postgraduate courses, mainly with the expectations of better job opportunities and salary. The study advocates for active role from colleges and universities in reaching out and motivating undergraduate students to pursue postgraduate courses.

Keywords: undergraduate students; university education; postgraduate courses; attitude towards pursuing PG courses; Bengaluru

1 Introduction

A nation's growth mainly depends upon its human resources. The power of human resources of any society or country can be made out through the kind of education offered to them. Higher education provides manpower to country for growth in all spheres. Colleges and Universities are the part and parcel of higher education.

University Education is the prime point for the all-round development of country. It offers Post Graduate Courses and Research in different disciplines which significantly contribute to the development of the country. University Education has been promoted since long in every five-year plan of our country right after the independence. University Education can be taken up by all streams of the education. Owing to the advent of technology and increase in the complexities in society and professional sphere, pursuing university education becomes an inevitable necessity on the part of undergraduate students.

2 Need and importance of the study

University plays a vital role in the economic development of the country. Studying at university helps the students to achieve a successful career, as it provides advanced knowledge, confidence, academic and technical skills, and social skills at higher level. Studying at university encourages creative and independent thought among students. University life exposes students to other cultures and backgrounds. It increases the confidence in doing what an individual envisaged primarily. University education enables the students to possess extraordinary qualities such as professional competency, communication skills, team-spirit, innovation, hard work and time management which helps to build the foundation for a career. In addition, university education helps in developing new skills and expanding the social network among the students.

Attitude is a powerful motivational process that energizes learning, generates interest, guides academic and career trajectories, and is essential to academic success among students. Thus, the attitude of the undergraduate students becomes pivotal in pursuing university education. It is important that undergraduate students should have suitable attitude towards pursuing university education. Hence, the present study was undertaken to investigate the attitudes of undergraduate students in Bengaluru toward pursuing postgraduate courses, with a specific demographic analysis of gender, location, academic stream, and family type. The study is important to various stakeholders including universities, teachers, parents, and policymakers—as it examines undergraduate students' attitudes toward pursuing postgraduate courses and the challenges that hinder student success.

The findings of the study can be helpful for the decision makers to understand the obstacles, problems and the issues of the undergraduate students which are affecting their decision of taking up the postgraduate courses. The study can provide recommendations for a clear path to convert the challenges into opportunities and also manage the huddles which come in the way of undergraduate students in pursuing postgraduate courses.

3 Literature review

The researcher reviewed previous studies and found main research gaps in terms of lack of studies on examining the attitudes of undergraduate students towards pursuing postgraduate courses in Karnataka in general and Bengaluru city in particular. Hence the present study was undertaken in Bengaluru.

4 Objectives of the study

- To construct and content validate scale to measure the attitudes of undergraduate students toward pursuing postgraduate courses.
- To find out how the attitudes of undergraduate students toward pursuing postgraduate courses vary according demographic variables.
- To suggest measures for university authorities to promote postgraduate courses to undergraduate students.

5 Variables of the study

- **Dependent Variable:** Attitudes towards pursuing postgraduate courses
- **Demographic Variables:** Gender, Subject, Residence and Family

6 Operational definitions of the key terms

- **Undergraduate Students:** This implies students who are pursuing undergraduate courses like science, arts and commerce. They include male and female, urban and rural students.
- **Post-Graduate Courses:** It implies the education given by university in the form of postgraduate courses and research in different disciplines.
- **Attitudes towards Pursuing Post-Graduate Courses:** It implies feelings, like and dislike, interest, concern and opinion of undergraduate students towards pursuing post-graduate courses.

7 Research design

The present study involved a quantitative descriptive survey method. This method was chosen to collect quantifiable data on attitudes of undergraduate students toward pursuing postgraduate courses without influencing them in any way.

7.1 Population and sampling

Undergraduate students studying at Colleges in Bengaluru city are the population of the present study. A sample of 100 undergraduate students was selected through purposive sampling.

7.2 Research instrument

The *Undergraduate Students Attitude Scale Towards Pursuing Postgraduate Courses* is a five-point Likert scale constructed and content validated by the researcher. It has 20 statements both positive and negative. The level of responses for the scale included Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

8 Results of the study

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in the attitude towards pursuing a postgraduate course between final-year undergraduate male and female students.

The results are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Attitude of undergraduate students towards pursuing a PG course based on gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance at 0.05 Level
Male	50	46.84	4.644	0.945	NS
Female	50	46.02	4.008		

Note: NS = not significant at the 0.05 level.

The obtained t-value 0.945 is less than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 Level of Significance. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that both male and female final-year undergraduate students have similar level of attitude towards pursuing postgraduate courses. Thus, it proves that gender did not influence the level of attitude towards pursuing postgraduate courses among final-year undergraduate students.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in the attitude towards pursuing a postgraduate course between final-year undergraduate science and commerce students.

The results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Attitude of undergraduate students towards pursuing a PG course based on subject.

Subject	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance at 0.01 Level
Science	50	47.68	4.688	2.997	S
Commerce	50	45.18	3.578		

Note: S = significant at the 0.01 level.

The obtained t-value 2.997 is greater than the table value 2.32 at 0.01 Level of Significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that science and commerce final-year undergraduate students differ in their attitude towards pursuing post graduate courses. The mean value of science final-year undergraduate students is more than commerce final-year undergraduate students. Thus, it proves that science undergraduate students have more inclination towards pursuing postgraduate course than commerce undergraduate students.

H_{03}: There is no significant difference in the attitude towards pursuing a postgraduate course between final-year undergraduate urban and rural students.

The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Attitude of undergraduate students towards pursuing a PG course based on locality.

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance at 0.01 Level
Urban	67	44.955	3.816	3.401	S
Rural	33	48.394	5.154		

Note: S = significant at the 0.01 level.

The obtained t-value 3.401 is greater than the table value 2.32 at 0.01 Level of Significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that urban and rural final-year undergraduate students differ in their attitude towards pursuing post graduate courses. The mean value of rural final-year undergraduate students is more than urban final-year undergraduate students. Thus, it proves that rural undergraduate students have more inclination towards pursuing postgraduate course than urban undergraduate students.

H_{04}: There is no significant difference in the attitude towards pursuing a postgraduate course between final-year undergraduate nuclear and joint family students.

The results are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Attitude of undergraduate students towards pursuing a PG course based on family type.

Family	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Level of Significance at 0.01 Level
Nuclear	74	45.595	4.438	3.425	S
Joint	26	49.654	5.440		

Note: S = significant at the 0.01 level.

The obtained t-value 3.425 is greater than the table value 2.32 at 0.01 Level of Significance. So, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. This means that nuclear and

joint family final-year undergraduate students differ in their attitude towards pursuing post graduate courses. The mean value of joint family final-year undergraduate students is more than nuclear family final-year undergraduate students. Thus, it proves that joint family undergraduate students have more inclination towards pursuing postgraduate course than nuclear undergraduate students.

9 Educational implications

- The colleges should arrange for university campus visit for its undergraduate students. This apart from demystifying advanced study environments, can help them to understand the importance and modalities of pursuing postgraduate courses for career advancement.
- The colleges should periodically invite eminent teachers from different disciplines of universities for guest lecturing as well as career talk.
- The colleges should invite its postgraduate alumni to share how advanced degrees directly improved their salaries, job titles, and hiring prospects.
- The colleges should take initiative to organize parent-teacher meeting and aware parents about the importance of pursuing postgraduate courses by their wards.
- The colleges should have a dedicated space for displaying the courses offered by various universities.
- The college library should have subscription for high-quality journals that essentially showcase the publications by the faculty from universities.
- The college faculty through class talk should orient and motivate the undergraduates to pursue postgraduate courses.
- The college should invite career experts who can highlight the emerging trends in various disciplines offered by universities.
- The colleges can conduct seminars and workshops for its undergraduate students. They can invite the experts who can aware the students about the importance of various postgraduate courses in their career.
- The colleges should aspire to seek postgraduate centers in their campus which gives a better educational and career goals for aspiring undergraduate students.
- Colleges should bring research dimension particularly for final year undergraduates. They should involve undergraduate students in faculty-led research projects, lab work, and academic publishing. This can motivate them to continue the streak by opting for postgraduate courses.
- The universities and institutions offering postgraduate courses should build an online presence and make use social media for reaching undergraduate students.
- The faculty of the colleges should share information about scholarships, fellowships, and graduate assistantships, such as national schemes or trust grants.

10 Limitations

- The study is confined to 100 undergraduate students of science and commerce studying in degree colleges in Bengaluru city.
- The study is confined to examine the attitude of undergraduate students towards pursuing postgraduate courses in relation to their gender, subject, locality and family.
- The study used a self-constructed and content validated undergraduate attitude scale towards pursuing post-graduate courses.

- The study did not involve examining the influence of any independent variable on the attitude of undergraduate students towards pursuing postgraduate courses.
- The data analysis of the study was done through only quantitative means. It involved only mean, standard deviation and t-test for statistical analysis.

11 Conclusion

The present study was undertaken in Bengaluru to examine the attitude of the undergraduate students towards pursuing postgraduate courses. The study found that both male and female students have equal level of inclination towards pursuing postgraduate courses. However, science students, rural students and joint family students respectively found to have more inclination towards pursuing postgraduate courses than arts students, urban students and nuclear family students. Overall, the study found out that undergraduate students in Bengaluru are found to have highly favorable attitude toward pursuing postgraduate courses, mainly with the expectations of better job opportunities and salary. The study advocates for active role from colleges and universities in reaching out and motivating undergraduate students to pursue postgraduate courses.

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