

Deciphering Legal Frontiers: Perspectives and Challenges in Learning Business Law among Sri Lankan Management Undergraduates.

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ABSTRACT

Every management degree program in Sri Lanka has law components in its curricula. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the law subject is difficult for non-law undergraduates, especially management undergraduates. Consequently, the application of those legal principles in practice by management graduates is questionable. One reason may be the method of dissemination of legal knowledge. This study examines the learning experience and perceptions of management undergraduates who studied law/business law as a compulsory subject in their degree programs, to understand the pedagogical/educational approaches that can enhance students' engagement in learning law. The paper adopts a qualitative approach, using semi-structured interviews with 46 management undergraduates and 34 management graduates in public universities in Sri Lanka. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify the key themes, patterns, and constraints from students' perspectives. This paper identifies students' experiences of learning law, including challenges such as the complexity of the legal language and the volume of syllabus contents, etc. It is suggested that the importance of adopting student-centered interactive learning approaches that not only enhance students' engagement in learning but also deepen their understanding of business law concepts. This approach plays a vital role in fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are indispensable for their professional development and success.

Keywords: Business Law, Learners' perspective, Management undergraduates, non-law students, Challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Law is an integral part of human society, and every member of society should have a basic understanding of the law of that country. This equally applies to managers of a business when making day-to-day decisions. The role of management graduates fill different roles in society and the scope of the role always expands in the modern dynamic society ranging from industrial entrepreneur to administrator/manager. A sound knowledge of the law of business managers, irrespective of the categories of manager such as Human Resource Manager, Compliance Manager, Purchasing Manager, etc., helps to handle a variety of legal issues and manage the business more efficiently. Failure to cognize the legal considerations affecting business such as contract law, employment law, data protection law, etc., and being ill-equipped to draft documents would bring severe consequences such as penalties, civil action, damages to reputation, and loss of profits. Therefore, it is vitally important to produce management graduates equipped with the right kind of legal knowledge (Smith & Johnson, 2018).

Admittedly, the legal education of any given country is one of the molding pieces of machinery of legal thought in that country. The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka was established in 1799 and authorized the Supreme Court to admit advocates. The Council of Legal Education was established in 1900; however, there was no proper system of teaching law until 1911. The teaching of law began with the establishment of Ceylon Law College in 1911. The university-level legal education began in 1947 when the University of Colombo (formerly the University of Ceylon) was established. Gradually, the teaching law spread to government and private universities as well as other institutions that conduct local and foreign courses. Parallely, the teaching

of law for non-law degree programs such as management, engineering, science, sociology, etc., has been developed to produce graduates who are well-grounded in the knowledge and skills essential to the practice of their chosen profession. This is mainly due to the recognition of international demand for graduates able to capitalize on the knowledge they create (Taylor & Davis, 1967).

It is axiomatic that business law is an integral component of every business. Business law is the law that regulates business entities and regulates all business transactions. Knowledge of business law facilitates not only managing a business entity but also handling legal issues arising from the operation. Further, knowledge of business law protects the public against specific business activities such as consumer protection, unfair business practices, violation of employee rights, environmental damage, and consumer exploitation. Due to the recognition of ever-increasing demand in the market for people who have sound knowledge in management and law to get competitive advantages, many leading universities in the world provide degree programs with a combination of management with law to equip their graduates with a sound understanding of law as well as business management skills and knowledge (Robert, 2018).

Universities in Sri Lanka require management undergraduates to undertake at least one compulsory business-oriented law subject in their curriculum. Accordingly, almost all Sri Lankan national universities offer Business law as a subject in their degree programs such as the Bachelor of Science in Management degree program at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Bachelor of Business Administration degree program at the University of Ruhuna, University of Colombo, University Peradeniya, Bachelor of Business Management degree program in the University of Kelaniya. This is ample evidence to emphasize the importance of legal education for management studies. The rationale for introducing law subjects to the management stream is to produce well-equipped graduates that suit local and international job markets (Skwarok, 1995).

John Henry Newman (1801-1890) says that the university is 'a place of teaching universal knowledge.' This shows that the essence of a university is to teach and extend universal knowledge, that equips students with the necessary capabilities to always thrive in various professional settings everywhere. This perception holds not only for universities in Sri Lanka but also for universities in the world. Consequently, an accomplished university graduate should possess the right kind of knowledge and skills to make them more successful and value-adding employees needed in the modern workforce.

Graduates from management disciplines with a foundational knowledge of law certainly bring unique perspectives to their respective fields, contributing to a more informed and ethically conscious professional workforce. However, undergraduates and graduates of the management stream are critical of both what they learn in law subjects and how they are being taught. It is law is difficult for management undergraduates due to various reasons (Khan, 2021a). They have negative perceptions about the learning environment which is not conducive to making intellectual contributions and engaging in vital intellectual discourse (Khan, 2021a). Hence, it is obvious that there is a gap between teaching law and learning law by management undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, it is imperative for the universities in Sri Lanka as public-funded institutions not to derelict the duty but to focus on the unique requirements of management undergraduates to deliver quality legal knowledge both from the perspectives of the teacher and the learner that helps students understand business management. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to explore the perceived reality of non-law students' learning experience of Business Law as a subject in their degree program. However, amidst the potential benefits of this interdisciplinary knowledge, undergraduates and graduates in management programs express reservations about their experiences with law subjects. The challenges they encounter in understanding and applying legal principles stem from various factors. The difficulties are not merely intrinsic to the complexity of legal concepts but extend to the negative perceptions surrounding the learning environment. The prevailing atmosphere, as perceived by management undergraduates, is often deemed conducive to making intellectual contributions and engaging in vital discourse.

Evidently, there exists a pronounced gap between the teaching of law and the actual learning experiences of management undergraduates in the educational landscape of Sri Lanka. Recognizing this disconnect becomes particularly crucial for public-funded universities, which bear the responsibility of delivering education that caters to the unique needs of diverse student populations. By using learning principles researchers in previous

studies attempted to fill this gap from teachers' perspective. However, incorporating learning principles to fill the knowledge gap might be difficult since a single principle cannot capture the complexity and diversity of human learning. The imperative lies not in neglecting this duty but in focusing on the specific requirements of management undergraduates. It is incumbent upon these institutions to bridge the gap by delivering quality legal knowledge that not only aligns with the perspectives of the teachers but also resonates with the learning preferences of the students.

This study, therefore, undertakes the vital task of exploring the perceived reality of non-law students' learning experience of Business Law in their degree programs in the Sri Lankan context. By delving into the challenges faced by management undergraduates and comprehensively understanding their perspectives, the research seeks to unravel the intricacies of the existing gap. In doing so, it aspires to inform educational strategies that can enhance the delivery of legal knowledge to management students, fostering a learning environment that is not only effective but also tailored to the unique demands of the management discipline. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute valuable insights that can shape the future of legal education for non-law students in Sri Lanka, fostering an environment where the intersection of management and law becomes a seamless and enriching experience for aspiring professionals (Christudason, 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Legal education, particularly the teaching for non-law undergraduates has been a subject of interest for researchers over the years. Accordingly, much research has been conducted on teaching law to non-law students and this literature falls into one of two categories, namely studies focusing on the pedagogy and the other student's perspective (Smith & Johnson, 2018). The research under the first category of studies focuses on different approaches including but not limited to traditional methods of legal pedagogy, interactive learning methods, case studies, simulations, role plays, problem-based learning methods, and moot courts used in teaching (Taylor & Davis, 1967; Skwarok, 1995). The available literature on teaching law to non-law students turned out to be more focused from the teacher's perspective and evaluated the impact of those teaching approaches from the teacher's perspective (Christudason, 2006).

In contrast, none or very few scientific studies have been conducted under the second category to examine the perceptions of non-law students in learning law and their performances and outcomes (Morris, 2006). Moreover, none of those researches especially dealt with management graduates or unique challenges encountered by Sri Lankan management undergraduates (Lampe, 2006). This shows that although there is a persisting need to perceive and deal with perceptions of non-law undergraduate learning law, there's a dearth of research in Sri Lanka and as well as overseas. Against this background, this study focuses on examining the validity of those claims that learning law is difficult in light of the perception of the state university management undergraduates/ graduates in Sri Lanka.

One of the earliest studies on teaching law to non-law students was conducted by William Taylor and Keith Davis (1967), which examined the pedagogical issues and methods of teaching land law to students of estate management who are professionals. It is argued that land law should be taught as a practical and applied subject (Taylor & Davis, 1967). However, this study focused on land law for professional students, who had a clear career goal and motivation to learn the subject. This study did not address the challenges faced by non-law undergraduates from other disciplines.

Another aspect of teaching law to non-law students is the interdisciplinary nature of teaching. Hannigan et al. (1971) recognized the interdisciplinary nature of legal education and the relevance of incorporating legal knowledge into various academic disciplines. This integration not only enriches students' understanding of the law but also enhances their ability to critically analyze and apply legal principles within the broader context of their chosen fields (Hannigan et al., 1971). By bridging the gap between legal education and other disciplines, students are empowered to appreciate the interconnectedness of legal concepts with real-world scenarios, fostering a holistic and practical approach to problem-solving in diverse professional settings.

A related issue is the research skills of non-law students who want to learn more about legal research. This was addressed by Bailey (1991), who explored the needs and expectations of non-law students majoring in the

social sciences who took a course on legal research methods. He recommended that libraries should build a basic law collection for non-law students and that instructors should teach the rudiments of legal research in an interesting and accessible way.

A study that focused on the teaching, learning, and assessment strategies of business law for non-law students at Hong Kong Polytechnic University was conducted by Lisa M. Skwarok (1995). The researcher described the design and implementation of a problem-based learning approach that aimed to develop students' legal problem-solving skills in a realistic and authentic context (Skwarok, 1995). Little et al. (2001) discuss the results of research into a successful problem-based approach to the development of students' legal problem-solving skills in a Bachelor of Business Studies degree (Little et al., 2001).

The difficulties and advantages of teaching business law to students who do not have a law degree were discussed by Corbin (2002). She explored the possibilities of using some methods such as adopting a student-centered approach, interactive methods of teaching, and offering feedback to improve the learning outcomes of the students (Corbin, 2002). Once again this is another proposal for changing teaching strategies. Traditional case studies are not enough to teach legal reasoning and analysis. Therefore, Monseau (2005) suggests a multi-layered approach of incorporating statutes, court opinions, etc., to enhance students' critical thinking but also problem-solving skills which help them to apply in real-world scenarios Monseau (2005) argues that traditional case studies are not enough to teach legal reasoning and analysis, and proposes a multi-layered approach that incorporates different sources of law, such as statutes, regulations, and court opinions. The article aims to enhance the student's critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the context of law.

A third challenge that management undergraduates face when learning law is the relevance of legal knowledge for their future careers. Lampe (2006) discusses this issue of the relevance of legal knowledge of the students for their future careers. His focus was on teaching business law and legal environment classes and suggested the necessity to develop a curriculum that suits students who are pursuing a business career. Christudason (2006) discusses the use of student feedback to improve the quality of teaching law to non-law students. Once again, a challenge that management undergraduates face when learning law is considered from the perspective of a teacher. This challenge is the diversity of backgrounds and interests of the students. Morris (2006) examines the possibility of adapting the law knowledge and skills to other professions for their professional practice. He focuses on the employability of students and suggests outcome-based education or work-integrated training.

Contextual Teaching and Learning approach which involves active students in the learning process that aims to teach students to understand learning that is related to real life. Allen (2007) argues this method is the most appropriate way to teach law to non-law students.

Butler et al. (2008) discuss those obstacles faced in the pedagogy of teaching legal problem-solving skills to non-law students. To overcome those problems, the Authors suggest strategies such as interactive teaching methods, interdisciplinary case studies structured feedback. A study by Ewang (2008) compares Lecture-based Learning (LBL) with a combination of LBL with problem-based learning (PLB) in relation to the performance of specific segments of students, namely accounting degree students and business degrees. He concluded that the PLB group performed significantly better than the LBL group in terms of academic achievement.

Problem-solving models, that have been applied successfully for law courses in Australia. Richardson et al. (2009) discuss the usefulness of these problem-solving models for non-law undergraduates in Australia. They also provide examples of how this model can be implemented in different contexts and disciplines. There are many challenges in teaching law with a large and diverse student group. A study was done on students of Bachelor of Business and Commerce (BBC) by Fitzpatrick (2009) and identified several curriculum-related issues. She emphasizes the importance of resources and institutional support in managing these issues. Connolly (2009) discusses the challenges of teaching law to students in business studies and suggests adopting the Wigmorean Chart Method to overcome the problem. This method helps the students visualize the issue, analyze the facts, and make decisions. It concludes that the adaptation would enhance work-related decision-making and academic legal problem-solving skills.

The reasons for business law subjects are perceived as challenging by non-law students and the implications of teaching strategies and approaches were explored by Benga (2011). The author suggests several teaching strategies, including using case studies, simulations, games, role-playing, and multimedia resources.

A study that specifically dealt with teaching intellectual property law to non-law students was conducted by Soetendorp (2012) who examined the perceptions and attitudes of students from various disciplines, such as engineering, design, and business, towards learning intellectual property law. She found that most students had a positive attitude towards the subject, and recognized its importance for their future careers. Since This is a narrower scope that specifically deals with a specific area of law (IP), it does not have much value for the present study. The effectiveness of the use of mind mapping over other traditional approaches in teaching an MBA management course was discussed by Lee (2012). The author claims that mind mapping can improve students' academic performance, critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills. Further, Khan (2021a) discusses the potential obstacles and advantages of teaching law to business students, presenting and highlighting effective strategies. This study relates to health study and therefore, it has no significance to the present study. However, some research has also been done about teaching specific law to a special group of students, for example, Soetendorp (2012) discusses teaching intellectual property law to non-law students.

Another study that deals with the impact of hybrid teaching methods on the learning experience of non-law students in Malaysia is Poon (2014), who examined the effects of combining traditional lectures on business law with collaborative and peer learning, social interaction, teamwork, task allocation, and confidence building.

The paper suggested that implementing a hybrid teaching method may effectively enhance non-law students' interest and comprehension of law subjects, as well as their motivation, participation, and performance. Chandran et al. (2015) did a similar study that highlights the effectiveness of blended learning approaches in engaging non-law students to study law. A different study that tested case-based approach and law-based lecturing approaches is Rahman (2015), who experimented with non-law background postgraduate students at a Malaysian university which may not apply to undergraduate students. Wulf (2015) examines the contents and teaching methods generally employed in the law courses required for degrees in business and economics. Learning outcomes of two different lecture formats: traditional and flipped were considered by Cameron and Dickfos (2015). They found that the flipped lecture format had a positive impact on students' engagement, satisfaction, and feedback, as well as their performance on quizzes and exams.

The need for Knowledge Management (KM) intervention in strategizing formative assessment for non-law students studying law was focused Chandran., et al (2016) and it is argued that KM can help overcome the challenges faced by non-law students in learning law, proposed that the proposed KM-IRAC would help the preparation of formative assessment amongst law academics in the future. The importance of the use of innovative teaching methods such as flashcards and games was emphasized by Naz (2017) who found that it is significant in favor of innovative teaching. However, Shaw-Mellors and Koornhof (2019) reject and suggest that teaching law to business students requires a different focus and content. Once again, from the teachers' perspective, Razak et al., (2020) deal with their experiences and insights on how to design and deliver effective law courses for students from various disciplines. Similarly, Reems (2021) discusses different methods such as role-play, simple questions, and journal writing as techniques for teaching business law. Remarkably, from the students' perspective, Khan (2021b) study focused on business students' experience of learning law and proposed effective teaching methods to ensure that legal topics are taught more acceptably. Again, the teaching methodology was dealt with by Danagher (2022) focusing on a bespoke legal writing guide and the success of the writing guidelines.

Karpenyuk (2022) explores interactive methods of teaching law to non-core faculty students including critical thinking, argumentation, and information analysis skills. Maher (2023) deals with approaches to teaching IP law to non-law students, including the use of resources, voices, icebreakers, and interactive techniques. The use of experiential learning methods (ELM) to teach law to non-law students was dealt with by Mahmood et al., (2023) reviewed the current experiential learning methods used to teach contract law and emphasized that the methods can be used for other substantive law courses. From the foregoing reviews of the studies that

examined various aspects of teaching law to non-law students, it is evident that those studies represent the teachers' perspectives.

All those pieces of literature deal with the teaching methods, and evaluation methods. These studies do not address the underlying courses that shape negative perceptions of Management Undergraduates toward learning law. None of those studies dealt with management undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, none of the literature was able to address the challenges faced by undergraduates in 'learning' law. Once again, these are one-sided studies that do not represent the other side of the story and therefore do not provide insights to solve the problem. Although one study considered business students' perception but failed to comprehensively address the unique impediments of learning law by non-law undergraduates. However, it cannot be undermined the negative perception of undergraduates that learning law is difficult.

Therefore, the dearth of empirical research on this specific problem leaves a gap in understanding their perception which affects their educational and professional goals in the long run. It is felt that there is a need for more research that explores the learner's perspective. To address and fill this gap, the present study aims to explore the perception of learning law (not teaching law,) of management undergraduates especially in the context of Sri Lankan state universities to propose effective remedial measures. A study of this nature is essential to equip management undergraduates with the right kind of knowledge to achieve the desired outcome of management degree programs in Sri Lanka.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed the interpretivism philosophy and under that qualitative research approach was used to explore and understand the learning experiences and perceptions of management undergraduates who have studied law/business law as a compulsory subject in their degree programs in Sri Lankan public universities. The time horizon for the study is cross-sectional. The primary objective is to identify pedagogical and educational approaches that can enhance students' engagement in learning law, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by non-law undergraduates.

The participants in this study consist of 46 current management undergraduates and 34 management graduates from various public universities in Sri Lanka which were chosen using a convenience basis. The inclusion criteria for participants are individuals who have completed or are currently undertaking a management degree program that includes a compulsory law/business law subject. This diverse group is expected to provide a comprehensive perspective on the challenges and experiences associated with learning law in a management context. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions. The semi-structured nature of the interviews will enable flexibility in probing specific areas of interest while allowing participants to express their thoughts in their own words. The interviews will be conducted in person and virtually, depending on the availability and preference of the participants. The interview questions will be designed to elicit detailed responses regarding participants' experiences with learning law, focusing on aspects such as the perceived difficulty of the subject, challenges faced, preferred learning methods, and suggestions for improvement. The interview protocol will be pilot-tested to ensure clarity and relevance before the actual data collection. The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves the identification and analysis of patterns, themes, and constraints within the data. This process will be iterative, involving multiple readings of the interview transcripts to identify recurring themes and patterns related to students' experiences and perceptions of learning law.

This study will adhere to ethical guidelines, ensuring the voluntary and informed participation of all respondents. Participants will be provided with information about the study's purpose, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant before the interviews, and pseudonyms will be used during data analysis to maintain anonymity. The findings of this research will contribute valuable insights into the challenges faced by management undergraduates in learning law and suggest student-centered, interactive learning approaches to enhance their engagement and understanding. These insights are crucial for the improvement of law/business law education within

management degree programs, ultimately fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills essential for professional development and success.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Most of the university lecturers are considered that be good teachers, they use the best delivery methods to disseminate the knowledge and the best assessment method to evaluate the performance of the students. However, it is questionable about the gap between what they think about effective teaching and evaluation and what is actually happening among the learners in the class. Today's undergraduates, including management, come from different backgrounds and have diverse learning styles. Among them, some are auditory learners and some are visual learners. However, it should not be undermined whatever may be the learning style of undergraduates, the benefit of kinesthetic or tactile teaching methods. The data collected for this study on teaching and learning law from a student's perspective reveals this truth. The following part deals with the diverse perceptions of non-law students about the law in their management degree program.

The class sizes

It is obvious that a healthy student-to-teacher ratio immensely affects the learning process at any educational level. Learning space plays an important role in producing work-ready graduates. Most of the universities use large class/lecture rooms for teaching. This creates a negative impact on the learning process.

Non-law students do not have the necessary background and skills to understand and apply legal concepts and principles compared to law students. This leads to confusion and frustration which severely effect the performance of the students. Student-teacher interaction, which affects the psychology of students, is a proximal process that drives students' engagement and learning. This interaction promotes, among other things, effective student outcomes, students learning motivation, and effective teaching in the classroom. However, a large classroom setting inhibits these advantages.

Likewise, a large class limits individual attention from the lecturer and opportunities for interactions which makes it difficult for students to ask questions, seek clarification, and feedback and individual instruction. Standardized assessment or clarification does not capture a unique understanding of the subject by individuals. Most of the students feel that these needs are adequately addressed due to the large class setting.

The overall perception of the quality of university education can be influenced by the quality of the learning environment. This includes the sound system and projector system. A weak sound system in the learning environment affects smooth listening i.e., the ability to comprehend and retain the information delivered by the lecturer without any distractions or difficulties. This equally applies to the distance between visual aids such as multimedia projector screens and students, in addition to the size of the screen. This evidence amply demonstrates that student performance can be assessed correctly only when the dissemination of knowledge is done in an appropriate size of class.

Stodginess (the quality of being boring, formal, or old-fashioned) legal material/law teaching)

Stodginess is the quality of being boring, formal, or old-fashioned. It can have a negative impact on legal material and law teaching by non-law students. Legal material that is stodgy may fail to capture the attention and interest of the readers, who may miss important details or lose motivation to learn. Law teaching by non-law students that is stodgy may also reduce the engagement and comprehension of the learners, who may find the subject dull or irrelevant. Stodginess can also hinder creativity and innovation in legal thinking and practice, as it may discourage new perspectives or approaches. Therefore, stodginess should be avoided in legal material and law teaching by non-law students, as it can compromise the quality and effectiveness of legal education and communication.

Preconceived notion- the attitude of the students before the learning of the subject

Most of the students have preconceived notions that law is a difficult subject. This is mostly due to the

transformed idea from senior students who performed the subject badly due to their personal reasons and attempt to generalize his / her perceptions. This preconceived notion creates a physiological barrier that resists new information and hinders the ability to grasp legal concepts and appreciate the complexity of the subject. Having preconceived notion limit the ability to understand the nuance of the subject and hinders from interdisciplinary nature of the law subject. Likewise, it prevents them from developing skills such as analytical reasoning, and problem-solving which are inherent in the business world. Further, they are prevented from investing the necessary effort into the law subject which ultimately affects their overall performance. As far as career opportunities are concerned, these students may not be qualified especially in the field of HRM where legal knowledge applies to day transactions such as requirement, leave, payments, termination, disciplinary actions, etc.

The complexity of legal concepts, legal language, and terms

The intricate nature of legal concepts, characterized by their complexity and abstraction, poses a formidable challenge for non-law students attempting to comprehend them. The inherent difficulty lies not only in the conceptual depth but also in the formidable obstacle presented by the legal language itself. This specialized language introduces a host of challenges for non-law students, stemming from its unique characteristics. Primarily, the legal language is laden with specialized terminology and jargon, unfamiliar to those outside the legal domain. Terms like "*bonafide*," "*nemo dat quod non habeat*," "*uberrimae fidei*," and "*caveat emptor*" carry meanings that are not intuitive to non-law students. The unfamiliarity with these terms makes retention and understanding a substantial hurdle.

Furthermore, the legal text often features lengthy and intricate sentences, complicating the comprehension process for non-law students. The convolution of ideas within these sentences can make it challenging for learners to follow the logical progression of arguments. The dense and complex structure of legal sentences acts as a barrier, hindering effective understanding and engagement. Moreover, the stylistic aspects of legal language present additional barriers for non-law students. The usage of certain words, such as "consideration" and "acceptance" in the context of contract law, carries specific legal meanings that may differ from their everyday usage. This disparity introduces confusion among learners, as they grapple with reconciling the legal definitions with their pre-existing understanding of these terms.

In conclusion, the perceived difficulty in understanding legal concepts by non-law students is a multifaceted challenge. It arises from the intricacy and abstract nature of legal principles, compounded by the specialized and jargon-laden language employed in legal texts. The length and structure of sentences further contribute to the complexity, creating barriers to effective comprehension. The nuanced meanings of specific words add an additional layer of confusion for learners, making the adoption of a student-centric, interactive learning approach imperative for overcoming these challenges.

Alien to their common pattern of subjects

Management undergraduates, having undergone tertiary education and completed their initial year of studies at the university, typically possess a certain level of familiarity with various subjects. However, when it comes to the subject of law, a distinct challenge arises due to the unique terminology and concepts inherent to legal studies. Unlike other subjects, the language of law introduces specialized terminology and nuanced concepts that may be unfamiliar to students in management programs.

The study of law demands a distinctive set of skills, prominently featuring critical thinking and analytical abilities. Management undergraduates, not initially exposed to legal frameworks, find themselves navigating a realm that requires the interpretation of statutory provisions, analysis of legal cases, and comprehension of fundamental legal principles. Acquiring these research skills is pivotal for a comprehensive understanding of the subject, yet it presents a significant challenge for those without a background in law.

Moreover, the transition from a practical, business-oriented problem-solving approach, inherent to management studies, to the more abstract and theoretical analysis demanded by legal studies can be a substantial shift in thinking for management students. While their previous academic endeavors may have

emphasized pragmatic solutions to real-world issues, the study of law introduces a different paradigm that requires a deeper engagement with theoretical concepts and abstract reasoning.

In essence, the challenge faced by management undergraduates in the study of law is two-fold. First, the unfamiliar terminology and concepts intrinsic to legal studies create a learning curve distinct from other subjects. Second, the shift from a practical, business-focused mindset to one that prioritizes abstract and theoretical analysis poses a cognitive adjustment for management students. Addressing these challenges necessitates a tailored approach to legal education that recognizes and accommodates the unique background and learning preferences of management undergraduates.

The quantity/volume of reading is overwhelming

Business law courses require excessive reading. This can range from statutes, cases laws, ongoing juridical reflection, etc. Since there are no statutory laws in Sri Lanka for some of the areas of business law such as insurance, contract law, etc. the students have to refer to other jurisdictions. Since the is not a static subject but rather dynamic. The students should be aware of the amendment of law and interpretation of new laws by the judiciary.

In addition to the linguistic and conceptual challenges, business law courses entail a significant demand for extensive reading. This encompasses a diverse array of legal materials, including statutes, case laws, ongoing juridical reflections, and more. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that certain areas of business law in Sri Lanka, such as insurance and contract law, lack statutory laws. Consequently, students must extend their research beyond national jurisdictions, delving into legal frameworks from other regions to gain a comprehensive understanding of these topics.

This heightened level of engagement with legal materials and the dynamic nature of the subject underscores the need for effective research skills and adaptability among management undergraduates. The challenge extends beyond the initial hurdle of understanding legal terminology and concepts, requiring students to cultivate a proactive approach to staying informed about legal developments and navigating the multifaceted layers of business law. This aspect further emphasizes the importance of adopting pedagogical approaches that equip management students with not only theoretical knowledge but also practical research skills to thrive in the ever-evolving field of business law.

No follow-up subject during studies.

Most of the management degree offers law as a one-time subject. During the learning process, they can only scratch the surface of the subject due to the structure of the course. This limited exposure hinders the student's ability to fully understand the subject. This narrowed perception of law and legal issues would affect the ability to recognize the implication of legal principles in the chosen field of profession. Further, this reduces the ability to specialize in areas such as labour law, and corporate law which are crucial in the career path. Additionally, this approach inhibits legal research skills which are important for various professions that negatively affect informed decision-making in a professional setting. Likewise, this limited approach would limit interdisciplinary thinking. Finally, there will be reduced competitiveness in professions where a thorough understanding of management with law such as environmental management, international sales, etc, for students compared to peers with more legal knowledge.

This limited exposure to law has repercussions that extend beyond the academic realm. It impedes students' ability to fully recognize the profound implications of legal principles within their chosen professional fields. This narrowed perspective may prove particularly detrimental when entering specialized areas like labour law or corporate law, which play pivotal roles in various career trajectories. The deficiency in comprehensive legal knowledge inhibits the development of specialization in these critical domains, hindering the potential for nuanced expertise in legal intricacies relevant to specific professions.

Moreover, this one-time, surface-level approach to law education adversely impacts the cultivation of essential legal research skills. Professions across diverse sectors increasingly demand adeptness in legal research for

informed decision-making. The deficiency in honing these skills during the formative years of education can limit graduates in their ability to navigate complex legal landscapes in professional settings.

No or lack of access to legal databases and the available official one in Sri Lanka is not updated.

Accessibility to legal material is an essential part of legal education. The lack of accessibility to government legal databases such as www.lawnet.lk poses a significant challenge for management undergraduates. Available legal databases are not updated and contain outdated information which has no value. This limitation not only hinders the ability to explore legal determinations and case law relevant to studies but also the ability to stay abreast of changes in the law. An outdated legal database leads to inaccurate legal analysis which affects the performance evaluation of students.

Medium of instructions

Many Faculties in the state universities of Sri Lanka offer their Management Degree Program in English medium to be on par with International Standards of Higher Education in the world. However, there are crucial issues to be addressed in the Universities to achieve the desired outcomes of those programs. Most university entrants are individuals for whom English is their second language. The challenges in learning law by non-law students from non-English speaking backgrounds are further magnified by offering the law course in English.

Method of teaching and assessment practices

Most universities use teacher-centered/lecture-based teaching for many reasons including logistics, human resources, lack of technological infrastructure, etc. However, most of the undergraduates feel that this is ineffective. This does not effectively cater to the diverse learning styles and preferences of non-law undergraduates.

The speed of lecture delivery, which is beyond the control of the learner, is another concern. Most of the lecturers do not spend much time explaining legal concepts and terminology due to various reasons including the time allocated to the course and being legally bound to complete the course within the given time. Students who are new to the subject face difficulty in the lectures and grasp the main points. They suggest that lecturers could adjust their pace and style of teaching to suit the needs and backgrounds of their students. The lecture's accent is one of the most significant factors that affect listeners since a lot of words have more than one meaning. In the context of law, they must be used appropriately in their appropriate contexts.

The teaching methods are theoretical and do not provide enough practical skills and experience for non-law undergraduates. The assessment practice is too rigid and applies more or less conventional methods such as mid-term tests, presentations, take-home assignments, etc. which are not the most effective way to measure the understanding of non-law graduates or their ability to apply legal principles in real life. There is a need to look at new educational methods including mock trials, more practical exercises, etc. Integration of technology is being commonly used in other educational settings. However, few universities have been using integrated technology including, virtual classroom assessments (viva/Q&A), real-time online assessments, and video assessments to assess the performance of students. However, it is needed to provide virtual law libraries, legal research databases, and online collaboration tools pertinent to law courses.

The perceptions of management undergraduate students in Sri Lankan Government Universities above indicate that there are more reasons to be considered pertaining to learning law. These considerations have not been thoroughly explored in the history of management degree programs.

CONCLUSION

Teaching law to non-law undergraduates in the universities in Sri Lanka is more challenging. Any study in this regard must consider both the lecturers' and students' perspectives in order to be a fair and balanced assessment. It is important to provide a lens of analyses on non-law undergraduates' perceptions of learning law to make them understand the subject and enable them to use the law in practice. This study examined in

depth the perceptions of business graduates in learning law in the Sri Lankan government universities context. Although it became clear that learning law is highly important for undergraduates to enhance their professional career path, there are significant issues in learning law by management undergraduates in Sri Lanka which must be seriously considered to provide learning a favourable situation in the University system. Findings of the study identify ten challenging areas (i.e.: the class sizes, stodginess, legal material/law teaching, preconceived notion- the attitude of the students before the learning of the subject, the complexity of legal concepts, legal language, and terms, alien to their common pattern of subjects, the quantity/volume of reading is overwhelming, no follow-up subject during studies, no or lack of access to legal databases and the available official one in Sri Lanka is not updated, medium of instructions and method of teaching and assessment practices) that learners face when there are learning Business laws as a subject. Based on the identified challenges, possible recommendations were provided. This study serves as a basis for destiny research in a similar context. In conclusion, it is suggested that it is the need of the day to address those issues highlighted in this study, in order to produce world-class graduates who are capable of navigating the challenges posed by an ever-evolving business landscape.

Limitations and future research directions

This study serves as an initial study that explores the study phenomena from the learner's perspective. Participants of the current study are limited to management undergraduates and graduates in selected universities in Sri Lanka and it is a limitation for a current study. Therefore, future studies suggested exploring the same phenomenon in different national universities and private higher educational institutions to enrich the phenomenon since their experiences might be different from the participants of the current study. To lay the foundation this study only uses a few theories and theory exclusion might be a limitation for the current study. There are different theories available in the literature and future studies suggested to explore the study phenomenon from different theoretical perspectives. The current study used a qualitative approach and future studies encourage to exploration of the study objectives by using different research approaches. The cross-sectional nature of the study is another limitation and future studies suggested to use of the longitudinal method to enlighten the study area.

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