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### STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS TOPIC SELECTION FOR RESEARCH STUDIES: A CASE STUDY OF BS English STUDENT IN LAHORE

*Huda Hameed Qureshi<sup>1</sup>, Samreen Riaz Ahmed<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Akbar Khan<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>M Phil English Linguistics Assistant Professor Government Post Graduate College  
Baghdad Road Bahawalpur, Pakistan

<sup>2</sup>PhD Scholar English Linguistics Institute of English Language and Literature  
University of Sindh Jamshoro, Pakistan

<sup>3</sup>English Department, The University of Lahore, Gujrat Campus, Pakistan

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#### **ABSTRACT**

BS programs have been emerged as the new and global way of learning in the education sector since many years. The students of BS English level have to make projects or write research thesis in their final semester. Students have to face huge difficulties in the process of selection of the topic for their studies. The purpose of the study is to know their views and measure attitude of the students regarding the process of topic selection. The study is quantitative in its nature being conducted for the measurement of the attitude of the students regarding selection of the topic. 40 students were selected as the sample of the study from District Lahore, doing BS English. The data was analyzed on SPSS and the results of the study show that students need to be given high attention and guidance regarding the process of topic selection for the research studies.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Pakistan is the developing country in which the BS English program has been initiated with full zeal and zest. BS English students are considered as the important in this regard they have to be involved in the research because of the research projects in their final semesters in Pakistan. As they are newly in the field so there could be many issues for them to select a problem.

Selection of the topic has been a great issue for the research studies at every stage because they have to face certain type of behaviour and difficulties while selecting a topic. The selection of the topic is the core element of the research on which a student has to run and reach to his/her destination. There are certain issues and problems in the selection of the topic as well. Lei (2009) says that the students of the research have a great craze of the research so that the new knowledge would also be given by them. Poock & Love (2001) describe that there could directly relation of the research with the selection of the topic.

Research is the wide range in which the core importance has the process of topic selection. Useen (1997) says that thesis writing has two basic objectives, research and reach. "Research" is being referred to the identification of the problem while "reach" is the availability of the data. So these tow objective, if are fulfilled then there could be a proper research.

The current study also highlights the certain type of problem in this regard as the students have to face themselves in the field of research during topic selection process.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To find out the perception of research students towards topic selection for research studies.
- To highlight the significance of topic selection for research studies.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What is the perception of students towards selection of topic for conducting a research?
2. How could be process of topic selection helpful for studies?

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Research has been a tool of exploring and defining the things in new way but there have been certain type of issues in this regard. The new field of study becomes a challenge for the students and the process of topic selection for research is also a new phenomenon for the BS English students in Pakistan. Proper guidance and counseling to the students can remove or lessen the difficulty level in students against topic selection for their study.

### ***Significance of the Study***

The study is quantitative in its nature and significant to understand the phenomenon of difficulty in students regarding topic selection for their research and describes the possible solution to lessen the problem of topic selection for research students.

### ***Limitation of the Study***

For convenience ,40 participants having the prescribed qualification are selected from Punjab University Lahore District Lahore as a sample of the study

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Ansan & Smith (2004) explored about the topic selection issues of data collection and the research product conduction phenomenon in the context of the tourist management. The study was conducted in the department of Hotel Management of Greenwich University UK. The study was qualitative in the way of conducted, on the qualitative phenomenon of observing process of the project completion, selection of the topic and the interest of the students. The study concluded that the students of the Hotel Management Department had to select the topic, being proposed by the supervisor rather than of their choice. The students could not be able to explore their interest and cannot set their career when the topics are not being selected of their choice. The study also revealed that, the personal hesitation and the low confidence are the big hurdles in interest-less topics and research project for the career of the students.

Deka, Mishra & Patel (2015) made a research study, exploring the attitude of physical education students towards research. The study was conducted in the graduate Department of Degree College of Physical Education. The study was quantitative in its nature and 75 students were selected for the case study. The results of the study revealed that the students had negative attitude towards the research studies. They have anxiety and had the fear of failing and no proper guidance for the research. The study suggested that the student would be told about the significance of the research studies and they would be motivated for the research as well.

Shahid & Shehzad (n.d) conducted a study on the selection of the topics regarding the thesis concern in the multicultural educational environment. The study was conducted in the context of Bleking Institute of Technology Sweden while the international students were as the part of the study. The purpose of the study was to explore the reason of lacking interest of research and topic selection. The study was quantitative in its nature being conducted in three different ways which were survey, focus group and the observation. 60 international students were selected in this regard and were asked different questions as the students were of different regions. The results of the study described that the students from different context had to suffer in different issues. The students which had been studying in teacher centered classrooms, had pessimist concern because they were asked to choose the topic of their teacher's choice while many of the students were not given proper instructions and guidance in their educational career so they were unable to choose a proper topic of study. The study also suggested, revising the course contents and the way of teaching and learning process so that the results would be gained differently in the context of the research and topic selection.

Qasem & Zayid (2019) made a research study on the challenges and the difficulties being faced by the learners making research projects at early stages. The objectives of the study were to find out the problems and difficulties faced by the undergraduate students who were going to conduct research projects. The study was quantitative and qualitative in its nature being conducted under the use of questionnaire as an instrument on 60 participants of Bisha University Saudi Arabia. The results of the study showed that about 70% students felt

predominance of English language as seems to be difficult to conduct research on this level. About 50% students were willing to conduct the research on the native language because of the least knowledge of the English language. The study also revealed many other factors which were also dominant in this regard as the students had least confidence level, no prior experience of research, proper guidance was also abandoned while the methodology and the area of interest development selection were also the main problems in this regard. The study suggested that the certain type of factors which could be helpful and would be kept in concern while making students more in concern at all in the research field.

Mqasood, Jabeen, Chaudhry & Sardar (2019) conduct a unique study on the measurement of the attitude of university student towards the research. A multivariate analysis was being made in this concern. The study was quantitative in its nature being undertaken on the postgraduate and graduate students in Punjab University. The results of the study revealed that the male students and the postgraduate students had positive attitude towards research studies than females and graduate students. The results of the study also revealed that there were certain factors which caused for the different issues of negative attitude towards research being presented in the students.

Pearson, Crandall, Dispennette & Mapples (2017) did a study to know the perception of undergraduate student towards applied research. The study was mixed in its nature being conducted for the purpose of knowing the significance of the exercise science in the research and the perception of the students towards the exercised science. The results of the study revealed that the students of the graduate level were too interested in the exercises being taken as research because those were proved as the most enriching source of knowledge and skill while mostly students wanted to experience academic as the most challenging.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is quantitative in nature and data is collected with paper-based survey. The questionnaire is put before the participants and the data is interpreted also on tables. Questionnaire is used as a tool and instrument of measurement of the perception of the students regarding research. The questionnaire is consisted on two parts of 15 questions, in which one part is of 5 questions and part 2 is consisted on 10 questions of likert scale. The data is analyzed in the software SPSS Version 23.

### ***Population***

The population of the study is the student of BS English level in District Lahore.

### ***Sample***

The sample of the study is 40 students of Punjab University Lahore who are doing BS English in different programs.

**Participants**

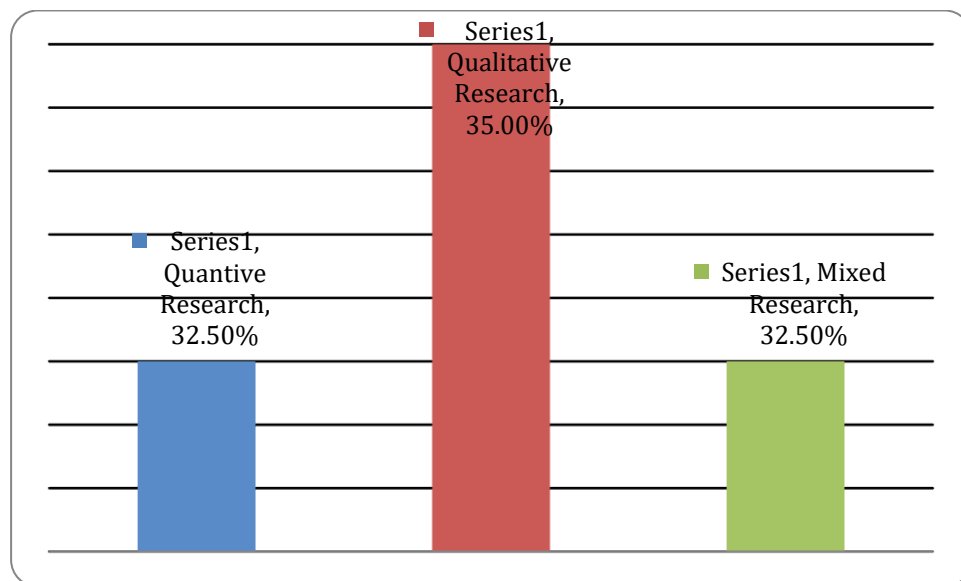
The participants before whom the questionnaire is put forward are completing their education in well reputed institutes of Lahore Division. As a sample 40 participants are selected and the participants answered the questions which are asked to them. The participants are the BS English students studying in Lahore because such people have to conduct research studies when they have to qualify for the final semester.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Question No.1. The topic would be of**

**Table No. 1**

Quantitative Research	Qualitative Research	Mixed Research	Total	Average Percentage
13	14	13	40	33.33%
32.50%	35.00%	32.50%	100%	



**Graph No. 1**

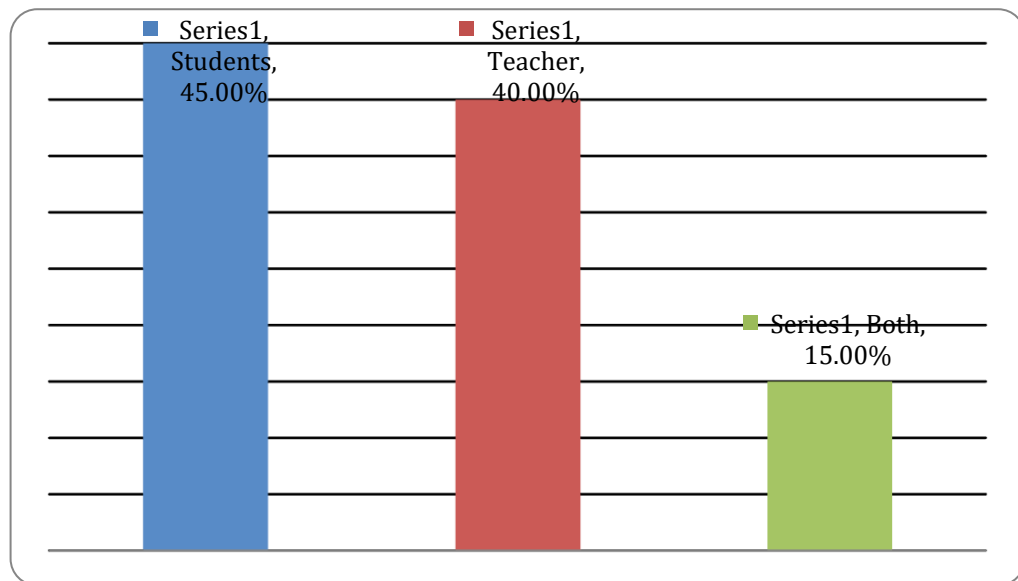
Question No. 1 is asked to the participants to know about the perception and the views about the nature of the topic that how would be topic type and many of the students mentions that differently according to the question. Table No. 1 and the Graph. No. 1 show that 32.50% students are willing that there would be quantitative type of research and their topic would be of that concern, 35% say that there would qualitatively type of topic so that the data would not be collected in the field while many of the students were also there who were willing the topic would be of mixed type of research so that their learning would be enhanced in both fields as these were 32.50% people. The frequency and the percentage of the high answer show that, mainly, students are willing for the

qualitative type of topic so that they would do it in limited way rather than getting experiments and knowing views of other.

**Question No. 2 Whose choice would be preferred for research studies?**

**Table No. 2.**

Students	Teacher	Both	Total	Average Percentage
18	16	6	40	33.33%
45.00%	40.00%	15.00%	100%	



**Graph No.2**

Question No. 2 is asked about the choice that who would be preferred in selection of the topic in research filed studies. The obtained results as have been shown in the Table No. 2 and the Graph No. 2 that mostly students like to have the topics of their own choice and this percentage was seen as 45% in the survey while 40% studies think that there would be given preference to the teachers in selection of the topic as the teachers have vast experience of the research rather than students. 15 % students also believe that the choice of both teacher and the students would also be preferred in every regard. The high percentage result of the question show that the students are willing to select the topic of their own choice rather than of teacher ‘s choice but the percentage is almost equivalent and there is no specific difference so the topic selection process would also be preferred in concern of the choices of the both members.

**Question No 3. The topic would be of which level**

**Table No. 3**

Local	Country	Global	Total	Average Percentage
16	14	10	40	33.33%
40.00%	35.00%	25.00%	100%	



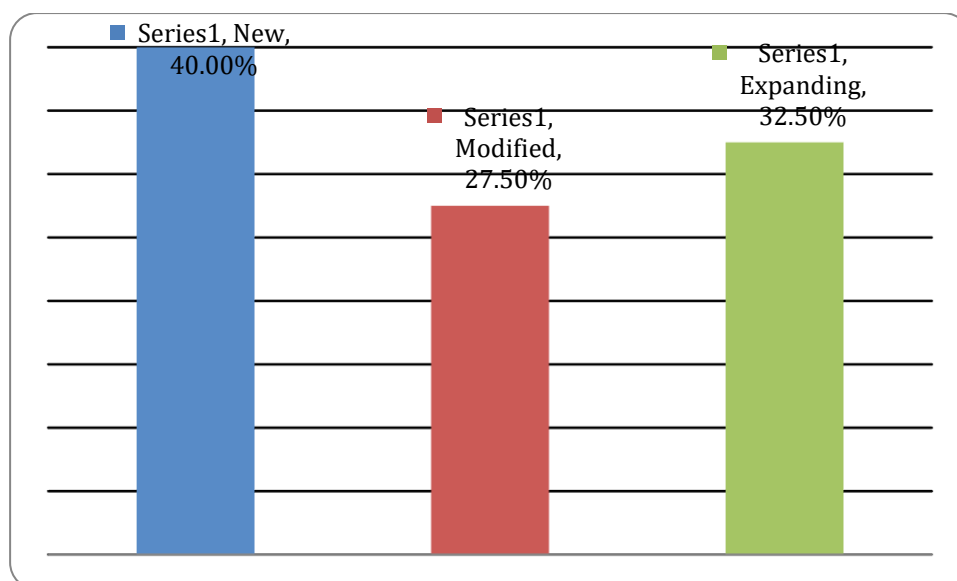
**Graph No. 3**

Question No. 3 was asked about the nature and the scope of the topic to the participants. The obtained results as are being shown in the Table No. 3 and the Graph No. 3 that 45% students want to have the topic of international level, 35 % want to have national and the 25% students want to have the topic of local level. The choice of the students in selection of the topic is already being mentioned that they want have the topic of their choice as well as of the global level because the students want to do research which would be globally attracted and recognized as well.

**Question No. 4. The topic would**

**Table No. 4.**

New	Modified	Expanding	Total	Average Percentage
16	11	13	40	33.33%
40.00%	27.50%	32.50%	100%	



**Graph No. 4**

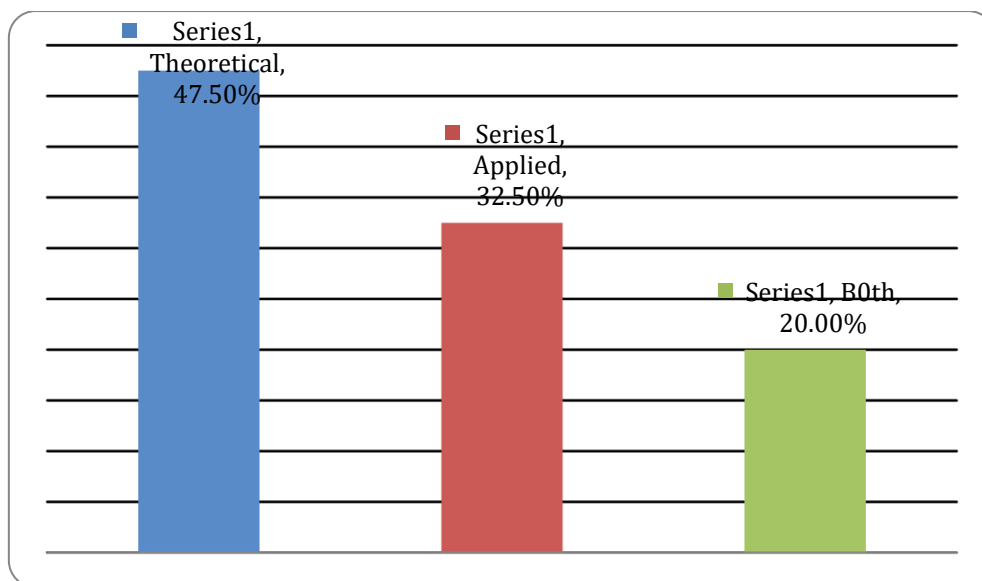
Question No.4 was asked about the topic type and its characteristics. 40 % students believe that their topic would be unique and new so that their research would be given high prestige while 27.5% believe that their topic would be modified as is being generalized or the relatively existed while 32.5% students believe that their topic would be expanding phenomenon so that the chain of the research or the continuity of the research would be maintained in all respects. The obtained results as are being shown in the Table NO. 4 and the Graph No.4 show that chiefly students want to have new topic rather than old one or modified. They want to make their place in the room of the research and want to explore the things as well.

***Question No 5. The topic would be***

**Table No. 5**

Theoretical	Applied	Both	Total	Average Percentage
19	13	8	40	33.33%
47.50%	32.50%	20.00%	100%	





**Graph No. 5**

Question No. 5 was asked about the nature of the topic and the research that which type of topics will be better for the students. The obtained results being shown in the Table No. 5 and the Graph No. 5 that the students are willing to have the theoretical type of topics so that their research would be of the keen concern as well based on the theology, 32.5% believe that their research would be of applied nature so the theories would be applied in the field for the purpose of obtaining high results in every regard while 20% think that that their research would be of both type so that the understanding of the all type of fields could be enhanced.

**Part. 2**

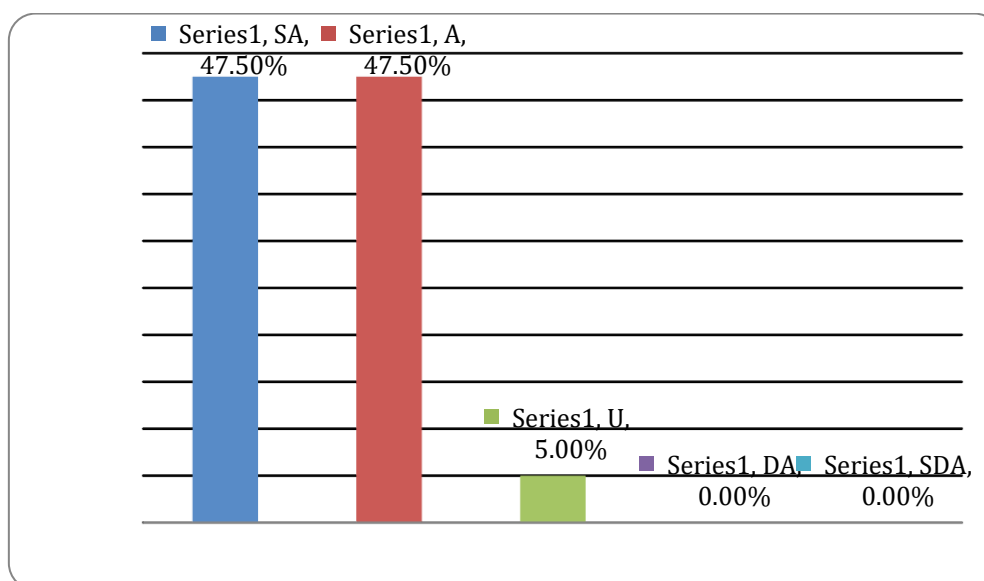
*Questionnaire Part. 2*

No.	Statement of the Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undefined	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I think that there would be unique topic for research studies.					
2	I believe that students would be encouraged while selecting research topic.					
3	I believe that Students would be free while selecting an area of study.					

4	I believe that There would be no restriction by supervisors for selecting the area of studies.					
5	I think that the supervisors would teach the students the ways of data searching for topic selection.					
6	I think that there would be practice of topic selection in course work classes.					
7	I think that the teachers would teach the students different ways of topic selection in course work classes.					
8	I believe that the supervisor would encourage the students for selecting a topic.					
9	I believe that the supervisor would help in modifying the topic.					
10	I believe that the supervisor would tell the student, how to search the relevant material.					

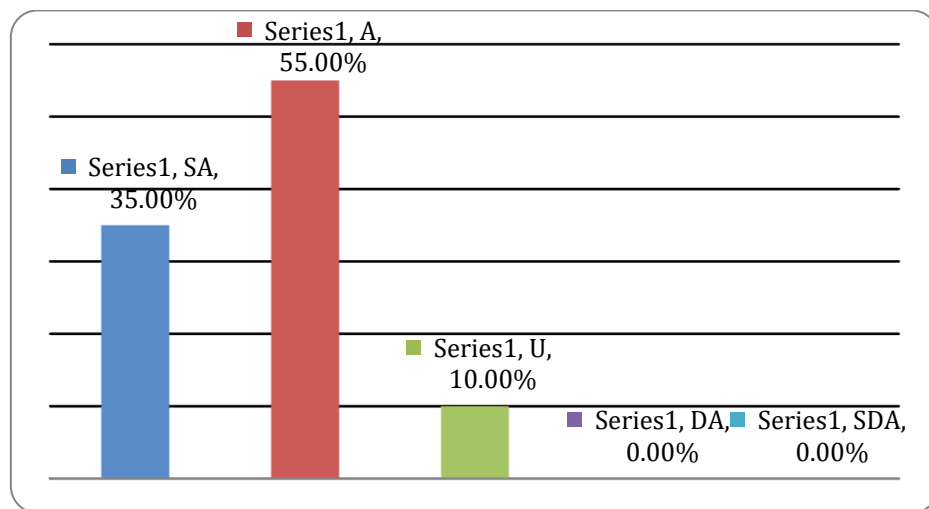
**Table No. 6 (Master Table)**

No.	Frequency/ Percentage	SA	A	U	DA	SDA	Total	Mean
Q.6	Frequency	19	19	2	0	0	40	4.43
	Percentage	47.50%	47.50%	5.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	
Q.7	Frequency	14	22	4	0	0	40	4.25
	Percentage	35.00%	55.00%	10.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	
Q.8	Frequency	10	17	12	1	0	40	3.90
	Percentage	25.00%	42.50%	30.00%	2.50%	0.00%	100%	
Q.9	Frequency	10	16	11	3	0	40	3.83
	Percentage	25.00%	40.00%	27.50%	7.50%	0.00%	100%	
Q.10	Frequency	14	22	2	2	0	40	4.20
	Percentage	35.00%	55.00%	5.00%	5.00%	0.00%	100%	
Q.11	Frequency	18	20	1	1	0	40	4.38
	Percentage	45.00%	50.00%	2.50%	2.50%	0.00%	100%	
Q.12	Frequency	17	20	3	0	0	40	4.35
	Percentage	42.50%	50.00%	7.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	
Q.13	Frequency	11	26	3	0	0	40	4.20
	Percentage	27.50%	65.00%	7.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	
Q.14	Frequency	15	21	4	0	0	40	4.28
	Percentage	37.50%	52.50%	10.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	
Q.15	Frequency	18	21	1	0	0	40	4.43
	Percentage	45.00%	52.50%	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%	100%	



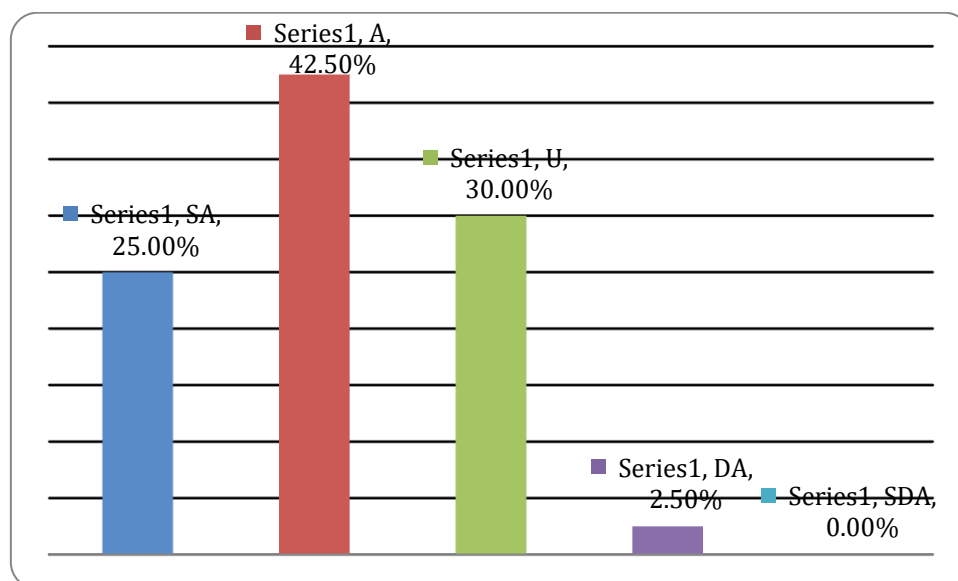
**Graph No. 6**

The second part of the questionnaire is consisted on the questions of likert scale based on the five likert scale to measure and understand the attitude of the students. Question No. 6 was asked about the uniqueness of the topic of the students that of which nature their topic would be so, in this regard, by and large, students think that their topic would be very unique while in the negation, no participants replied. The obtained result is if significance and the mean value show that the people have high value in this concern. 95 % students want to have unique topic while just 5% people have no proper view in this regard.



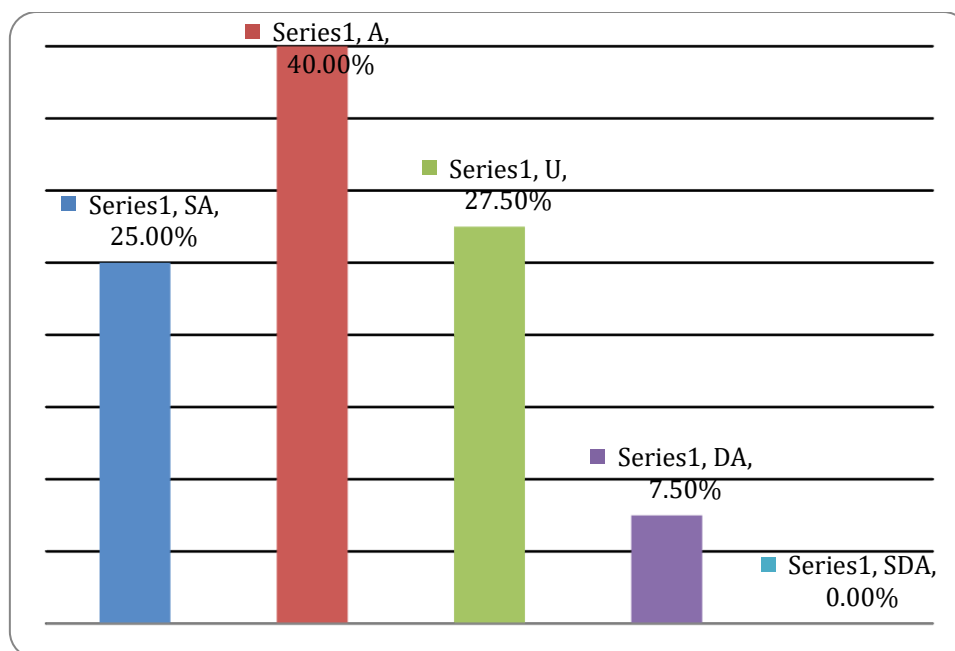
**Graph No. 7**

Question No.7 was about the encouragement and the motivation regarding the process of the topic selection. Most of the students think that the students would be encouraged as the agreement percentage was obtained as 90% of the students while the uncertainty was being shown by 10% students also, however, in the opposition of the statement, no views were found. The mean value 4.25 show that the high significance of the statement in the students.



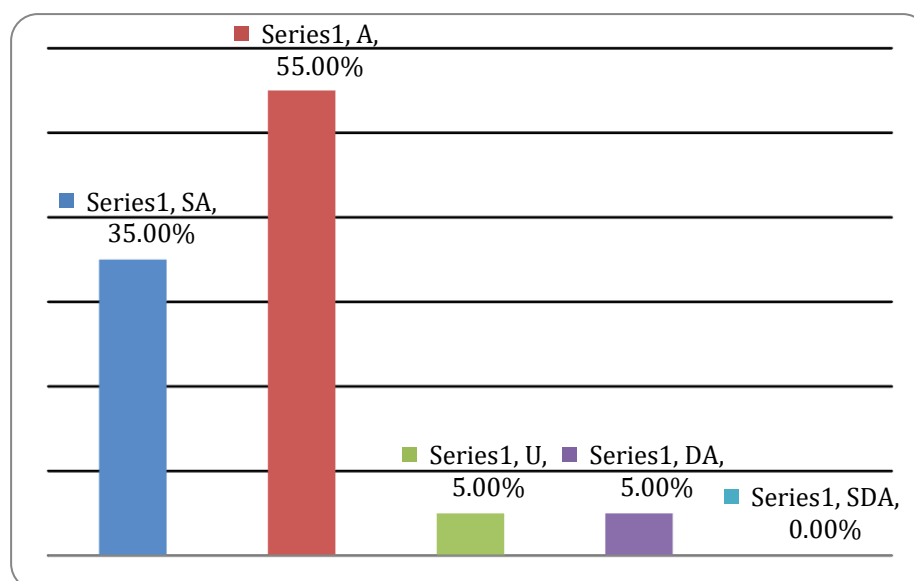
**Graph No. 8**

Question No. 8 was asked about the freedom giving to the students while selection of the topic. The obtained results, as for, being shown on the master table No. 6 and the Graph No. 8 show that there is also high significant view, as regards, by the students that the 25 % students have strong while 42.5 % have positive attitude as well to the view that the students would be given freedom in selection of the topic while 30% students are fall of uncertainty. Only 2.5% students are in the form of opposing as there could be high restriction on the fields but the mean value 3.9 shows that there is significant belief of the students that the topic would be selected by giving the choice of freedom to the students.



### Graph No. 9

Question No. 9 is raised before to know about the views of students in terms of the restriction being imposed by the supervisor related to the selection of the topic as many supervisors have taste of their own. The obtained and analyzed data being shown in the Master table and the Graph No. 9 show that the students strongly believe that there would be no restrictions by the students in the process of selection of area of research and they would give complete freedom in the selection of the field as well. 25 % strongly while 40% politely believe that there would be no restriction by the supervisors relatively while 7.5% are in opposing the view and 27% students have no specific view in this regard. The mean value 3.83% shows the significance in the students.

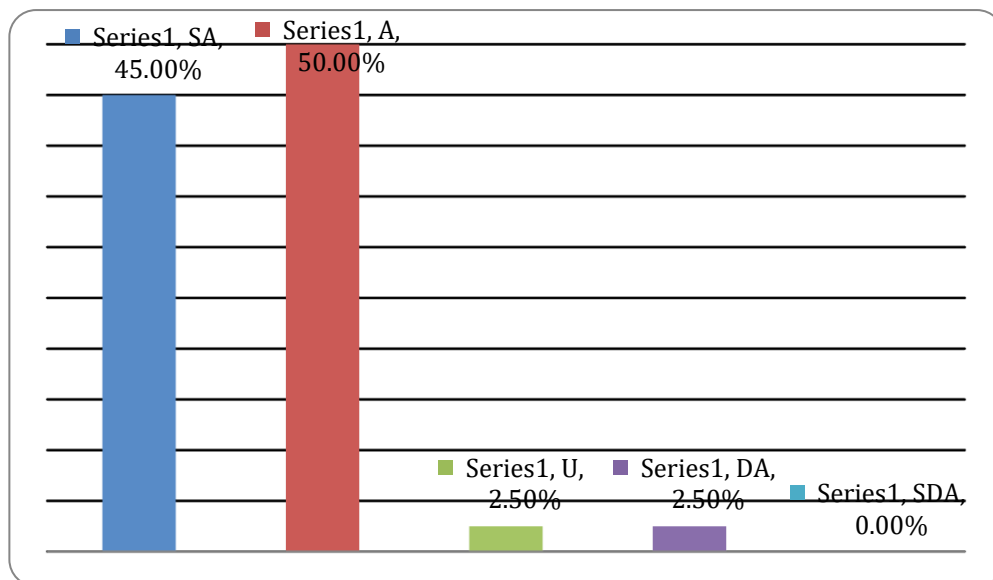
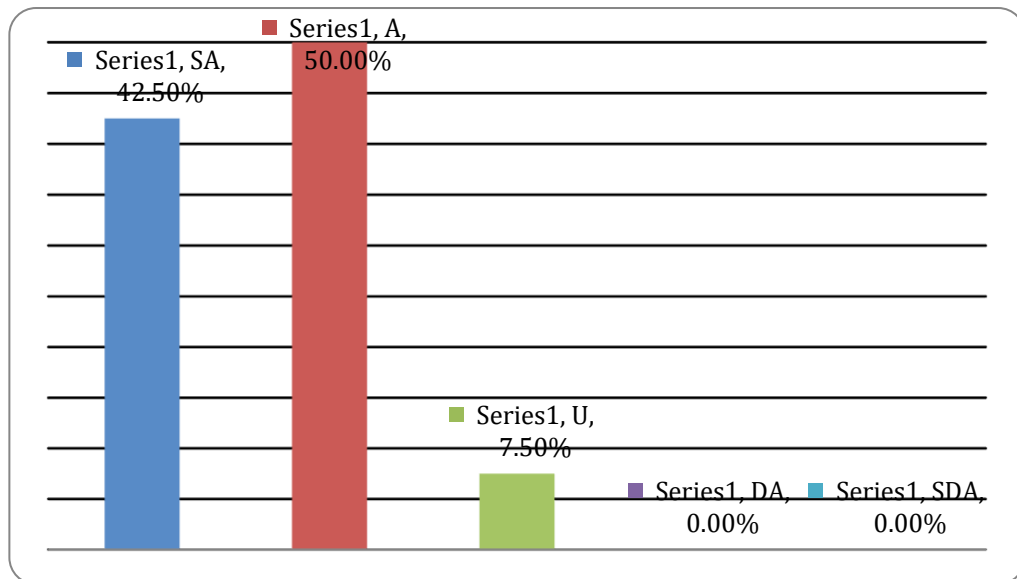


**Graph No. 10**

Question No. 10 was asked to the students to know the view about the training and giving instructions and guidance regarding data searching, a great technique, is also very important for the research. This issue comes to see that many students do not know how to search data so they have to keep in concern that they would be guided properly regarding data searching. The obtained results being described in the master table and the Graph No. 10 show that the students of research have utmost desire that their difficulties would be removed and solved regarding data collection about their research in this regard, 35% strongly and 55% students highly show positivity and have desire that they would give proper guidance regarding data collection. 5% students feel uncertainty while 5% show that they have no concern which could be result of parental support or other sources. The mean value 4.20 shows that the students have strong desire in the realm of research.

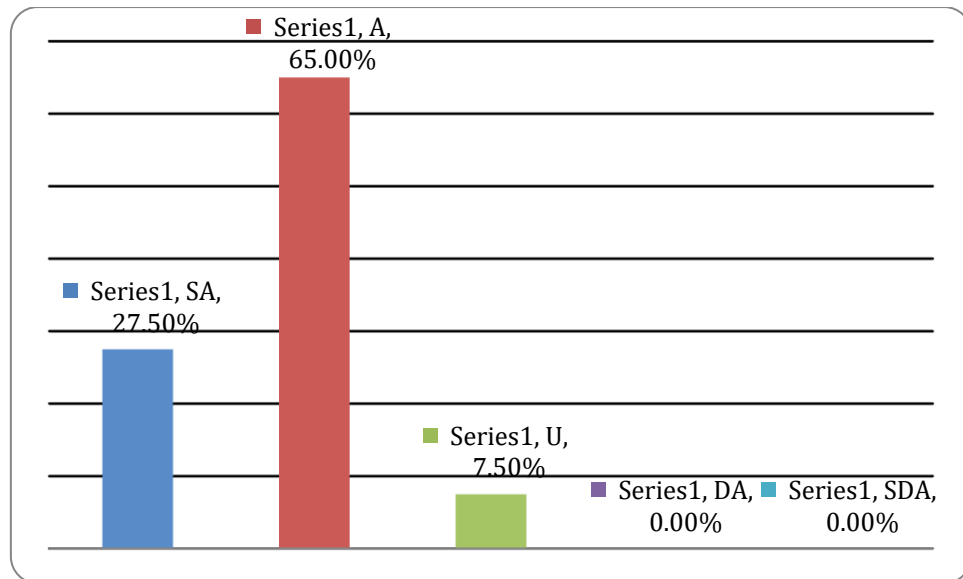
**Graph No. 11**

The results obtained through the Question No. 11 which was being asked in the context of the research topic selection and practices during the course work so that the difficulties at mean time would not be felt. The results show that there is strong perception of students regarding the practices in the topic selecting process in the time of course work and this which is being shown by 45% student while 50% students also have urge that there would be proper practicing of topic selection during the course work while no clear responses shown by 2.5% students and opposition of the statement is also being shown by the 2.5% students. The mean value show high significance as is 4.38.



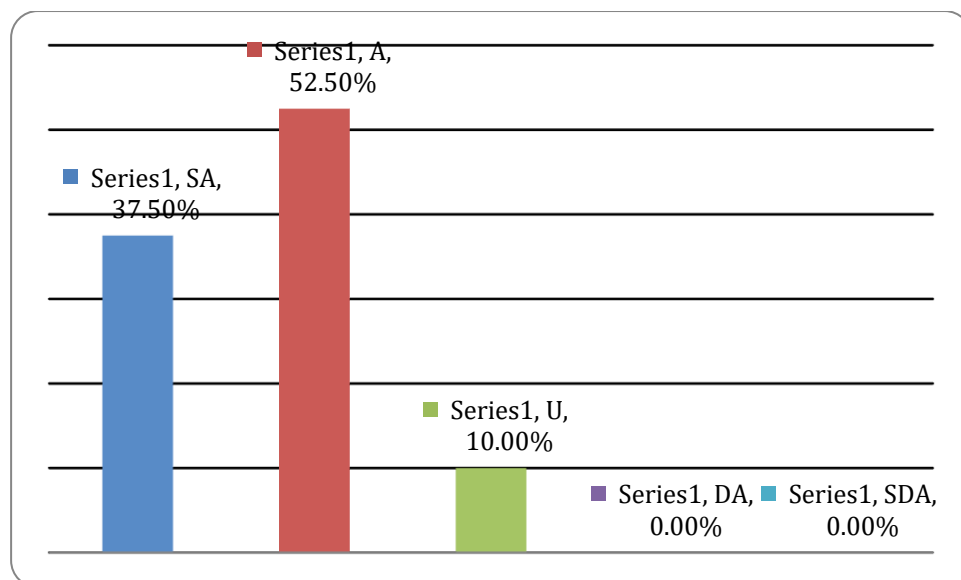
**Graph No. 12**

Question No. 12 was asked to the students about selection of topic and different techniques during the course work. The obtained results being shown in the master table and the graph show that students also have high desires in this regard which is being shown by 42.5% students strongly and by 50% students positively. No response was in negation and the undefined answer was given by 7.5% people. The mean values show the highly significance and it was 4.35.



**Graph No. 13**

Question No.13 was asked to know the view about there would be encouragement regarding the topic selection because free choice plays important role while the choice of selection is also very necessary. The results that those 65% students have same desire while 27% have comparatively greater desire that there would be encouragement in topic selection for the research. No response as in opposition while undefined answer was given by 7.5% people. The mean value show high significance that students have utmost desire in this regard as it is 4.20 s well.

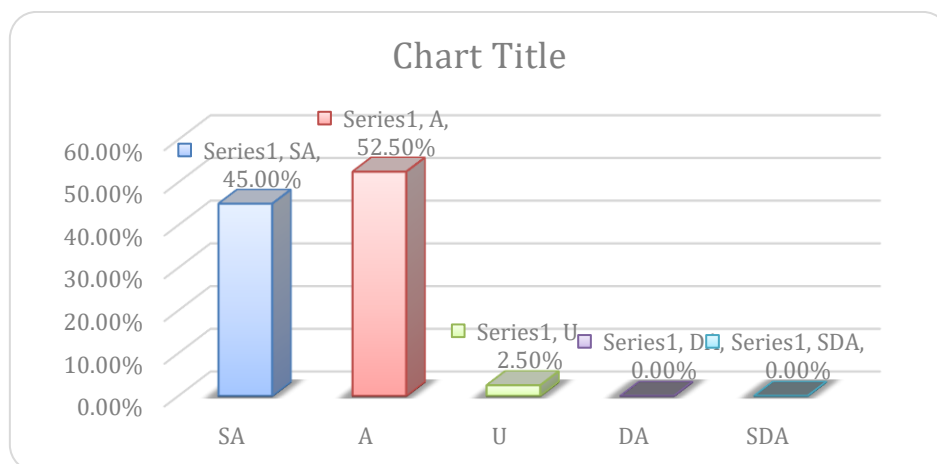


**Graph No. 14**

Question No. 14 is asked to the students about the modification of the topic and the supervisors would also support if there comes any difficulty. The obtained calculations being shown in the table and the graph demonstrate the positive wish by the students in this regard. 52% positively and 37.50% have strong



agreement to the statement while 10% of the students have fallen in uncertainty because of no proper view. No disagreement response was received by the participants as well. The mean value 4.28 exhibits that there is high significance of the statement that there would be proper support and help by the supervisor in the regard of topic modification.



**Graph No. 15**

Question No. 15 is the final question of the study being raised to know the view of the students regarding searching of the material and the proper guidance to the relevance of the material for the research. The results of the study show that the students have extreme desires that there would be proper guidance for the people regarding guidance for the purpose of relevant material searching because many times the technique of data collection about the topic of the research is told but which material is more approximate is not told so the students would be told properly. 45% students have wish that they would be proper guided in this regard too. The same view is also being shown by the 52.5 % people while no response was received in the form of disagreement while just 2.5% people had no proper reply. The mean value illustrates that there are extreme wishes of the students that they would be given proper guidance regarding relevant data selection.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study describe that the students have great interest in research studies and have great intention in this regard. Students keep this issue sensitive and require that there would be proper guidance and the support for them regarding the process of topic selection. They propose that the process of topic selection is the most important of all and wish that there would be supportive role of the supervisors regarding the selection of topic for research studies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students would be preferably given chance to select their own field.
- The role of teacher would be supportive in selection of topic, modification of topic and the area.

- Supervisors would tell the techniques and different ways of material searching and relevant data collection methods so that there would be easiness for the students.

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