DIFFERENT ASPECTS AND STUDENTS’ FEEDBACK TOWARD EFFECTIVE FRESHER ORIENTATION IN SRI LANKAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT
Only a limited number of Advanced Level qualified Sri Lankan students to enter public universities due to the limited number of intake by the public university system of Sri Lanka. Yet, some of the degree programs cannot retain the required number of students due to inherent issues of the university system. Conducting well-structured orientation program can be part of the solution to some of the deep-rooted issues in Sri Lankan university system and, such a program was conducted at the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka to test the effectiveness of different aspects of orientation towards student retention. The orientation was based on key factors, viz, familiarization to the novel environment and culture; provision of required skills to follow university academic programs; develop creativity and critical thinking with the aid of social programs; build trust with the university communities and provide hope for the future; and provide opportunities to entertainment and skill development. The program was conducted for 26 days and students participated with great enthusiasm. Caring and provision of the sense of belonging was a key element retaining the students during the orientation. Further, skill development programs and entertainment activities provided a solid foundation for the academic program and cohesion among the fresher colleagues needed for effective university life.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, University & Orientation

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