

**HOW THE UNIVERSITY ACCOUNTING EDUCATION CREATES VALUE TO THE  
CAREER WITH RELATE TO THE BSC. ACCOUNTING (SPECIAL) DEGREE,  
UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA**

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**ABSTRACT**

Accounting profession takes a significant place in the modern dynamic business environment. An accounting professional can be created either through academic qualification or professional qualification. University education has taken a high value for professional qualification. Not only university education but also professional institutes have introduced different types of professional accounting courses. University accounting degrees have designed with educational and training process relating to the accounting courses and this study tries to emphasize how the university accounting education creates value to the career.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of the value addition of the BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree programme of the graduate's career. (In The University of Sri Jayewardenepura) This study has focused on the value of the above degree and how it helped the graduates to create value added for their career.

Data collection was done through unstructured interviews and when it reached the saturation point, conducting interviews had been terminated. Throughout the research the ultimate objective has accomplished although this degree programme created value addition to the career, interviewees have suggested some important areas which should be developed and changed to the degree programme.

**Keywords:** The BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree, Value Addition, Career, Accounting Education

## Introduction

In modern higher educational context, not only government universities but also private organizations offer various types of accounting degree programmes. In normal situation students who get high marks for the Advanced Level examination in Commerce Stream enter into the government universities and they mostly prefer reading accounting degree, students who unable to get that chance mostly apply for accounting degree programmes which are offering by the private sector. Under these circumstances there are lots of students read accounting degrees in a modern-day context. Nowadays there is a rapid increment in relation to the number of accounting degree holders in job market rather than the earlier society. Hence it has opened a door for generating high competition in job market regarding the accounting professions.

In accordance with the literature review, some researchers identified that some university degrees have mismatches with careers and some areas should develop. According to the research, the university's role is more generic skills. There is obviously developing their basic technical skills in accounting, financial, reporting, Corporations Act, corporations' law, tax, and researcher guessed the universities should concern of enhancing the student's communication skills. They will be required obviously to do written and oral presentations throughout the course. Universities basic word, excel to some extent their self-confidence, their motivation and maybe those sorts of skills. Howisen & Hancock (2014)

And also using different strategies researcher found out whether there is a partnership between the university and the accounting profession to suit the local needs of the country. According to researcher's findings, he found that the lack of coordination among educational institution has created a demand for British Professional qualifications which are not very applicable to need of the country. Finally, the researcher suggested that educational authorities in Sri Lanka Should consider more seriously that the partnership between the university and the accounting profession is extremely important for producing competent accountants who can contribute effectively to the nation's development process. Yapa (2000).

According to above situation, this study focused on identifying the way how accounting graduates think about accounting degree programmes and its value addition process for their career. To carry out this study the researchers have selected University of Sri Jayewardenepura among all the government universities because it is the best management faculty in Sri Lanka. Due to that, accounting graduates of this university became the research population. Data collection was done through unstructured interviews and when it reached the saturation point, conducting interviews had been terminated. The saturation point was met after conducting interviews with 40 graduates. According to the interviewee's point of views, this degree programme created value addition for the career.

## **Research Problem**

Accounting is an integral part of every business. Accounting professionals help to ensure that firms are run efficiently, public records are kept accurately and taxes are paid properly and on time. Therefore Accountants professions are played a major role in the job market.

While always a great choice, an accounting degree in today's marketplace offers an even bigger pathway to new opportunities and industry. This study focused on the Accounting Education with relating to the BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree programme. It addressed the question of, whether the University Accounting Education creates value additions for the career in relation to The University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

Researchers focused on the following question raised by the articles relate to the University Accounting Education. The findings of the articles are mentioned in the literature review. The referred articles were not addressed the value addition create by the University Accounting Education. So the researchers found the gap between articles and the existing situation and developed the research on the following question.

“Do you think University Accounting Education creates value additions for the career in relation to the BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree of The University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka”? Majority of the interviewees are following and already completed Professional courses, so they could differentiate the both academic and professional Accounting Education accurately. By addressing this research question from the unstructured interviews, researchers were able to get ideal answers for the research question.

## **Objectives of the Study**

To find out the importance of the BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree programme offered by The University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka and its value additions for the career of the graduates. And also to find out the special courses and programmes which create value addition and to find out new suggestions from the graduates to improve this degree programme.

Based on the research question this study addresses the following research objectives.

1. To find out the courses offered by the department which create value addition to the degree programme.
2. To find out the importance of the internship programme which helps to improve practical skills of the graduate.
3. To identify how this degree programmes is able to improve Information Technology skills.
4. To identify the activities conducted by the department to improve graduate's soft skills.

## Literature Review

In recent years, many universities in developed countries have changed their environment, Structures, Strategies, and processes. These actions also change their core values, fundamental missions, and overall operations. The study applies Neo-Institutional Sociology in theoretical approach of research into university environments and changes over recent decades. NIS contents that organizations pursue legitimacy, approval, and funding from their general environment and culture. Also, universities in many developed countries have been operating in both government and public sector bureaucracy. It called New Public Management furthermore its key features are a focus on outcomes & related value for money in government expenditures etc. The main consideration of government and community philosophy is reducing government's direct role in the provision of social, educational, health and other services. The especially higher education sector is consideration of marketization of government through reducing the government funding, grants, and subsidies.

Also, higher education researchers and commentators agree that universities have corporatized and commercialized. As a result, university objectives now reflect a private sector corporate philosophy and also academic language has increasingly been replaced with corporate and business language. Furthermore, they identified professors as middle managers, courses, and programs as saleable product and student as customers.

The corporatization of universities carries both advantages and disadvantages. In more recent times, the global financial crisis has impacted on university funds and investments, therefore corporate university approach to managing that issue they are downsizing the scope of degree programs and associated academic units.

University corporatization and its drivers have returned to the role of accountability, as a result, it affects to the university missions, philosophies, and strategies. That financial accountability more focuses on both the traditional forms of cost allocation and budgeting as well as more other techniques like balances scorecard and total quality management. These are reflected the market-based approach for universities Larker (2011).

According to the making accounting degree fit for universities, its cover four main areas such as Accounting curricula and pedagogy, Accounting's relation within universities, to professional accounting institution and student expectation and accounting academics.

This makes the arbitrariness of capitalist ideology and its structure of us appears natural, perpetuates taken for granted perceptions of reality and alternative mission of what is possible. They are not alone in resisting, theories accounting and not just through the lenses of neo-classical economics and examine accounting ethical and moral basis and whether it serves the public interest.

Much accounting education overly inculcates technical skills and rote, rule-based learning other than positive economics and agency theory, ethics and morality, and is overly concentrated on the interests of private capital. They concentrate on the needs of investors and managers of large western listed companies to the neglect of public sector, and non-government organizations poorer countries. The environment is civil society and broader stakeholder engagement. This leaves much accounting education in a historical, theoretical and moral.

Solving problems under uncertainty, developing good communication and interpersonal skills and being creative should include in accounting courses. Hopper (2013).

The aim of this study is to investigate the relative personality preferences of accounting and non-accounting graduates seeking to enter the professions. It was prompted by the debate surrounding reason changes to professional entry requirement and firm recruitment strategies, which are intended, improve opportunities for non-accounting graduates to enter the professions.

A significant motivating factor for these developments has been commonly needed to increase the pool of talent available to the professions. Strong competition for staff and slow growth in the number of accounting graduates have meant that the supply of accounting graduates has not kept pace with the demand for such individuals. Another influential motivating factor has been a perceived need to increase opportunities for attracting individuals with more “Breadth and Depth” to enter the professions.

Generally speaking, researching personality preferences is concern with investigating identifiable traits that can be associated with certain individuals or groups to facilitate and appraisal of their personality and the consequent effect this is likely to have on certain behavioral tendencies such as attitudes, orientation to the world and decision making style

Accounting profession is relatively extant literature examined several interesting issues including the personality “type” professional accountants, the effect of personality preferences on decision making performance in various accounting base context, the personality type of accounting student and the impact of accounting student personality traits on learning and the effectiveness of different approaches to classroom instruction in accounting courses. Andon & Roebuck (2010)

According to teaching accounting as a language issue makes it three special issues dealing substantially with accounting education. This is in addition to similar special issues in other leading accounting journals, not to mention the various journals devoted entirely to the topic. The reason for this accounting education is structural. We accounting educators sit at the confluence of societal forces, the tradition of university education the advocacy of the accounting profession, the hunger of the capital market, the demand of employers, the regulatory impulses of government and the business school rankings that whether we like it or not safe this research.

Accounting education which offers to students gives a chance to engage in accounting critically, teaching accounting as a language.

This learning experience allowed students to create a non-technical, non-academic response to the Enron debacle. In analyzing the implication of this assignment look at the role of universities in reproducing coax of the established social order like another instrument of knowledge of the social world schools and universities are powerful political instruments of social conversation. They help reproduce the dominant system of which they are the product.

Universities, particularly because of the credentialing that is endemic in higher education today, produce cognitive dissonance in students as they encounter the dominant system of beliefs. They further Argive that open-ended assignment like the one they describe open students the chance to recognize their own cognitive dissonance and deal with it on their own terms.

They want to Argive that recognizing accounting as a language a teaching student not only the unique calculative grammar of that language but also the structure the condition under which accounting narratives are written position them to be informed, critical readers of those narratives.

Finally, when we have identified the nature of accounting as a language such as distinctive features are open noted, measurement, unlike other languages accounting, has a fixation with measuring everything and using currency to do it , distinctive grammar of accounting is arithmetic hierarchical categorization, metaphor, after categorizing everything that goes to into the story and measuring it in a currency.

Treating accounting as a language and drawing on literary theory to examine financial statements directly address these issues. Graham (2013)

Teaching learning and learning outside the circle is addressed the development of corporate university is an element in the suite of “economically rational public policy changes promulgated in recent decades. Working from a position that the practice of accounting is centrally implicated in the changes, it is contended in this paper that the accounting, and accounting education, can, in fact, play a part in challenging these positions.

In this paper, it has been considered that how accounting education and accounting academics might respond to public policies and privacy policies. Interviews and research articles are used as the data collection method.

These findings are collected such as Accounting academics who seek to broaden the perceived disciplinary boundaries within which they work will face undoubted resistance in this endeavor from both students and academics colleagues, The great bulk of accounting students may not initially seek or appreciate the consciousness raising, engaging, enlightening, and emancipatory

critique that might be offered in “critical” accounting classes. They may even resent being confronted with it. Indeed, it is likely that this will be the case, given the non-creative, rote learning, practice-oriented, bean counting stereotype, which many students seem to associate with accounting and Accounting academics play conflict roles. Most, of course, are themselves the product of conventional accounting education programs, into which they self-selected with pre-existing stereotypes about accounting, and they have been socialized into the existing system through their own education. Boyce (2004)

The Marketization of Accountancy is among the field that has experienced this marketization process which took place mainly in the 1980s and 1990s when neo-liberalism ran rampant. The researcher had used Actor-network theory and Callon's process of translation as main theories to conduct their research. Actor-network theory is the sociology of association that explores and traces actors' new association when social transformation occurred. In Callon's process of translation as a preliminary moment follows by four moments such as Problematization, underassessment, and enrolment and mobilization. The researcher had used semi-structured interviews method and a collection of documents method to develop the research. He identified Professional service marketing been more debated than in accounting And also he found Marketing initiatives reallocate accounts' attention from technical skill and ethical preoccupation to self-promotion and representation, consequently transforming and weakening accountants traditional professionalism, There are competing forms of professionalism at play, the role of accountant is now largely defined by neo-liberal values which seem to increasingly overshadow professional and altruistic values related to public services, The core issue that accountant must face is striking a balance between market Orientation, on the other hand and the protection of traditional professional values. Picard (2016)

If we address the problem of the team working of accounting graduates, the ability to work effectively in a team is highly expected by employers from accounting graduates. As per the article we selected, it showed that many university graduates express lack teamwork skills. This study is motivated by the need for the higher education sector to produce accounting graduates who are able to meet comprehensive skills required in the team environment. The use of teams by organizations has become an established practice in response to operational and strategic challenges. The advance of teamwork has been widely recognized. Effective teamwork has been associated with superior performance outcomes, such as efficiency, productivity, response time, quality, customer satisfaction and innovation.

With the importance attributed to teamwork, it is a concern that employers score accounting graduates poorly in teamwork skills. In a research funded by Australian Learning and Teaching Council, (Naidoo 2011) reported that a survey of employers indicated significant gaps between the importance that the employers attached to teamwork skills and the extent to which these skills have been demonstrated by graduates.

This study describes teamwork in accounting work contexts, thus qualitative data analysis techniques are used. Accordingly, semi-structured, in-depth interviews with graduate employers were undertaken. A semi-structured interview is most closely aligned with an ethnographic qualitative research method where an emphasis is placed on eliciting participant's experiences, observation, and developed insights.

In this study to generate a cross-section sampling of employers, a purposive sample was constituted. Four participants were recruited from each of the three sectors, the private sector, businesses, government-linked or subsidiary organizations and accounting firms resulting in 12 interviews.

We can conclude that the organizing staffs to work in teams have become a feature of organizations as a response to operational and strategic challenges of the business environment. In the accounting discipline, where research has affirmed the importance of teamwork, the professional bodies have recommended that the learning of teamwork skills should be embedded in the design of accredited university courses Paguio & Jackling (2015)

According to the article, investigating the factors influencing global accountancy education standards and their influence on country-specific accountancy education received impetus with the publication of the impact of globalization on accountancy education in 2002 by Karreman. This publication provided a comparative analysis of professional accountancy education in 25 countries worldwide and developed a model for the classification of accountancy education system.

In Karreman study (2202) covered 25 countries, of which only two, South Africa and Kenya, were in Africa. The study selected possible distinguishing factors and tested their relevance to accounting Education. These distinguishing factors are the influence of differences in cultural background, the present economic position of the countries involved, the effect of the legal system on accountancy education and the contribution of higher education to the qualification of accountants.

This study found that professional bodies in common law countries, such as countries with a historical UK background, show a tendency towards professional self-regulation, whereas the civil law countries show a tendency towards government regulation. As a result of this study, Karremen was able to make a number of recommendations relating to the scope, influence, and promotion of the International education guidelines, and the promotion of mutual recognition and harmonization of accountancy education.

As the methods of this research, they used questionnaire. The questionnaire required the respondents to identify themselves, their institution, its address and contact details, the name of the professional body. Its official abbreviation and its web address.



The importance of this research is that it provides comparative information on professional accountancy education. Stainbank & Ramatho (2008)

These issues are explored by a review of the literature in accounting and other professions regarding the respective roles of universities and employers in the development both technical and non-technical knowledge and skills of professional particularly accounting practitioner is a perennial debate.

The debate about what should be the objectives of a university-based accounting education continues to be of interest internationally. In recent times the catalyst for this discussion is the recognition that the nature of the work of accounting practitioners is changing significantly. There have been some major developments in higher education internationally with respect to teaching and learning standards.

More recently a task force formed by the Institute of management accountants and the management accounting section of the American Accounting Association has produced a report outlining a competency-based educational framework that is applicable to a variety of accounting career paths.

They used Interviews as data collection method. The study, the results of which we report here in part, was an Australia –wide investigation into the technical and non-technical skill required of future accounting.

Our analysis of the interview comments is split between the responsibility for developing technical skill and the non-technical skills.

A deeper analysis of the comments indicated that there was a strong expectation across all employers that the universities would concentrate on the development of basic practical accounting skills such as Excel and at last one electronic bookkeeping system.

#### Responsibility for non-technical skills

The university's role is more generic skills. There is obviously developing their basic technical skills in accounting, financial, reporting, Corporations Act, corporations' law, tax and I guess their communication skills. They will be required obviously to do written and oral presentations throughout the course. Your basic word, excel to some extent their self-confidence, their motivation and maybe those sorts of skills. Howisen & Kent (2014)

Nowadays, rapidly grow the sense of unease about the state and direction of accounting research. That is the excessive spread of performance measurement practices and the flow of conformity. They tend to engender and consolidate and also much of current research tends to

operate within the academic practice. Rather than questioning and challenging them. According to Hopwood, this is the main research for the apparent failure of academia to identify any of the recent financial and economic crises.

This is focusing that academia's understated performance to address issues relevant to European society has much to do with institutional incentives faced by academic scholars in their carriers.

From this perspective, accounting is largely viewed as abuttal, a mechanical and objective technology whose function is just to reduce information asymmetry and to provide the transparency needed for capital markets to function efficiently. According to this, the little scope is left for other issues such as the linkages between accounting and the macroeconomic and socio-political environment in which it operates.

Accounting is deeply implicated in the like of individual organizations and society.

According to this paper, the shortage in developing research questions relevant to European Union society is rightly related to the widespread, practice of assessing universities research quality based on journal rankings, which tends to reward conformity to us mainstream research.

According to Wilkinson and Durdon (2015), mainstream research is not going to change by itself. Thus; accordingly researchers should shift their attention away from concerns stagnation of accounting research towards applying pressure to policy-makers to take action. As those who do acknowledge the social responsibility of their profession.

To be critical and relevant research needs to be free as much as possible from any constraint. Being free means the possibility of embracing research paradigms. Thereby create accounting in its social, organizations and historical research. Pale (2016)

Almost all developing countries which have been colonies under powerful western rules for a considerable length of time gathered their accounting education from a colonial system. Because of that, they specialized in accounting professions according to the colony's need rather than they're own economic and social system needs. Under this situation, they produced professional accountants for a match with developed western economics not for the local economies.

In this situation, universities produce accounting graduates but they are not encouraged to enter into the profession. So most accounting graduates have been diverted to non-accounting careers and also ICASL has produced only 1800 fully qualified Chartered Accountants and about 40% of them hold a relevant degree. So this is inadequate for a country's populations.

The researcher had used those strategies for their research. First is since acceptance of the need for change in a prerequisite to the beginning about change itself, the profession should seek to heighten interest among all stakeholders in the need for change. The second one is the profession should provide an incentive for change. The third one is a professional body should campaign to reduce the influence of barriers to changing universities and similar institutions.

Using these strategies researcher found out whether there is a partnership between the university and the accounting profession to suit the local needs of the country. According to researcher's findings, he found that the lack of coordination among educational institution has created a demand for British Professional qualifications which are not very applicable to need of the country. Finally, he suggested that educational authorities in Sri Lanka Should consider more seriously that the partnership between the university and the accounting profession is extremely important for producing competent accountants who can contribute effectively to the nation's development process Yapa (2000).

Examine the personal and situational factors that determine career progression for women in the accountancy profession within the context of the Big Six firms in Scotland from data generated by a postal questionnaire focusing specifically on both male and female senior managers within these firms.

No significant differences between male and female managers in terms of achievement, motivation, aspiration towards promotion and motivation to manage. Female characteristics in the Accounting previewed negatively and positively. Men treated as workers, not parents, but women are always seen as mothers.

The data relates specifically to senior management, both male, and female, within the B6 accountancy firms in Scotland. The data was generated by a questionnaire to all senior managers. The response shows an overall return of 49.2 percent.

Men are headhunted into senior management positions, while women remain loyal to their firms in order to promote. The researcher had used both personal and situational factors that determine the pace and structure of the careers and pace of managers in the accountancy profession when analyzed from a gender perspective Gammie (1997).

China has needed to develop a large cadre of high quality internationally proficient accountants. And also China aims to provide innovative professional accounting graduates who have a strong foundation in the theory and practice. Especially Chinese Institution of Certified Public Accountants (CICPA) establishes an information platform and a database outlining international qualifications, and wider the type of the foreign qualifications available to Chinese accounting students. Furthermore, research in China is reluctant to explore the opinions and attitudes of accounting students.

The adoption of IFRS will require Chinese accountants to exercise professional judgments and critical thinking. China has distributed a Chinese language questionnaire survey and in reviewing responses, the adopted a critical and interpretivism stance based on their collective experiences

of accounting education commonly, the students felt that they had improved their generic skills, language skills, and professional skills. And also they considered teaching method, according to 71% of respondents; flexible teaching methods are used infrequently in the CIAP. Flexible modes of teaching are not common in international accounting education programs in China.

Face to face lecturing is the prime mode of delivery language and lecture materials are in English. Such English language teaching materials help cultivate an understanding of international accounting terminology and GAAP. This is important fact because major professional guidance is published in English. As well as the use of English language teaching materials will help lectures. Especially overseas textbooks are often lengthy and are accompanied by a large volume; however, local Chinese teaching materials have more of technical focus, not expensive and offer few case studies

Finally, we can identify following matters as conclusions. China is the rapidly developing global economic and geopolitical environment. In Chinese universities imports original English teaching materials and replace some Chinese oriented classes. China can improve the accounting education programs offered cooperatively with foreign universities and foreign professional accounting bodies. Hong (2013)

## **Methods**

### **Data collection approaches for qualitative research usually involves:**

1. Direct interaction with individuals on a one to one basis
2. Direct interaction with individuals in a group setting

The type of this research is qualitative therefore as the main data collection method individual unstructured interviews have been selected. Required data for the research study has been gathered from unstructured interviews. An unstructured interview or non-directive interview is an interview in which questions are not prearranged. These non-directive interviews are considered to be the opposite of a structured interview which offers a set amount of standardized questions. From unstructured interviews, the natural behavior of the interviewees can observe & the ideal answers for the questions can gather.

## **Analysis and Discussion**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of the value addition of the BSc. Accounting (Special) Degree programme of the graduate's career. (In The University of Sri Jayewardenepura) This study has focused on the value of the above degree and how it helped the graduates to create value addition for their career. Hence when analyzing on the qualitative

capacity this leads to several differentiation of the facts. Mainly the analysis is conducted with the focus on the degree as a qualification and how much of it has been adding value to an individual's career.

### **On Accounting Degree as an academic Qualification**

Considering the respondents – all of them being holders of accounting degree- 40 of the sample respondents pursue another professional qualification. On some instances they have been reading two or more professional qualification in regard to this. However out his more than 50% of the respondents has been following Chartered Accountancy, ACCA and CIMA as professional qualifications. Apart from the accountancy field – few have been reading for taxation related qualifications and also following with some marketing related qualifications. There is a partnership between the university and the accounting profession to suite the local needs of the country. According to researcher's findings he found that the lack of coordination among educational institution has created a demand for British Professional qualifications which are not very applicable to need of the country. This endures that there degree has been only regarded as an academic qualification and has not been able to fulfill the sole qualification as to obtain a degree.

### **Degree being as in aid to find a job**

The B.Sc. Accounting degree has been most of the time considered as a nominal value addition – in the respondent's point of view. Most of the time being a graduate of the state university has been marked as a distinct advantage for them. However it hasn't been able to purposefully serve as a degree which can grant a job opportunity. This is an important point of view in regard to the commodification of universities. Although the university is a not for profit institute – with the commodification of the degrees the university is looking to increase the demand for its graduates. However when considering the responses – most of them felt as being victim for the overall situation since they haven't been able to get a job opportunity in regard to the subjects they studied.

The possession of a degree has a face value to being that to enter in t o a state university an individual needs to be fully prepared in an intellectual level with the current competition. Thus many would be seeing this as a prestigious position. Hence- along with the university degree – the optional two year period of training has helped many individuals to grant a job. As stated by most respondents the two to three year experience they gained through working,

While studying in the university has treated them to a much front position in the overall job market competition. However the subject and theoretical content of the degree hasn't provided much back up. The practical on hand working experience along with the degree has provided them a much better chance rather than blindly leading with a single degree qualification.

### **Aiding of Degree content to the Job Opportunities**

This aspect of seeing degree and the related experience to aid in the job market has several different responses. Some of the respondents have quite positive outlook on the matter while majority possess a negative outlook. As in the context- the majority of the respondents shared that the most important skills that they learned in the university is about the interpersonal skills and somewhat basic computer skills. These are not expected value addition of a degree. Most of them have been able to grasp the surface of the experience as an undergraduate – and some of them even not being able to take even that much.

In elaborating on this fact most of them noted that the software packages they learned and the basic word and excel skills have been aiding them in the context – but majority of the theoretical context has been useless. However in value additional perspective – being an undergraduate an obtaining a degree is somewhat a 360 experience which need to be grasped by themselves. If an individual is not ready to fully apprehend on the fact- that the whole 4 years has been about the learning experience. Hence this question becomes highly subjective in relation to individual perspective. Mainly the skill that a person can grant through the degree is entirely dependent on his or her approach to life and learning curve.

The most of the respondents oppose the idea of learning tools- and the subject content- but haven't taken time enough to make new friends or even approach a different hobby or interest during their four year tenure. Hence most of them see that their four year learning experience is not fulfilled.

### **Regarding the special benefits granted through the degree**

Most of the time – this question is also approached with the same level of apprehension as the above questions. Many degree holders believe that there is no special benefit apparently for the degree holders. Hence they tend to discover that the skill set is usually what they have developed through the group assignments and so on. In analyzing the situation on beneficial nature of the degree following statements serve a strong point that the researcher wants to highlight.

“Nobody will give any special benefit whether he having a degree or not. But there is some recognition in social environment. And also, few subject exemptions to professional qualification. Other than the above there is no any special benefit received from society.”

“Society as a whole treats us as educated People”

The university and being with the different groups of people helped”.

Hence – when discussing the benefits of the degree- rather than the study of accountancy as a subject – the respect gained from the society comes directly from being a degree holder from a

university of state. This is seen in all the respondents perspectives – that the special benefit comes as being educated personnel's since they have a degree. This highlights the fact that being a graduate from the university and being a fore runner in the study of accountancy has no purpose to serve in the overall context. As with many of the contexts – the individual's perspectives differ regarding to their personal characteristics.

## **Skill Development**

In response to this many of respondents have a slight regret in not developing their personal skills. Many do not have the vague ide even about the skills in connecting to the literature review - accountant is now largely defined though neo-liberal values which seem to increasingly overshadow professional and altruistic values related to public services, The core issue that accountant must face is striking a balance between market Orientation, on the other hand, and the protection of traditional professional values. Picard (2016).

Thus most of the respondents consider that a skill in MS Word is something that they have developed accordance to the degree. This is somewhat a pathetic look into the skills and intellectual level of the degree holders. Because if they haven't been able to distinguish between skills and basic competencies – the problem lies in their overall learning curve. Several of the respondents mentioned that they should have improved their presentation and communication skills. However there is a sore net to this question. In relation to the literature review – If we address the problem of team working of accounting graduates, the ability to work effectively in a team is highly expect by employers from accounting graduates. As per the article we selected, it showed that many university graduates express lack teamwork skills. This study is motivated by the need for the higher education sector to produce accounting graduates who are able to meet comprehensive skills required in the team environment. The use of teams by organizations has become an established practice in response to operational and strategic challenges. The advance of teamwork has been widely recognized. Effective teamwork has been associated with superior performance outcomes, such as efficiency, productivity, response time, quality, customer satisfaction and innovation.

Most of the employers have a tendency to develop a somewhat introvert nature to the accounts. This is in fact based on the psychological characteristics of the accountancy and its peers from several generations onwards. Thus the team work is also an impotent skill only few of the sample respondents have been able to develop. The point to highlight on this is that the assignments and the presentation that were given the 4 years of education have not emphasised that the group presentation is about team work – but has a vague mentioning of that. The following statement marks a point in this manner.

“Skills are not developed in a degree. It is a personal development. A degree of without practical training or not up to a current and future market demands will not give any skills at all. Degree

can enhance knowledge but not skills. But some interpersonal skills can enhance being at a university with various people in various social environment.”

### **Degree being a competitive force to place a job**

Majority of the respondents deny the statement that what is learned in the degree is not enough for them to face the competition in the job market. All of them believe that the degree serves as a “paper qualification” or mostly as an academic qualification rather than placing to be a sole provider of job. All the respondents highlighted on the fact that the degree needs to be fully equipped with a professional qualification and work experience to manage a job. This is a fact that needs to be considered. Most of them have a distinct favorable attitude towards the degree because it has been able to serve them as an entry qualification. Also some of the theoretical practices as taxation and laws regarding the country helped them with the job. But the rest of the theoretical knowledge hasn’t been providing much of a value in the overall sense.

This gives a dignified approach to the under rated measure of the accountancy degree.

### **Areas of improvement**

As in regard to the areas of improvement in many suggested that more practical on hands experience sharing, getting rid of the overall paper based exams need to be eliminated. Hence summarizing all of the suggestions can be drafted as follows.

Syllabuses and theoretical content need to be more focused on practical and real life experiences rather than focusing on theoretical models. Many of the respondents suggest that the degree needs to be taught at least several subjects by industry experts. This needs to be defined in the manner of directly linking to the jobs in the market rather than having no linkages. Especially the practical uses of software packages need to be more included in the syllabus.

Skills development needs to be more focused- this could be related that the assignments systems need to be changed – rather than mainly focusing on the end of the year exam system. Hence – the presentations and other assignments should be given a much more priority stance. Especially the assignments should be used as a mode of skill development, where the respondents have the opportunity to go out in to the industry and meet the industry experts and engage and learn. When in above questions some of the respondents have been able to get this experience. This it could be stated that this has been personal objectives and capacity. Thus in order to make all the respondents have the skill development to be a mandatory task more and more tasks need to be aligned for the academic arena. Rather than letting only handful of students grasp the experience.

Reducing the gap between the contents of academic and professional qualifications. – Many of the respondents found a distinct difference between the degree and the professional qualification. However this can be related with the orientation of the both qualifications. While professional qualifications are treated as mainly a nominal value addition to climb up the corporate ladder –



the degree serves as an experience. Especially the content can be different regarding the Sri Lankan and British qualification – which has different focuses in the core.

Creating a linkage between the university and job market – the majority of the respondents has highlighted on this saying that they have to pursue a job opportunity on their own. Hence no positive back up has not been offered by the university. This is a controversial situation considering the capabilities of the individuals; some of the respondents have a confidence that they easily secure jobs while the majority of the employees have a difficulty in getting a job.

### **Summary of discussion and findings**

In summarizing the analysis of the context there have been many mismatching Responses coming from the respondents. Mainly the answers seemed to have a unifying sense of saying that the degree is not enough in the job market – while many see different pros and cons of the degree. This could be easily related with the fact that the individual preferences comes in to terms in this sense. Hence some of the answers tend to be biased and partial. Mainly with this sort of a situation it has been observed by the researcher – that the personal achievements, perspectives and preferences have been playing a major role in discussing the results.

### **Conclusion**

Conclusion need to be drawn in regard to the objectives that were defined in the previous chapters. The following objectives were designed to achieve with the completion of the project.

#### **1. To find out the courses offered by the department which create value addition to the degree programme.**

Hence one of the main concerns on this is that the Programmes that were proffered by the university tend to be average of importance in accordance with the overall stance. Most of the respondents tend to be having a Luke warm attitude to the degree and its offerings. Thus it can be drastically concluded even though the university is proclaiming to add value – considering the overall stance – there are various lower than the standards attitudes from some of the respondents.

#### **2. To find out the importance of the internship programme which helps to improve practical skills of the graduate.**

Every respondent market the importance of internship program in a high stake. As per the degree this has been the only pros they have declared. Mainly this sort of an internship has been an absolute advantage for them with the degree. Hence internship and the work experience gained through it create a positive experience for them rather than militating the learning opportunity. Thus the basic understanding of the subject and the practical n hand experience through the training is much needed and considered to be important.

**3. To identify how this degree Programmes is able to improve Information Technology skills.**

Many have marked that the basic MS package has been a must for their job opportunities. This degree program includes Accounting Packages such as SAGE, SPSS & etc. This can be a huge value addition in regard to the fact that the employers will find an attractive quality. Also when engaged in a job this reduces the learning curve to a significantly smaller level and can be attested with the fact that the overall engagement of a job will be much more productive.

**4. To identify the activities conducted by the department to improve graduate's soft skills.**

This is the most important element of the overall study. As with the analysis and literature review it can be seen that many degree holders have backward attitude to develop their skills. Hence more Programmes need to be introduced in order to devise better opportunities for the respondents. Hence it is always an important element to consider in overall set of decisions based support system.

Because when the decision making skills presentations skills, communication skills are develop – it proved confidence for the respondents otherwise they lack. As per the analysis – it seems that most of the undergraduates and degree holders need to be trained in this regard.

In an overall conclusion of the study- the main point to note is the subjectivity of the responses. More than half of the responses are biased. The majority of the respondents have viewed opinions that are personalized rather than speaking on a neutral point. This occurs because some of the respondents have been more engaged in the situation while some have been living a 'hermitage' life. Thus the differences occur. In the context it is often neglected as a fact that the respondents need a proper stance to work on and the research can be further expanded. The main point that needs to mention is in regard to the lack of skills. In accordance with the literature review some researchers identified that some university degrees have mismatches with careers and some areas should develop. According to the research the university's role is more generic skills. There is obviously developing their basic technical skills in accounting, financial, reporting, corporations Act, corporations' law, tax and researcher guessed the universities should concern of enhancing the student's communication skills. They will be required obviously to do written and oral presentations throughout the course. Universities basic word, excel to some extent their self-confidence, their motivation and may be those sorts of skills. Howisen & Hancock (2014). Thus with the study it has also been proved true and these need to be addressed. Especially in the current work place – if degree needs to be a value adding activity – the soft skills and out of the text books approach has to be adopted.

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