MOTIVATION TO DO GENDER STUDIES AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT AND GRADUATE STUDIES: A STUDY OF THE GRADUATES OF THE GENDER STUDIES PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

Ruhana Padzil', Shanthi Thambiah, Pauline I Erera & Maimuna Hamid Merican

Abstract

This article discusses the impact of students' participation in Gender Studies Programme, University of Malaya on work and career choices and on graduate studies. We surveyed all those students that we could locate from the Dean's Office Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences database and focusing on graduates who minored in Gender Studies Program since the session 1996/97 when the programme was established, to the 2006/07 academic session. The graduates were given 73 item questionnaires that incorporated elements of several widely used and validated research instruments. We asked them about the impact of the programme on their work and career choices, their personal lives and relationships, and on their contributions to civil society. We also asked their reasons for choosing Gender Studies. Of the 87 graduates of the Programme that we were able to locate 43 returned completed questionnaires for a response rate of 49.4 percent. In this article we decided to focus on the impact on employment and graduate studies amongst the students of the Gender Studies Program. Almost all the graduates (93%) were employed full time. Over half (53.5%) had jobs that were related to gender studies. Just under half (46.5) reported that the Gender Studies Program had opened up job possibilities for them. Close to one third (28%) had pursued graduate studies since graduating from the University of Malaya.

Keywords: doing gender studies, employment, career choices, graduate studies, motivation to do gender studies

Introduction

This study is a contribution to the discussions at the national level on knowledge, skills and employability of our graduates. It is important to determine the correlation between the knowledge and skills acquired and the employment patterns of graduates of the Gender Studies Program. The study seeks to learn how students of the Gender

' Ruhana Padzil is a lecturer at the Gender Studies Program, University of Malaya