ICBM 2025

21ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Tech Titans and Turmoil: Leveraging Disruptive Technologies for Sustainable Business Transformation

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

2025

21st International Conference on Business Management

(ICBM 2025)

"Tech Titans and Turmoil: Leveraging Disruptive Technologies for Sustainable Business Transformation"

19th February 2025

Proceedings Book

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Colombo, Sri Lanka.

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Tel: +94 11 2803052

Fax: +94 11 2803653

Preface

The International Conference on Business Management (ICBM), organised by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, is a prestigious annual event that provides a prominent global platform for social science researchers to share and discuss their ideas and findings. In February 2025, the conference will celebrate its 21st consecutive edition, with the theme "Tech Titans and Turmoil: Leveraging Disruptive Technologies for Sustainable Business Transformation." ICBM 2025 is structured around 12 research tracks, all designed to explore various dimensions of this central theme.

This year, the conference will take place in person at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. The keynote address will be delivered by Prof. Robert Faff, Research Professor at Corvinus University of Budapest, Hungary, Emeritus Professor at the University of Queensland, Australia, and Honorary Adjunct Professor at Bond University, Australia.

A total of 211 manuscripts were submitted for this year's conference. After a rigorous double-blind peer review process, which involved both national and international reviewers, 126 manuscripts were selected for presentation. The abstracts of the presented papers are included in this proceedings book.

Authors of the accepted papers will have the opportunity to present their research to a distinguished panel, receiving constructive feedback to further enhance their work. From the 12 research tracks, the best papers will be selected based on the panel's evaluations. These outstanding papers will then have the opportunity to be further developed into full research articles. They may be considered for publication in the Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, a Scopus-indexed journal, subject to the journal's standard review process.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all the authors who submitted manuscripts, the reviewers, and the panel members for their dedication, as well as to the organising committee for their continued support. We also wish all the authors whose abstracts are published continued success in their research endeavours and look forward to their future contributions to the field of social sciences.

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ICBM 2025

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Message from the Vice-Chancellor

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings for the 21st International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2025), hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ). This year's conference, held under the timely and thought-provoking theme of "Tech Titans and Turmoil: Leveraging Disruptive Technologies for Sustainable Business Transformation," aims to address some of the most pressing challenges of our time, placing a strong emphasis on how disruptive technologies can reshape the future of business.

The ICBM has become a cornerstone event in our academic calendar since its inception in 1999, serving as a platform for meaningful dialogue between academia and industry. In 2025, we are proud to continue this tradition of excellence, bringing together scholars, practitioners, and thought leaders to discuss the intersection of technology, business, and sustainable development.

This conference underscores the need for ethical leadership, responsible business practices, and a focus on achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through technology-driven innovations. The breadth of knowledge shared, both in the main conference and the pre-conference workshops, promises to ignite new ideas and solutions for addressing today's global challenges.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the organising committee, conference co-chairs, and the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce for their exceptional work in making this event possible. I also extend my sincere appreciation to all the presenters, participants, and partners who have contributed to the success of ICBM 2025. May this conference foster collaborations that lead to groundbreaking insights and initiatives for a sustainable, tech-driven future.

Senior Professor Pathmalal M. Manage

Vice-Chancellor

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Dean

It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the key contributors of the 21st International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2025) - the flagship research event of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (USJ). As a pioneering international conference on business management in Sri Lanka, ICBM has established a legacy of academic excellence, uniting local and international scholars and industry leaders in transformative dialogues that shape the future of business management.

As we mark this significant milestone, I extend my warmest congratulations to the paper presenters whose scholarly contributions enrich the intellectual discourse of our academic community. Your research and insights are invaluable in navigating the challenges and opportunities of a rapidly evolving global landscape.

My sincere appreciation goes to the Organising Committee for their outstanding efforts in orchestrating this prestigious event. This year, I am particularly pleased to witness the conference evolving into a dynamic research week, featuring an engaging programme comprising the Main Conference, the Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Pitching Competition, the Business Forum and Case Study Book Publication, the Undergraduate Research Day (URD), and Pre-Conference Workshops. This expansion reflects our unwavering commitment to advancing research and fostering meaningful collaborations.

The theme for ICBM 2025, "Tech Titans and Turmoil: Leveraging Disruptive Technologies for Sustainable Business Transformation," is both timely and thought-provoking, capturing the profound shifts occurring in today's business landscape. In an era where disruptive technologies are reshaping industries and economies, this conference serves as a vital platform for scholars to present cutting-edge research that bridges theory and practice, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge and social well-being.

We sincerely appreciate the valuable collaborations that contribute to ICBM 2025. Our partnership with the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM), USJ, and Emerald Publishing has played a key role in shaping this year's conference. Additionally, our association with the Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences (SLJSS), a Scopus-indexed journal published by the National Science Foundation, provides a great opportunity for high-quality conference manuscripts to be considered for publication. These collaborations help strengthen the impact of the conference, and we are grateful for their continued support.

The ICBM stands as a beacon of academic excellence, fostering collaboration, innovation, and impactful research across diverse management disciplines. I am confident that this year's conference will uphold this tradition, inspiring meaningful discussions and generating transformative research outcomes.

To all participants, organisers, and attendees, I extend my deepest appreciation and best wishes for a successful and insightful conference.

Professor Dushan Jayawickrama

Dean, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Co-Chairs

Dr. Neelangi Nanayakkara
Co-Chair, ICBM 2025

Dr. Gayani Samarakoon
Co-Chair, ICBM 2025

As the Co-Chairs of ICBM 2025, it is our privilege and honour to extend our warm greetings to all the authors contributing to the ICBM 2025 Proceedings. This year, the conference is organised under the theme: "Tech Titans and Turmoils: Leveraging Disruptive Technologies for Sustainable Business Transformation." The paradoxical nature of technological advancements, which bring both opportunities and challenges, inspired us to select this thought-provoking theme. Economic and social organisations have undergone transformative changes throughout history, shaped by various revolutions. Among these, the industrial and digital revolutions stand out as pivotal, driving profound shifts in the socio-economic and political structures of society. Today, we are witnessing a new wave of transformation driven by disruptive technologies, which have fundamentally reshaped the world we live in, particularly in the realm of work. These dynamic changes have created a multitude of research gaps, and without addressing them, the future development of knowledge in these areas will remain incomplete. In this context, ICBM 2025 and its proceedings are dedicated to examining the interplay between disruptive technologies and organisational transformation. We are deeply inspired by the research contributions of the authors, who have explored the impacts of these technologies on various dimensions of organisations and management.

To uphold the quality and academic rigour of this conference, we implemented a double-blind peer review process, ensuring that all manuscripts were critically evaluated. Constructive and insightful feedback was provided to authors during the conference to further enhance their work. Additionally, we are pleased to provide authors with an opportunity to publish their research in a Scopus-indexed journal, the Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, published by

the National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of ICBM 2025. In particular, we extend our sincere thanks to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, the Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC), our esteemed reviewers, track chairs, authors, and academics from FMSC, the Postgraduate Institute of Management (PIM) and other local and foreign universities. We are also grateful to Emerald Publishing and our valued sponsors for their generous support and encouragement.

We hope these proceedings will serve as a valuable resource for academics, researchers, and practitioners, contributing to meaningful advancements in the field of business management in the era of disruptive technologies.

Co-Chairs, ICBM 2025
Dr. Neelangie Nanayakkara
Dr. Gayani Samarakoon

Conference Tracks

ICBM 2025 called for conference manuscripts under 12 research tracks.

Doing Business in Platform Society

New Ways of Working and Managing People in the World of Work

Data-driven Digital Transformation of Accounting and Finance

Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Information Systems Management and Operational Excellence

Governance and Public Management in the Global Political Economy

Regulatory and Ethical Implications of Socio–technological Transformations

Marketing Strategies in Platform Society

Changing Landscape of Higher Education and Educational Management

Managing Global Economic Challenges

Real Estate Management for a Sustainable Future

New Methodological Approaches in Management Research

Multi-Disciplinary Research

List of Research Titles and Authors

New Ways of Working and Managing People in the World of Work

Leveraging Emerging Technologies for Information Systems Management and Operational Excellence

Marketing Strategies in Platform Society

Changing Landscape of Higher Education and Educational Management

Managing Global Economic Challenges

Real Estate Management for a Sustainable Future

Abstracts

Opinion Mining of Undergraduates' Views toward LMS-Based Digital Assessments in Sri Lanka: Insights Using Sentiment Analysis and Association Rule Mining

Prabhasara Athurupane [1], Mariene Fernando [2], Nimasha Sugathadasa [3], Kavinga Elamulla [4], Mihiri Gunasekara [5], Piumi Yapa [6]

Department of Information Technology, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,4]
Department of Decision Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [2,5]
Department of Estate Management & Valuation, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [3]
Department of Finance, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [6]

prabhasara@sjp.ac.lk [1], *mariene@sjp.ac.lk* [2], *nimashasugathadasa@sjp.ac.lk* [3], *kavinga.elamulla@sjp.ac.lk* [4], *mygunasekara@sjp.ac.lk* [5], *piumiyapa@sjp.ac.lk* [6]

ABSTRACT

In recent years, LMS-based examinations have become more significant in Sri Lankan higher education, particularly in light of the global trend towards digital learning environments. This study aims to examine undergraduates' opinions regarding an all-digital LMS-based assessment environment at a Sri Lankan State university. A sample of 823 undergraduates responded to questions related to attitude towards LMS-based digital assessments and their English language proficiency. The gathered data was pre-processed and analysed for the sentiment extraction using RapidMiner 10.2 and frequent associations were identified using the Frequent Pattern Growth algorithm, a method employed in Association Rule Mining (ARM). According to the analysis, 78.7% of the respondents reported a positive sentiment towards LMS-based assessment, while 10.21% and 11.1% reported a negative and neutral sentiment respectively. Further, the authors were able to draw some interesting associations regarding the LMS-based assessment, from among the textual data collected in the form of feedback, where the positive sentiment was further validated using the associations, since the associated terms with LMS-based assessment were "good" and "easy". During the process of ARM, it was also identified that drag-and-drop and MCQs were mostly preferred by the undergraduates. Importantly, the study also found that English language obstacles do not have a fundamental impact on how students feel about completing LMS-based digital assessments, despite the difficulties that can arise at times, particularly when responding to essay-type questions and issues with instructions. According to the current study's findings, English language is merely a minor obstacle to LMS adoption, which can be overcome by consistent e-learning activities in conjunction with Information Technology proficiency. Recommendations include mock practice sessions and enhanced digital literacy training for faculty and students. Improved infrastructure and longitudinal research are necessary to understand the long-term impact of LMS-based digital assessments and reasons behind disfavour of certain question types. The study highlights the importance of qualitative thematic analysis to complement findings and ensure inclusive, efficient LMS-based digital assessment practices in Sri Lankan higher education.

Keywords: **Association Rule Mining, Digital Assessments, Learning Management System (LMS), Opinion Mining, Sentiment Analysis**

'Marketing Underrepresentation at Top-Management': A Study on the Presence of Marketers in the Top Management Teams (TMTs) of Sri Lankan Organisations

Asanga Ranasinghe [1], Jayawardana A. K. L. [2], Rathnayake D. T. [3], Fernando P. B. D. [4]

Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]
Department of Marketing Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [3]
Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [4]

asanga@pim.sjp.ac.lk [1], ananda@pim.sjp.ac.lk [2], dilan@sjp.ac.lk [3], bhagyadewmini@sjp.ac.lk [4]

ABSTRACT

A comparatively small group of the most influential individuals at the top level of the business make up the top management team, which has the power to establish the overarching strategies of the particular organisation. Thus, top management teams play a vital role in setting the overall direction of the organisation. Though marketing is considered as an important function in the organisation, the presence of marketers in the top management teams remain scarce. A preliminary analysis of the top management teams revealed that the majority of the top twenty companies operating in Sri Lanka for the year 2022/23 contain marketing professionals in their boards of directors, which is considered as the top management team. Additionally, an area of negligence is visible in the extant literature on the reasons for marketing professionals being under-represented in the top management teams, as well as a contextual gap is visible as this phenomenon is less investigated in empirical studies in the Global South, particularly in the context of Sri Lanka. This paper proposes to explore the aforementioned gaps by using the theoretical frameworks of social capital theory and role congruity theory, in order to investigate the types of social capital needed for marketing professionals to be included in TMTs and to investigate the discrepancies between the perceived roles as marketers and what is expected of TMT members. The study proposes a comparative case analysis approach to explore the research problem by selecting an organisation with marketing representation in its TMT level and another organisation without marketing representation in its TMT level. The comparative cases will be developed based on the primary data collected through a series of interviews, as well as using other credible secondary data sources. In addition to the thematic analysis, it is proposed to further improve the methodological rigour of the proposed study through triangulation, technique documenting, and cross-checking.

Keywords: **Marketers, Qualitative Research, Role Congruity Theory, Social Capital Theory, Top Management Teams**

Interconnected Dynamics of Equity, Currency, and Commodity Markets in South Asia: A Time-Varying Parameter Vector Autoregressive Approach

Sarathkumara S. M. N. N. [1], Samarakoon S. M. R. K. [2]

Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka [1]
Vinod Gupta School of Management, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India. [2]
Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Kuliyapitiya, Sri Lanka [2]

naveennirupama8312@gmail.com [1], kithsiri@wyb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the dynamic return spillovers among major South Asian financial markets, including equity indices from India (NIFTY50R), Pakistan (KSER), and Sri Lanka (SLASPIR), as well as key global commodities such as Brent crude oil (BrentR) and gold (GoldR), and the relevant exchange rates (USDINR, USDPKR, and USDLKR). Using the Time-Varying Parameter Vector Autoregressive (TVP-VAR) connectedness approach, the analysis covers the period from March 2, 2005, to February 29, 2024, providing insights into how financial shocks propagate across these interconnected markets over nearly two decades. The findings reveal that the Indian equity market (NIFTY50R) and the Indian Rupee exchange rate (USDINR) serve as significant transmitters of shocks within the South Asian region, influencing other regional markets. Conversely, the Sri Lankan (SLASPIR) and Pakistani (KSER) equity indices are identified as net receivers of shocks, indicating their vulnerability to external financial disturbances. The study also highlights the pivotal role of Brent crude oil prices (BrentR) in driving spillovers, particularly affecting the Indian financial markets. The study's findings have significant implications for understanding the complexities of market interconnectedness in South Asia, particularly in the context of global economic integration.

Keywords: **Emerging Markets, Return Spillovers, South Asian Financial Markets, TVP-VAR Connectedness approach**

Relationship between Green Supply Chain Soft & Hard Dimensions and Environmental Performance in Manufacturing Firms in Sri Lanka: Moderating Effect of Product Complexity

Ashoka A. N. D. [1], Jayewardena A. K. L. [2], Upananda D. R. P. [3]

Faculty of Management Studies, The Open University of Sri Lanka [1]
Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura [2]
Faculty of Management Studies, The Open University of Sri Lanka [3]

andas@ou.ac.lk [1], ananda@pim.sjp.ac.lk [2], drupa@ou.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Environmental pollution and biodiversity loss are escalating challenges to global sustainability, particularly in developing countries such as Sri Lanka. This paper investigates the impact of green supply chain management (GSCM) practices—focusing on both soft and hard dimensions—on the environmental performance of the manufacturing sector. Although a substantial body of literature has examined GSCM and its environmental effects, little research has explored how product complexity moderates these relationships. To address this gap, the current study proposes a conceptual model that integrates GSCM soft and hard dimensions, environmental performance, and product complexity, all framed within the resource-based view (RBV). This model not only elucidates the mechanisms through which supply chain practices can drive ecological improvements but also highlights the critical role of product complexity in shaping these outcomes. The paper concludes by discussing the theoretical and managerial implications of the model, offering valuable insights for organisations aiming to enhance environmental performance through targeted GSCM strategies and suggesting avenues for future research.

Keywords: **Employee Involvement, Environmental Performance, Green Purchasing, Green Manufacturing, Product Complexity, Top Management Commitment**

Adoption of Vertical Integration Towards Business Performance Excellence: A Case Study

Dissanayake D. M. K.V. S. [1], Premasiri P. H. P. R. N. [2], Wijesekara G. A. V. [3], Perera D. F. A. M. K. [4], Liyanage T. [5]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5]

bm21554490@my.sliit.lk[1]

ABSTRACT

The Sri Lankan food and beverage industry prioritises improvements in product quality, cost reduction, productivity increase, and customer satisfaction. Over the last several years, some major corporations have taken steps to establish more control over their supply chains with the revival of vertical integration. Some scholars have argued that vertical integration has a negative impact and is an outdated strategy. Hence this study investigates how the implementation and institutionalisation of vertical integration, often regarded as an outdated strategy by some scholars, contribute to business performance excellence particularly in conjunction with a management change, using a single case study. This study aims to explore why did the case study organisation move to vertical integration as a key strategic initiative and to explore, how vertical integration drives the business performance excellence of the case study organisation. This study explores how vertical integration affects business performance at Everfresh through thematic analysis of interviews. It provides key insights into how vertical integration contributes to an organisation's operational efficiency and effectiveness. This company benefits from improved supply chain resilience, productivity, and customer satisfaction. Everfresh focuses on long-term ROI and regulatory alignment, emphasising operational efficiency and profitability. Despite previous literature suggesting vertical integration may be outdated, this company achieves competitive advantages through enhanced efficiency, quality, and financial returns, highlighting its continued relevance in today's food and beverage industry. This study concludes that vertical integration improves Everfresh company's food and beverage company business performance by improving operational efficiency and effectiveness. Theoretically, it supports the use of institutional theory in explaining strategic changes. Practically, it has been shown that an organisation can achieve performance excellence through vertical integration, particularly in conjunction with a management change. This research provides some useful insights for industry practitioners and adds to the ongoing discourse on the relevance of vertical integration in contemporary business strategies.

Keywords: **Business Excellence, Case Study, Forward and Backward Integration Strategy, Food and Beverage Industry, Vertical Integration**

Decision Criteria for Evaluation of Consumer Privacy and Security Aspects in Platform Business Models

Indra Mahakalanda [1], Ishari Siriwardane [2]

Department of Decision Sciences, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka [1]
Sri Lanka Telecom PLC, Colombo 01. Sri Lanka [2]

indram@uom.lk [1]*, ishari@slt.com.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

In the evolving landscape of digital economies, platform business models aka digital business models have emerged as dominant forces driving innovation, connectivity, and commerce. However, the pervasive integration of data within these platforms, data monetisation and intra-inter firm benefit sharing have associated 'privacy' related costs for consumers. Thus firm-consumer interactions have amplified concerns regarding privacy tensions among consumers, firms and regulators. We explore the multifaceted criteria of privacy within digital platform business models, highlighting its critical importance. The objective of this paper is to develop a Fuzzy Analytic Hierarchy Process (FAHP) for the evaluation of consumer privacy and security criteria of platform business models taking into consideration of the judgments of decision makers. First, it identifies 4 criteria and 14 sub criteria that constitute consumer privacy and security aspects in digital business models. FAHP questionnaire survey collects data from 10 industry experts and FAHP assigns weights for each criterion enabling decision makers to rank based on the importance level. This study focuses only on the main criteria for the evaluation of consumer privacy and security in digital platforms. Results of FAHP analysis ranks user awareness & education and compliance& regulatory framework criteria with the highest importance and it assigns the lowest weight to data collection practices criterion.

Our multi-criteria decision framework provides a comprehensive understanding of privacy's pivotal role in the success and sustainability of platform business models. Ultimately, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on privacy, advocating for robust privacy strategies that balance innovation and ethical responsibility in the digital age.

Keywords: **Analytical Hierarchy Process, Consumer Privacy and Security, Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis, Platform Business Models**

Unveiling the Nexus of Cryptocurrency as a Mode of Payment in SME Sector in Sri Lanka

Nuwan A. N. [1], Bandara H. G. K. N. [2], Ranasinghe D. K [3], Heenkenda S. [4], Damayanthi B. W. R. [5], Bulankulama S. W. G. K. [6]

Business Management School, Gale Road, Colombo-06. [1]
Department of Economics, University of Rajarata, Mihintale, Sri Lanka. [2,6]
National Institution of Business Management, Vidya Mawatha, Colombo 07. [3]
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. [4,5]

annuwan@gmail.com [1]

ABSTRACT

State-of-the-art technology has changed every aspect of global operations, making individuals switch to a contemporary platform instead of traditional business processes. The evolution of payment methods has shifted more towards virtual payment methods than ever before and the global spread of adoption of cryptocurrency is remarkable. This study aimed to analyse the influencing factors and degree of readiness of SMEs to embrace cryptocurrency as a form of payment, with a particular focus on SMEs in Sri Lanka. The study employed a quantitative survey approach and gathered 240 responses from SMEs registered in the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of industries In Sri Lanka. A self-administered questionnaire method was used to collect primary data, which were then analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. According to the findings, respondents were enthusiastic about using cryptocurrencies as a payment method. The study revealed that the SME sector in Sri Lanka the breading ground for new payment technologies, particularly among male-owned SMEs in the service sector. This study further revealed that social influence and trust go hand in hand, and trust has a big impact on the adoption of cryptocurrencies in particular where distrust in SMEs are greater challenge and where perceptions of the rule of law are strongest. The findings implied that the transaction openness and more accessible information on the opaque legal issues around cryptocurrencies, particularly the distinct roles of the many regulatory authorities, platform security should be reinforced. Regular security audits, disclosing vulnerabilities and solutions, and responding to users' complaints and inquiries must all be managed in a well-organised manner among the unorganised sector.

Keywords: **Cryptocurrency, Cryptocurrency Adoption, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Trust, Social Influence, SME**

Bridging Traditional and Contemporary 3R Approaches: A Systematic Literature Review across Key Industries

Menike R. M. A. P. [1], Navoda K. B. D. [2], Dharmarathna H. M. R. N. [3],
Sirimanna N. N. W. M. [4], Geethma Pathirana [5], Tharuka Jayathilake [6]

Department of Business Management, SLIIT Business School,
Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

Geethma.p@sliit.lk [5] *Tharuka.j @sliit.lk* [6]

ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review evaluates the Traditional 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) and Contemporary 3R (Resell, Repair, Rental) frameworks across the Fashion, Automotive, Construction, and Manufacturing industries. While the Traditional 3R model has effectively reduced waste and conserved resources, its limitations, such as downcycling and inefficiencies in modern applications, underscore the need for adaptive strategies. Conversely, the Contemporary 3R model emphasises lifecycle extension through consumer-driven approaches, including resell platforms, rental services, and repair initiatives, addressing the evolving demands of the circular economy. The study introduces the Hybrid 3R model as a comprehensive framework that integrates elements of both traditional and contemporary practices, offering a synergistic approach to sustainability. By combining recycling with repair and resell strategies, the Hybrid 3R model optimises resource utilisation, reduces waste, and fosters systemic innovation in sustainable practices. This review contributes to the discourse on circular economy principles, highlighting the transformative potential of hybrid strategies in achieving long-term environmental and economic objectives.

Keywords: **3R Approach, Lifecycle Extension, Sustainability Practices, Waste Management**

Building Bridges: Networking Strategies of Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka's Muslim-Owned SME Sector

Sithas M. T. M. [1], Surangi H. A. K. N. S. [2], Ruwan Abeysekera [3]

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [1]
Department of Commerce and Financial Management University of Kelaniya [2]
Department of Finance, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies University of Kelaniya [3]

mohd.sithas@gmail.com[1], surangins@kln.ac.lk[2], ruwanab@kln.ac.lk[3]

ABSTRACT

Networking is a vital component of entrepreneurial success, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating within ethnic minority communities. These communities often face unique socio-economic challenges in sustaining and expanding their businesses due to cultural constraints, limited resources, and systematic barriers. The Muslim community in Sri Lanka, which forms a significant minority group, has long been involved in entrepreneurship, yet the specific networking strategies they employ to navigate these challenges remain underexplored. This study explores the networking strategies adopted by Sri Lanka's Muslim entrepreneurs to overcome the challenges and drive their businesses. Using a qualitative narrative approach and purposive sampling techniques, the research captures the lived experiences and stories of eleven ethnic minority entrepreneurs, exploring how ethnic minority entrepreneurs form and develop networks within a socio-cultural and economic context. Thematic analysis revealed five key themes: business activities, close networks, social and religious gatherings, organised networks, and digital platforms, with six sub-themes. Sub-themes under business activities include customer relationships, employment relationships, and business alliances while close networks encompass family bonding, friendship and social bonds, and marital ties. These strategies primarily foster strong ties within the community itself, except for organised networks and digital platforms which offer the opportunity to create broader connections outside the community. However, due to reluctance to participate in organised network events, trust issues, and lack of awareness about digital platforms, ethnic entrepreneurs often struggle to generate weak ties and predominantly form strong ties within their community, which hinder their networking objectives. The findings highlight the significance of having both strong and weak connections inside and outside the community for business sustainability and development, and the dynamic interplay between tradition and technology in entrepreneurial networking is key for minority entrepreneurial successes. The study offers insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to understand ethnic minority entrepreneurs' networking strategies and support them to develop their businesses.

Keywords: **Minority Entrepreneurs, Muslim Businesses, Networking Strategies, Social Capital, Sri Lankan**

Factors Affecting Intention to Adopt E-Commerce in the Handicraft Industry in Sri Lanka

Nisansala Wijesinghe [1], Ravindu Kulawardane [2], Wewaldeniyage S. L. K. [3]

Department of Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Sri Lanka[1,2,3]

nisansalawijesinghe0421@gmail.com [1], ravindudeshan@sjp.ac.lk [2], shanikalakmali@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The handicraft industry in Sri Lanka, characterised by its rich cultural heritage and economic significance, has yet to fully embrace e-commerce despite its transformative potential. This study investigates the factors influencing the intention of Sri Lankan artisans to adopt e-commerce platforms. Utilising a quantitative research methodology, the study surveyed 385 artisans from the Western, Central, and Southern provinces; areas noted for their dense handicraft populations. The analysis, grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework, focuses on several determinants: perceived cost, relative advantage, organisational readiness, government support, and perceived ease of use. SPSS statistical software was used to perform these analyses. Data analysis revealed that 51.2% of businesses experienced minimal e-commerce sales (0–20%), while 22.3% reported 41–60% of their sales occurring online. The findings indicate that artisans are more likely to adopt e-commerce when they perceive tangible benefits, such as expanded market reach and increased sales. Relative advantage emerged as a significant factor, explaining 39.9% of the variation in adoption intention. Conversely, perceived cost had a notable negative impact, with a 40.2% inverse relationship between higher costs and adoption. Perceived ease of use also played a critical role, demonstrating a 28.3% positive relationship, indicating that user-friendly platforms encourage adoption. Organisational readiness, encompassing digital skills and technological integration, exhibited a 26% positive relationship with adoption, emphasising the role of preparedness. However, government support had a minimal effect, with a beta coefficient of 0.018, suggesting that while policies may help, they do not directly address affordability or accessibility concerns. Regression analysis confirmed that relative advantage, perceived ease of use, and organisational readiness significantly influence e-commerce adoption. However, barriers such as high costs and limited digital literacy persist. To address these, the study recommends reducing costs, improving organisational readiness, and developing user-friendly, affordable platforms. Key policy measures include enhancing digital infrastructure, providing financial incentives, and promoting digital literacy. Future research should expand its scope and examine post-adoption outcomes to strengthen the global competitiveness of Sri Lanka's handicraft sector.

Keywords: **Artisan Digital Transformation, E-Commerce Adoption, Sri Lankan Handicraft, Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)*, *Technology Organisation Environment (TOE) Framework**

Career Expectations of Gen Z Job Seekers: Insights from Entry-Level Positions

Poornima Attygala [1], Mayuri Atapattu [2]

Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [1,2]

poornimanayani1025@gmail.com [1], mayuri@hrm.cmb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Career expectations play a vital role in the success of one's career journey. The identified problem of this research is the lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the career expectations of Generation Z job seekers in entry-level positions within the current workforce. Hence, the objective of this research is to explore the career expectations of Generation Z job seekers who are in entry-level positions. This research collected data from ten entry-level job seekers belonging to Generation Z and utilised semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. Additionally, thematic analysis is the data analysis technique of this research as it follows the qualitative approach. According to the findings of this research, work-life balance, intrinsic rewards, extrinsic rewards, skill improvement, job stability, job security, flexible work arrangements, friendly supervision, supportive work atmosphere, and job switching are the main career expectations of Generation Z job seekers in entry-level positions. Further, this study has divided those ten career expectations into three main categories such as job-centric career expectations, workplace-centric career expectations, and person-centric career expectations making a significant contribution to the literature. Generation Z entry level job seekers' career expectations that have been identified from this study can be applied to the elements of the Job Characteristics Model. Therefore, this study makes an immense theoretical contribution by creating new knowledge and intensifying the existing theories. In addition, this study makes a significant practical contribution as it is mostly beneficial for human resources professionals in the current workplaces when preparing work policies and strategies related to the attraction and retention of this latest generation in the workforce. Further, this study makes a considerable empirical contribution by filling the gap in existing literature since there is a dearth of studies (Barhate & Dirani, 2022; Hutanu et al., 2020; Pekica, 2020) about the career expectations of entry-level job seekers who belong to Generation Z compared to previous generations.

Keywords: **Career Expectations, Current Workforce, Entry Level Positions, Generation Z, Job Seekers**

Managing Workforce Ethnic Diversity in Sri Lankan Organisations: A Qualitative Exploration

Banu F. R. Z. [1], Fernando P. B. D. [2]

Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]

zbrussain00@gmail.com [1], bhagyadewmini@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Organisations are becoming more aware of how important it is to manage ethnic diversity to encourage innovation, improve decision making and gain competitive advantages in a globalised environment. Historically, Sri Lankan organisations have faced challenges in managing ethnic diversity. In line with this view, an area of neglect is visible in the extant literature on the ethnic diversity patterns, its advantages and disadvantages as well as on the ethnic diversity strategies used in Sri Lankan organisations. Accordingly, this study mainly focuses on why Sri Lankan organisations face challenges when implementing strategies for managing workforce ethnic diversity. By using a qualitative approach, data was collected from ten employees who represented the diverse ethnicities of Sri Lankan organisations. Subsequently, the collected data was coded and analysed through thematic analysis. Accordingly, the findings were presented under the themes of the current ethnic diversity practices in organisational cultures, the impact of managing ethnic diversity and strategies used to manage an ethnically diverse workforce in Sri Lanka. The findings show that Sri Lankan organisations use several strategies to manage ethnic diversity. These include creating an inclusive workplace, encouraging teamwork between different ethnic groups, celebrating cultural differences, and making employees feel like they belong. These efforts help improve job satisfaction, teamwork, and employee retention while building a positive workplace culture. However, the study also found some challenges. These include cultural misunderstandings, biases, and struggles to create unity among diverse groups. These challenges show that managing ethnic diversity needs careful planning and effort. To overcome these problems, organisations follow strategies like strong leadership support for diversity goals, teaching employees about different cultures, and improving communication. They also connect with different communities by joining cultural events and creating partnerships. Flexible work policies help meet the needs of diverse employees and make them feel appreciated. This study provides important insights into managing ethnic diversity in Sri Lanka and provides useful ideas to make it successful.

Keywords: **Ethnic Diversity, Inclusion, Qualitative Research, Workforce Diversity**

HR Strategies for the Future of Work: Managing Virtual and Distributed Teams Effectively

Battu Nagaraju

Department of MBA(HRM), Acharya Nagarjuna University

battunraju@yahoo.co.in

ABSTRACT

More and more virtual and remote teams are popping up as a result of workplace transformations, which means HR departments need to be creative to keep track of performance and boost morale. This research aims to analyse how various HR methods and technology have affected employee happiness and productivity across different industries. Flexible work rules, performance monitoring tools, and team-building activities were some human resources techniques evaluated using a quantitative methodology with 200 participants questioned. To further improve employee engagement and productivity, the study investigates the function of HR analytics, project management tools, and video conferencing platforms. The results show that the best HR practices include having clear communication procedures and frequent virtual check-ins. These practices have a substantial correlation with employee happiness ($\beta = 0.63$) and performance ($\beta = 0.68$). There was a broad adoption of performance management systems and flexible work rules, both of which had beneficial consequences. There was a substantial correlation between productivity and the most popular technology: video conferencing ($r = 0.72$) and project management software ($r = 0.68$). Emerging technologies, including AI-driven feedback systems, have great potential for improving HR processes in the future, even if they are not yet commonly used. This research provides practical suggestions for enhancing remote team management and highlights the necessity of customised HR strategies to meet the specific needs of each organisation and industry. The research relies on self-reported data and has a cross-sectional design, which is limitations. Future research should look at industry-specific difficulties and use longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impacts of HR policies on remote teams.

Keywords: **Employee Performance, Emerging Technologies, HR Strategies, Remote Work, Virtual Teams, Workforce Management**

The Impact of Career Development on White-Collar Employee Retention in a Selected Apparel Firm in Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka

Dayabandara H. M. A. U. [1], Perera, G. D. N. [2]

Department of Human Resource Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

anuradhadayabanadara@gmail.com [1], *dinokagnp@sjp.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of career development on white-collar employee retention in a selected apparel firm in Sabaragamuwa province of Sri Lanka. Poor employee retention leads to high employee turnover rates, resulting in increased costs associated with recruitment, work transition, and wastage. Previous studies indicate a positive correlation between career development and employee retention. However, most of these studies have been conducted in Western countries, highlighting a lack of empirical evidence within the Sri Lankan context. This gap underscores the need for research in this area. The research problem addressed is "Does career development impact white-collar employee retention in the selected apparel firm in Sabaragamuwa Province of Sri Lanka?" Six research objectives were developed: to examine the impact of career development, career goal progress, professional ability, promotion speed, and career remuneration growth on white-collar employee retention, as well as to determine the most significant determinants of career development and white-collar employee retention in the selected apparel firm in Sabaragamuwa province of Sri Lanka. Five hypotheses were formulated and tested in a non-contrived setting. The study adopted a cross-sectional design, with a sample of 152 white-collar employees who responded to a structured questionnaire consisting of 29 statements with a five-point Likert scale. The random sampling method was used for this study. The unit of analysis was the individual level, and data were collected primarily by electronic mail using Google Forms. The data collected was analysed using univariate and bivariate methods through SPSS version 23. The findings indicate that career development significantly impacts employee retention among white-collar employees in the selected apparel firm in Sabaragamuwa province of Sri Lanka, and all hypotheses are supported. The most significant determinant of career development identified in this study is career goal progress, while work-life balance was the most significant factor affecting white-collar employee retention. This study contributes to theoretical and practical knowledge, offering insights to top management on the importance of career development for enhancing employee retention.

Keywords: **Apparel Firms, Career Development, Employee Retention, White-Collar Employees**

Organisational Stigmatisation of HIV and Potential Employability of People Living with HIV (PLHIV): A Developing Country Perspective

B. Romesh De Silva

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

romeshdesilva@sjp.ac.lk

ABSTRACT

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) have prevailed over centuries, creating controversies in society due to their contentious nature. Among other STIs, HIV remains the most critical STI in terms of prevalence, death rates, and transmission. Notwithstanding its 100% incurability, experts predicted a potential decline in HIV with the invention of ART treatments that could control the fatality associated with the virus while suppressing its transmission. The predictions turned out to be delusional, with PLHIV not accepting their actual status to access medication due to social stigma and its associated fears. Fear of losing employment remains a prime issue of HIV stigma. The study encompasses both the voice of the employable PLHIV and the perspective of organisations in understanding the nature and intensity of stigma effectuated upon PLHIV within the Sri Lankan socio-organisational context. Findings suggest that Sri Lankan organisations, due to stigma and lack of awareness, perceive PLHIV as an unemployable community with the potential to derive a multitude of calamities to the smooth flow of organisational operations. Organisational stigmatisation is behaviourally manifested through workplace discrimination, while cognitive manifestation is spawned through culture-specific stereotypical labelling processes, socially constructed to emphasise the social deviance of PLHIV. Among many HIV research focused on the medical and statistical technicality of transmission, this study stands out as a social research effort to establish employment-related stigma as a fundamental threat to the socio-economic survival of PLHIV in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Discrimination, Employment, HIV, Labelling, Stigma**

Factors Affecting Employee Adaptation to E-Tax Administration in Sri Lanka

Dhamruwan T. B. [1], Fernando R. L. S. [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1]

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [2]

tsbrindu@gmail.com [1], rlsf@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

E-taxation is a specific application of e-government. Modern information technology increases tax compliance, base, and collection by creating a bridge between taxpayers and the tax authority. However, the scope of e-taxation is not limited to providing online taxpayer services. e-Tax administration, a part of the broader application of e-taxation, is aimed at increasing government revenue collection by improving the efficiency and productivity of tax officials through the automation of core tax system tasks and facilitation of decision-making by managing information. In the case of Sri Lanka, evidence revealed that the earlier stages of the implementation of e-tax administration have not improved revenue collection due to a lower level of adaptation by the officials to e-tax administration. This study aimed to understand the factors underlying tax officials' adaptation to e-tax administration in Sri Lanka by incorporating technology acceptance behaviour, change management, and job redesign perspectives. This study has proposed a modified Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) Model to explain employees' technology acceptance, especially after the techno-structural changes in public sector organisations. The modified UTAUT model was tested using the data collected from a sample of 229 tax officials, which was subsequently analysed using Structural Equation Modelling. Findings suggested that Social Influence and Job Enrichment Characteristics of e-tax administration had the highest impact on employees' adaptation to e-tax administration. Effort Expectancy, Facilitating Conditions, and Technophobia have also been identified as significant determinants of employees' adaptation to e-tax administration. Findings also indicated that the impacts of these factors on employee Adaptation to e-tax administration are significantly mediated by employees' Intention to adopt e-tax administration. The study recommends focusing on how techno-structural changes affect job characteristics, involving employees in improvements, and enhancing the perception of new technologies in public sector organisations.

Keywords: **E-Taxation, Employee Adaptation, Public Sector, Technology Acceptance**

Exploring the Quality of Life of LGBTQ+ Employees: With Special Reference to the Western Province of Sri Lanka

Dilukshan S. [1], Thushara E. [2], Perera L. I. N. [3], Navodya I. D. S. [4], Vandhana Dunuwila [5], Yamuna Wickramasinghe [6]

SLIIT Business School [1,2,3,4,5,6]

bm21541766@my.sliit.lk [1], bm21559068@my.sliit.lk [2], bm21587924@my.sliit.lk [3], bm21592874@my.sliit.lk [4], vandhana.d@sliit.lk [5], yamuna.w@sliit.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the Quality of Life (QoL) of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and LGBTQ+ employees in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Despite international progress regarding LGBTQ+ issues, many in Sri Lanka still face discrimination, which impacts their overall well-being. Considering the paucity of research in the area on the unique challenges and experiences faced by many LGBTQ+ employees, this study is much needed. This phenomenological research study adopted focus group interviews to discuss the following aspects: identifying primary factors affecting the quality of life, social issues, and difficulties at work for LGBTQ+ employees. In this regard, the thematic analysis emphasises the effects of personal health, freedom of choice of expression, and work income on quality of life. Participants reported discrimination, social exclusion, and lack of access to health services. The findings highlight the critical need for supportive policy and community resources. Other work-related challenges include harassment at work and lack of accommodation, which further hinder access to opportunities for career advancement. These findings argue for the urgent need for targeted interventions by providing social and professional environment to improve the quality of life of LGBTQ+ employees. It reveals insights into the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Sri Lanka and promotes systemic change to support well-being and improve opportunity.

Keywords: **LGBTQ+ Community, LGBTQ+ Employees, Quality of Life, Social Challenges, Workplace Challenge**

Working Environment Barriers Faced by the Females in the Construction Industry of Sri Lanka: A Qualitative Study

Fernando D. T. [1], Fernando P. B. D. [2]

Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]

fernando.dilhari10@gmail.com [1], bhagyadewmini@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the unique work environment-related barriers faced by females in the Sri Lankan construction industry and to uncover the hidden challenges they encounter. The construction industry, an industry that is traditionally associated with masculinity through its gendered work, has faced significant changes in the 21st century with the entry of more female workers. Despite the efforts to challenge the traditional gender norms, the construction industry particularly in the Sri Lankan context continues to demonstrate a low level of female labour force participation, due to the unique barriers imposed on females through its working environment. Seen in this light, this research is aimed at exploring the barriers faced by the females employed in the Sri Lankan construction industry, particularly considering its working environment. This research study was conducted in a qualitative inductive approach using in-depth, semi-structured interviewing techniques. The findings of this study revealed four main barriers faced by the females in terms of their working environment namely, unsafe and harsh working conditions, inadequate amenities, lack of workplace support and lack of career development, which are further elaborated through the theoretical lens of the social role theory. The first theme of unsafe and harsh working conditions is characterised by aspects such as lack of protective attire that is designed for women and challenging weather conditions, while the second theme of inadequate amenities discussed aspects such as female-specific sanitary facilities and washrooms. Lack of workplace support, which is the third theme of the discussion, elaborated on aspects such as sexual harassment and hostile attitudes of the male counterparts that are displayed towards women, and the fourth theme of lack of career development discussed aspects such as exclusion and boy-bonding. Thus, this study aimed to address the existing area of neglect in the literature by empirically focusing on female workers in the Sri Lankan construction industry, which is an under-searched population, as well as by addressing the contextual gap in the extant literature, by focusing on the construction industry of a Global South context such as Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Construction Industry, Female Labour Force Participation, Gender, Qualitative Research, Social Role Theory**

The Impact of Working-From-Home on Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement, Employee Well-Being, and Employee Work-Life Balance, with Special Reference to Banking Sector Employees in Sri Lanka

Nipuni Fernando [1], Seshika Kariyapperuma [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]

nipunidfernando@yahoo.com [1], seshika@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of work-from-home on job satisfaction with a specific focus on the mediating role of employee engagement, employee well-being, and employee work-life balance in this relationship with special reference to banking sector employees in Sri Lanka. There is a significant research gap both locally and globally on the impact of remote work in Sri Lankan banks, where existing studies focused on isolated aspects and short-term effects, while long-term consequences remain underexplored. Four hypotheses and a conceptual framework were developed based on a comprehensive literature survey. A quantitative research approach was adopted with a cross-sectional correlational survey design. A standard questionnaire was utilised to collect data from a sample of 391 banking sector employees in Sri Lanka. The sample was selected based on the stratified sampling technique. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised to analyse the data. The reliability and validity were tested using Cronbach's Alpha, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test, and Bartlett's test of sphericity. The hypotheses were tested using simple regression analysis and Baron and Kenny's mediator analysis method. The results indicate a strong positive relationship between work-from-home and job satisfaction. It was found that both employee engagement and work-life balance mediate the relationship between work-from-home and job satisfaction. Contrary to expectations, the mediating effect of employee well-being was not supported, likely due to the complex interplay of factors like boundary management, social support, and individual preferences. This study contributes to the knowledge of remote work and organisational behaviour by highlighting the positive impact of flexible work arrangements on the Job Satisfaction of banking sector employees. Moreover, it extends the theoretical understanding by identifying employee engagement and work-life balance as significant mediators in this relationship, revealing the methods through which remote work influences job satisfaction. Additionally, it shows the complex nature of employee well-being in work-from-home settings stressing the need for further exploration into its role in job satisfaction. The major implication of the finding is that increasing work-from-home arrangements in the workplace may be an effective and efficient way to increase employees' job satisfaction. Finally, the study highlights the importance of supportive policies and practices to optimise the impact of remote work on employee satisfaction, offering valuable insights for Sri Lanka's banking sector organisations to navigate remote work arrangements and support their employees effectively.

Keywords: **Employee Well-Being, Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, Working-From-Home, Work-Life Balance**

A Study of Brain Drain of Migrated Millennial Doctors from Colombo District, Sri Lanka

Hiripitiya U. D. [1], Jayathilaka A. K. K. R. [2]

Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka[1,2]

dewhiripitiya@gmail.com [1], *anuruddikakumudu@sjp.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

According to the GMOA, 400 medical specialists have left the country in the past two years, and five thousand physicians from Sri Lanka have completed examinations, allowing them to work overseas. The research paper explores the intricate brain drain problem that mostly affects medical professionals in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka, who are millennials born between 1981 and 1996. A comprehensive understanding of the push and pull forces influencing their actions was obtained through the systematic gathering of data through in-depth interviews with eight participants, selected via snowball sampling, and analysed using the narrative method under the qualitative approach. Further research paper discusses the factors that cause younger medical professionals to leave Sri Lanka and their views that go along with what they aspire from the relocation. The research paper discovered several motivating factors such as financial limitations, unbearable working stress along with burnout, the drastic increase in tax rates, resource and technology constraints, a toxic work environment with rigid hierarchies, negative attitudes from society, and unethical political interferences along with the ungraciousness drove them to achieve their perspectives such as intention to work in world-class healthcare systems, personal and professional growth, elevate their mental well-being, better future for children and to be valued and respected by the society. The research paper emphasises how critical it is to implement specific strategies to lessen the negative consequences of this brain drain and create an atmosphere that will help Sri Lankan young medical professionals remain within the country. By identifying the underlying reasons for this occurrence, implementing specific policies and addressing the sensible demeanours and courtesies, Sri Lanka has the adequacy to enhance its human capital by energising the young workforce to reinforce the people's standard of living even by uplifting the primary healthcare to mould it into a better place to live and grow.

Keywords: **Brain Drain, Knowledge Worker, Medical Professionals, Millennials, Personal Aspirations**

Moderating Role of Learning Orientation on the Impact of Transformational Leadership on Employee Innovative Behaviour: Evidence from Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

Jasintha N. [1], Viveka U. [2]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka [1,2]

jasinhabn@univ.jfn.ac.lk [1], *uviveka2112@gmail.com* [2]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative behaviour, focusing on the moderating effect of learning orientation in Sri Lanka's garment sector. Drawing on the knowledge-based view (KBV) theory, the research explores how transformational leaders foster innovation and creativity in a highly competitive and dynamic environment. Transformational leadership, characterised by vision, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, is crucial in shaping an organisational culture that encourages experimentation, risk-taking, and knowledge-sharing. Leaders who adopt this style inspire employees to think innovatively and contribute novel ideas, enhancing the firm's adaptability and competitiveness. Given the rapid technological advancements and shifting consumer demands in the garment sector, fostering an innovation-driven culture is vital for business sustainability and growth. This study employed a quantitative approach, using convenience sampling to collect data from 296 respondents. The analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25.0. The findings confirm that transformational leadership significantly impacts innovative behaviour among employees. Furthermore, learning orientation was found to have a moderating effect, strengthening the relationship between transformational leadership and innovation. Employees in organisations that emphasise continuous learning are likelier to experiment with new ideas and take calculated risks, contributing to the company's overall innovation capability. These results underscore the necessity for garment sector businesses to adopt leadership strategies that motivate employees and create an environment that supports continuous learning and knowledge-sharing practices. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature by applying KBV theory to the apparel industry, demonstrating how leadership and organisational learning interact to drive innovation. Practically, it highlights the importance of investing in leadership development programs that enhance transformational behaviours and implementing strategies that reinforce a learning-oriented culture. For policymakers and industry leaders, these findings offer valuable insights into improving organisational agility and competitiveness through leadership and learning-based interventions.

Keywords: **Apparel Workers, Employee Innovative Behaviour, Learning Orientation, Transformational Leadership**

The Impact of Organisation Identification on Innovation Performance: Mediating Role of Job Embeddedness, Evidence from Executives in the Apparel Industry in Sri Lanka

Jasintha N. [1], Uthayavarshika V. [2]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka [1, 2]

jasinhabn@univ.jfn.ac.lk [1], *uthayavarshihav@gmail.com [2]*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of organisational identification on innovation performance, emphasising the mediating role of job embeddedness in the Sri Lankan garment sector. Organisational identification fosters a sense of belonging and purpose among employees, motivating them to actively engage in creative problem-solving and innovative initiatives that contribute to organisational success. Employees who strongly identify with their organisation are more likely to exhibit commitment, reactiveness, and a willingness to go beyond their formal roles to drive innovation. The study is grounded on the social exchange theory, highlighting how job embeddedness comprising links, fit, and sacrifice plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between organisational identification and innovation performance. Job embeddedness creates a stable and supportive work environment that enhances employees' engagement, collaboration, and retention, ultimately facilitating innovation. Data were collected through a convenience sampling method from 233 executive-level employees in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. The data were analysed using SPSS 26.0. The findings reveal that organisational identification significantly predicts innovation performance, and job embeddedness mediates this relationship by reinforcing employees' connection to their work and organisation. A well-embedded workforce, supported by meaningful professional relationships and alignment with company values, is more inclined to contribute innovative ideas and solutions. This study has significant theoretical and practical implications. Academically, it extends existing research by exploring the psychological and situational factors that drive innovation in the apparel sector. From a managerial perspective, fostering organisational identification through initiatives that enhance job embeddedness—such as promoting a culture of creativity, strengthening social ties within the workplace, and aligning employee goals with organisational objectives—can lead to a more engaged and innovative executive workforce. The study concludes that businesses in Sri Lanka's garment sector can enhance their global competitiveness by leveraging these factors. Future research should explore similar mechanisms in different industries and cultural contexts to validate these findings further.

Keywords: **Apparel Sector, Innovation Performance, Job Embeddedness, Organisational Identification, Sri Lanka**

How Do Body Image Perceptions Shape Personality Traits among Sri Lankan Youth?

Jayamindi G. G. S. [1], Ahamed M. N. A. [2], Rajapakshe R. M. D. N. [3], Lekamge D. S. [4],

Dunuvila V. R. [5], Aluthwala C. [6]

School of Business, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

bm21578496@my.sliit.lk [1], bm21588150@my.sliit.lk [2], bm21565830@my.sliit.lk [3], bm21562006@my.sliit.lk [4], vandhana.d@sliit.lk [5], chathuni.a@sliit.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the association of body image perception with personality traits in the Sri Lankan youth population aged 15–29 years. The research question is: How does body image perception relate to personality traits? Data were collected from 384 participants (192 males and 192 females) through an online questionnaire, with the sample size determined using Cochran's formula for reliability. The study addresses a gap by examining how social media exposure and societal pressures influence body image and personality in Sri Lankan youth, a topic underexplored in this cultural context. The age group of 15–29 years was selected based on the classification of youth defined by the National Youth Services Council of Sri Lanka. Body image was measured using the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ), and personality traits were assessed with the Big Five Inventory (BFI). Chi-Square tests were applied as the primary analysis method to identify statistically significant relationships between categorical variables, making it suitable for examining associations in the collected data. Results revealed a significant relationship between body image and personality traits. Positive body image was linked to higher conscientiousness and agreeableness, while negative body image correlated with neuroticism, marked by emotional instability. Gender differences were notable: females faced greater dissatisfaction due to societal standards of thinness, whereas males emphasised fitness and muscularity. Social media played a critical role, often reinforcing unrealistic beauty ideals. However, individuals engaged in exercise and equipped with media literacy showed healthier personality profiles and a more positive body image. These findings underscore the socio-cultural factors shaping the dynamic body image-personality. The study advocates for creating supportive environments and promoting media literacy to combat body image dissatisfaction and encourage healthy personality development. This research offers insights for fostering mental health, resilience, and holistic growth among young people in Sri Lanka, bridging critical knowledge gaps.

Keywords: **Body Image, Perception, Personality, Sri Lankan Youth**

Beyond the Line: Automation and Its Ramifications on Manufacturing Workers, a Case Study on Biscuity Company

Sashini Kothalawala [1], Anuruddika Jayathilaka [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]

sashinipaboda@gmail.com [1]*, anuruddikakumudu@sjp.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

'Automation' became a key birth of the Industrial Revolution, forming this research's root. While society embraced this transformation, it ultimately failed to foresee the negative consequences that industrial automation would bring in the near decades. As automation grew more efficient, the worst treatment of workers within automated systems skyrocketed, as revealed by some researchers. Therefore, this case study was purposefully designed to discover the broader ramifications of industrial automation on manufacturing workers by focusing on the confectionery industry in Sri Lanka. This study investigated three key areas: worker engagement, experience, and health, based on qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews with seven blue-collar workers and two factory floor supervisors from a leading Biscuity company, followed by the thematic analysis. Also, research aimed to uncover both the positive and negative effects of automation on workers, while findings showed that automation mainly had a harmful impact on workers' engagement, experience, and health, leading to a more detrimental version of automation for these workers. However, the study showed that automation is not purely independent of human workers and strikes a balance between human workers and automation, which can move automation from the devil's impacts toward a more balanced system.

Keywords: **Automation, Engagement, Experience, Health, Worker**

To Hide or Not to Hide? Impact of Leader-Member Exchange on Knowledge-Hiding among IT Professionals in Sri Lanka

Manjula Sivarajah [1], Thasika Thanushan [2], Logendran Mayuran [3]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna [1,2,3]

manjulasivarajah@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Information technology (IT) sector plays a pivotal role in Sri Lanka's economic growth and global competitiveness. Given its role, understanding the dynamics of knowledge-hiding among its employees becomes crucial. Drawing from the Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study examines the relationship between Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and knowledge-hiding among IT employees in Sri Lanka with a particular focus on the moderating role of Relative Leader-Member Exchange (RLMX). A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 215 usable responses. Data collection was conducted using convenience sampling, and the data were analysed using SPSS. Correlation and regression analyses were employed to examine the relationships between LMX, knowledge-hiding behaviours, and RLMX. The findings revealed a positive correlation between LMX and RLMX ($r = 0.621$, $p < 0.01$) indicating that higher-quality LMX improves RLMX. LMX negatively correlates with knowledge-hiding ($r = -0.670$, $p < 0.01$), showing that stronger leader-member relationships reduce knowledge-hiding behaviours. Regression analysis confirms that LMX (coefficient = -0.45, $p < 0.001$) and RLMX (coefficient = -0.38, $p < 0.001$) both significantly decrease knowledge-hiding. The interaction term (LMX * RLMX; coefficient = -0.25, $p = 0.001$) reveals that RLMX weakens LMX's negative effect on knowledge-hiding, especially when RLMX levels are high. This study contributes to the LMX theory by adding RLMX as a moderator, depicting the role of relative perceptions in organisational behaviour. This study extends knowledge-hiding literature in high-pressure industries and also indicates cultural dimensions like power distance and collectivism in shaping leadership dynamics and knowledge-sharing behaviours. The findings suggest that a high-quality LMX relationship is fostered by maintaining trust and transparency, which helps reduce knowledge-hiding. Treating team members with fairness and equality eliminates feelings of favouritism. Leadership development programs also can mitigate negative impacts on support and relationship skills, thus reducing knowledge-hiding.

Keywords: **Information Technology (IT) Sector Employees, Knowledge-hiding, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX), Relative Leader-Member Exchange (RLMX), Sri Lanka**

Leadership Potential and Self-Perceived Employability of Fresh Graduates: Reference to Eastern University, Sri Lanka

Marambe W. M. D. H. [1], Abeysekara S. P. [2]

Department of Economics, Faculty of Commerce and Management,
Eastern University, Sri Lanka [1,2]

dimali.marambe@gmail.com [1], samadhiabeysekera01@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

Leadership competencies are vital for equipping graduates with the skills needed to thrive in today's highly competitive job market. This study explores the relationship between five key leadership attributes: Problem-Solving, Leading Others, Self-Management, Networking, Intellectual Inquiry, and Self-Perceived Employability (SPE) among graduates from Eastern University, Sri Lanka. Employing a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, data were collected through an online survey administered to 327 respondents. Multiple regression analysis was utilised to identify the predictive power of each leadership attribute on SPE. The results reveal that all five leadership dimensions are significant predictors of SPE. Among these, Self-Management emerged as the strongest predictor, highlighting its critical role in shaping graduates' perceptions of their employability. This attribute encompasses essential organisational skills, including time management, task prioritisation, and follow-through, which are indispensable for effective performance in professional settings. Problem-Solving and Intellectual Inquiry were also found to positively influence graduates' confidence in their ability to navigate workplace challenges and adapt to evolving industry demands. Similarly, Networking and Leading Others contributed to enhancing professional connections and fostering teamwork abilities, further reinforcing employability. These findings underscore the necessity of embedding leadership development and experiential learning opportunities into academic curricula. Educational institutions and policymakers are urged to design programs that not only impart theoretical knowledge but also facilitate the practical application of leadership skills. Graduates, on their part, should actively seek opportunities to develop these competencies, build professional networks, and stay informed about changes within their industries. Despite the robust insights offered, this study is limited by its reliance on self-reported data and its cross-sectional design, which restricts causal interpretations. Future research could adopt longitudinal methods and explore additional variables, such as emotional intelligence and adaptability in digital work environments, to build on these findings.

Keywords: **Graduate Skills, Higher Education, Leadership Competencies, Network, Self-Perceived Employability**

HR Professionals' Perceptions of Workplace Bullying and Their Handling Approaches in Selected Sri Lankan Private Organisations

Muthuramanitharan E. [1], Atapattu A. W. M. M. [2]

Department of Human Resources Management, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [1,2]

eladsyaramanitharan@gmail.com [1], mayuri@hrm.cmb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Workplace bullying is one of the growing contemporary issues in the world. Our country (Sri Lanka) is also not an exception in this matter. There are so many bullying incidents happening day-to-day in the Sri Lankan context. This workplace bullying is happening for so many reasons, and it adversely affects the organisations as well as individuals (employees). Therefore, at the workplace, Human Resource Professionals (HRPs) have a major role in handling these situations. They have to function as intermediaries and resolve conflicts. Owing to the importance of HRPs in handling bullying complaints, their (HRPs') proper understanding and perception of workplace bullying is crucial. Similarly, the manner in which they perceive the situation will undoubtedly impact the way in which they address and manage bullying complaints. So, this research has been conducted to identify how HRPs of organisations in Sri Lanka handle workplace bullying and to explore how HRPs of organisations in Sri Lanka handle bullying complaints. The study selected 10 HRPs from industries across Sri Lanka, especially from private sector organisations. A semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data. Upon gathering data, a thematic analysis was used to draw conclusions. The data analysis shows that there are different ways the HRPs perceive workplace bullying and also HRPs employ several methods and procedures to handle bullying complaints. Besides, it was revealed that perception influences handling patterns, and the reasons for different HRPs having different perceptions. Therefore, HRPs play a pivotal role in managing incidents of bullying and their perception is of paramount importance in the process of addressing such matters.

Keywords: **Bullying Handling Patterns, Human Resource Professionals (HRPs), Workplace Bullying**

Impact of Extrinsic Motivation Factors on Employees' Task Performance

Nandasena U. D. C. [1], Galhena B. L. [2], Ganewatta G. K. H. [3]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance,
University of Ruhuna [1,2,3]

chamaninandasena98@gmail.com [1], *blgalhena2@gmail.com* [2], *hemamali@badm.ruh.ac.lk* [3]

ABSTRACT

Extrinsic Motivation is an important determinant of employees' task performance as it represents employees' motivation level for their work and the organisation. There are many motivational theories such as Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Fredric Herzberg's Two-factor theory, Expectancy theory, Equity theory, Goal Setting theory, and Reinforcement theory. These theories can be categorised as content theories which focus on needs and need deficiencies and process theories which focus on the process that motivates behaviour. This study investigates the impact of extrinsic motivation on employees' task performance within the garment industry in Sri Lanka, a crucial industry for the nation's export earnings. Extrinsic motivators, encompassing factors external to the work itself, significantly impact employee task performance. The research explores the influence of specific extrinsic motivation factors: salary, supervision, working conditions, and work environment. The quantitative research design was applied for the research and convenience sampling was used to select the sample of 384 operational-level employees. Data was collected through self-administered online questionnaires. The study utilises Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis to assess the relationship between extrinsic motivation factors and task performance. This study shows the importance of extrinsic motivation factors in enhancing employees' task performance within the organisation. Therefore, organisations can create a motivating and rewarding workplace by offering competitive salaries, providing effective leadership and support, ensuring comfortable and favourable working conditions, and fostering a positive work environment for the development of operational-level employees' task performance. Furthermore, Human Resource managers should prioritise the working environment to enhance the employees' task performance because employees are more likely to work in a comfortable environment.

Keywords: **Employees' Task Performance, Extrinsic Motivation, Garment Industry**

Impact of Flexible Work Arrangement on Employee Well-Being: Special Reference from the IT Industry in Kandy District

Nandasiri P. G. N. L. [1], Saravanabawan A. [2], Thanuja V. [3]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna [1,2,3]

nirashalakshani04@gmail.com [1], bawan@univ.jfn.ac.lk [2], Vthanuja12739@gmail.com [3]

ABSTRACT

The study situates itself within the rapidly evolving landscape of human resource management amidst globalisation and the technological revolution. As organisations adapt to new work dynamics, particularly in industries such as information technology, the concept of flexible work arrangements has emerged as a crucial response to the changing demands of the workforce. The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of flexible work arrangements on employee well-being among employees in the Kandy district, Sri Lanka. Given the evolving nature of work, particularly in the IT sector, this research explores how various flexible work patterns, such as hybrid work, flexible work hours, and job sharing, affect employees' overall well-being. The research employs a quantitative approach, with the population comprising employees in the IT sector, and targets a sample size of 120 participants selected through convenience sampling. The questionnaire is distributed via a Google form in both Sinhala and English, ensuring accessibility for participants. The study found that flexible work arrangements significantly enhance employee well-being among IT professionals in the Kandy district. Specifically, hybrid work models and job-sharing arrangements were identified as particularly beneficial. Strong positive correlations were observed between employee well-being and the different types of flexible work arrangements. Multiple regression analysis indicated that hybrid work and job sharing significantly predict employee well-being, while flexible work hours did not show a significant impact. This suggests that the structure and nature of work arrangements are crucial for enhancing employee satisfaction. The insights gained from this research provide valuable implications for employers and policymakers, suggesting that adopting flexible work practices can lead to a more engaged and satisfied workforce in the IT industry. Overall, the study emphasises the critical role of flexible work arrangements in promoting employee well-being and suggests that organisations should consider implementing such practices to foster a healthier work environment.

Keywords: **Employee Well-Being, Flexible Work Arrangement, Hybrid Work, IT Sector, Job Sharing**

The Impact of Talent Management Practices on Employee Performance: Evidence from the Private Banking Sector Employees in Sri Lanka

Nivetha S. [1], Saravanabawan A. [2], Thanuja V. [3]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. [1,2,3]

nivethasritharan99@gmail.com [1], bawan@univ.jfn.ac.lk [2], Vthanuja12739@gmail.com [3]

ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of talent management practices on employee performance (EP) within Sri Lanka's private banking sector. The research aims to assess the impact of practices such as recruitment and selection (RSP), strategic workforce planning (SWP), succession planning and leadership development (SPLD), employee engagement and retention (EER), training and development (TDP), learning and development (LDP), and technological infrastructure (TI) on employees' performance outcomes. The study was cross-sectional, and the respondents included 100 respondents of private banking employees. There had been simple random sampling for generalisability purposes. Descriptive statistics summarise the data, correlation analysis would identify the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance, and multiple regression analysis would determine the collective impact of these practices on resultant performance. The results indicate positive correlations between talent management practices and employee performance. More notably, training and development, succession planning and leadership development, and technological infrastructure showed associations with performance measures. Regression analysis suggested that talent management practices explain 35.8% of the variance in employee performance. This suggests how important these practices are for an organisation to improve its productivity and efficiency. The study concludes that private banking institutions need to perfect their recruitment, engage employees, and invest in training and career development opportunities to improve performance and retention. Aligning talent management strategies with the business's overall goals through strategic workforce planning and learning initiatives is necessary for long-term success. For further depth of understanding, future research is recommended to examine more factors influencing the effectiveness of talent management practices. The outcome of this research study offers significant suggestions for private banks on how to develop proper talent management structures and ultimately strengthen employee performance, job satisfaction, and general organisational outcomes.

Keywords: **Employee Performance, Private Banking Sector, Recruitment and Selection, Sri Lanka, , Talent Management Practices**

The State of Employee Engagement Research: Current Trends and Future Directions from the Bibliometric Lens

Mathushan Packiyanathan [1], Aruna Shantha Gamage [2], Sivarajah Harikaran [3],
Yogarajah Nanthagopan [4], Navaneethakrishnan Kengatharan [5]

University of Vavuniya [1,4]
University of Sri Jayewardenepura [2]
University of Jaffna [3]

mathush92@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement has emerged as a salient focus in organisational research, highlighting its impact on productivity and organisational effectiveness. Despite extensive literature, gaps persist in understanding engagement's multifaceted nature across different contexts. This study utilises bibliometric analysis to examine trends, key contributors, and theme clusters in employee engagement research from 2014 to 2024. Drawing upon the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a theoretical framework, the findings highlight the significance of leadership, organisational culture, and sustainable practices in fostering employee engagement. Emerging issues such as digital transformation, gig economy dynamics, and cultural variances highlight this domain's changing problems and possibilities. Significant research lacunas include the effects of technology, longitudinal investigations, and intersectional analyses. This study highlights the need for comprehensive techniques to enhance engagement, providing a basis for future research to tackle limits in niche areas and diverse contexts. Finally, these findings can serve as a springboard for researchers to investigate the fields of employee engagement further.

Keywords: **Bibliometric Analysis, Employee Engagement, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, Organisational Effectiveness**

Emotional Intelligence as a Moderator of Work-Life Balance and Job Stress in State Sector Millennials

Perera H. M. R. T. [1], Dissanayake W. D. M. B. K. [2]

Department of Business Management, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Kuliyapitiya [1,2]

thathsari240@gmail.com [1], bimba@wyb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study examined the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between work-life balance and job stress among newly recruited Millennial graduates in the Sri Lankan state sector. Although work-life balance, job stress, and emotional intelligence have been widely studied concepts, previous researchers have mostly overlooked the Millennial generation and there is a dearth of studies that investigated the integrated relationship among all three of these variables within the context of Sri Lanka. As Millennials are in the early stages of their careers and soon be conquering the world of work, new investigations are required to bridge the gap and understand how these factors interplay with them. Therefore, intending to fill the available literature and empirical gap, data were collected from 192 respondents, representing a 77% response rate out of a target group of 250 Millennial graduates—selected through convenience sampling technique. The research adopt positivist philosophy with a deductive approach, employing a quantitative method following a survey method to collect primary data in a cross-sectional study over a six-month period. Data were through a Google form and the data were analysed using Simple regression analysis and PROCESS Macro in SPSS used for moderation testing. The findings emphasise the importance of prioritising work-life balance initiatives to alleviate job stress among Millennials, while emotional intelligence training serves as a complementary support mechanism. The study's implications are significant for organisational policies and practices, highlighting the necessity for state sector organisations to implement initiatives that foster work-life integration. Additionally, the findings suggest that policies should promote flexible work arrangements, support mental health initiatives, and provide resources for employees seeking to improve their work-life integration. Future research should consider expanding the sample size and incorporating diverse populations to further explore the interactions between emotional intelligence, work-life balance, and job stress across different industries and organisational cultures to strength generalisability.

Keywords: **Emotional Intelligence, Job Stress, Millennials Graduates, , State Sector, Work-Life Balance**

The Dark Side of High Performance: A Moderated Model of Abusive Supervision in Sri Lanka's Apparel Industry

Priyanthini M. [1], Mayuran L. [2], Thasika T. [3]

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management studies and commerce, University of Jaffna [1,2,3]

ABSTRACT

While high-performing employees are typically viewed as organisational assets, recent evidence suggests that they may also be the targets of abusive supervision. Thus, drawing from social comparison theory (SCT), this study aims to investigate the relationship between subordinate high performance and abusive supervision. Further, this study also aims to examine the moderating effect of supervisor task dependency on the above relationship. The study utilised a quantitative research approach, employing a deductive methodology to test the research model empirically. Data were collected using convenience sampling from 395 invited dyads of supervisors and subordinates in apparel organisations in Sri Lanka, resulting in 248 valid dyadic responses. The unit of analysis was at the individual level, focusing on paired supervisor-subordinate dyads. Data collection followed a cross-sectional time horizon, capturing responses at a single point in time. The data analysis was carried out using SPSS. The study utilised correlation and regression analyses to find out the relationships between subordinate high performance, abusive supervision and supervisor task dependency. The study revealed that both main and interaction effects significantly explain abusive supervision, with the main effects model accounting for 72% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.72$) and the interaction effects model 65% ($R^2 = 0.65$). Subordinate high performance positively influences abusive supervision ($B = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), while supervisor task dependency has a negative impact ($B = -0.45$, $p < 0.001$), reducing abusive behaviour as dependency increases. The interaction term ($B = -0.25$, $p = 0.002$) weakens the positive link between subordinate performance and abusive supervision. This study extends the understanding of abusive supervision by challenging the traditional view that it primarily targets low-performing employees. It reveals that high-performing subordinates can also be victims of abusive supervision, and identifies a specific condition – supervisor task dependency - that can mitigate this relationship. This study provides practical insights to reduce abusive supervision, especially towards high-performing employees. Key strategies include fostering a supportive culture, promoting cooperation, training supervisors, and encouraging teamwork.

Keywords: **Abusive Supervision, Apparel Industry, Social Comparison Theory, Sri Lanka, Subordinate High Performance, Task Dependency**

Conceptualising Atypical Recruitment Readiness for Neurodiverse Individuals in MNEs Operating in Sri Lanka

Prabha Silva [1], Venuka Batagoda [2]

Department of Management, Faculty of Business, NSBM Green University, Sri Lanka [1]
Department of International Business, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [2]

prabha.s@nsbm.ac.lk [1], *venuka@dinb.cmb.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

The study is focused on introducing a concept developed for the recruitment readiness for neurodiverse individuals in the Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) which are operating in Sri Lanka. The conceptual study addresses the pressing needs in corporate recruitment practices to enhance inclusivity in organisations. Neurodiversity is one of the most under or unemployed categories of diversity in organisations and it includes individuals with autism, ADHD, dyslexia and other diverse cognition abilities which are not yet tapped in many industries. Many global institutions such as Google, IBM and Hewlett Packard signify the progressive move towards including neurodiverse employees in the carder of the workplace and achieve the best out of these employees' unique skill sets. However, Sri Lanka is showing no significant initiative towards accommodating neurodiverse initiatives and most literature indicates a lack of workplace adaptations for such neurodiverse recruitments and alarming rates of social stigmatisation. The study aims to conceptualise a model to bridge the gap in the readiness of the MNEs operating in Sri Lanka with the global trends and to identify the modes to integrate the neurodiverse talent in the workforce. This is to be executed by aligning the system with the Person-Environment fit theory which conceptualises recruitment readiness through primary determinants of non-traditional recruitment systems, environmental adjustments and alignment with global trends. The suggested framework is supposed to elaborate on non-discriminatory practices, tailored training programs, and resource allocation to foster inclusivity. The outcomes would include enhanced innovation, productivity, and adherence to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles to be compared and contrasted in future extended empirical research. The study addresses the advantages, as well as challenges, companies might face when they recruit neurodiverse employees. The hostile environment for the recruitment of neurodiverse employees is created as a result of social stigma and organisational bias. The unique skills of neurodiverse employees, such as creative thinking, complex problem-solving, and analytical abilities, are often overlooked due to limited opportunities in various industries. This study proposes using qualitative methods, including case-based research and semi-structured interviews with HR professionals in Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) operating in Sri Lanka. The aim is to explore recruitment practices, environmental adaptations, and the acceptance of neurodiverse individuals by their coworkers. This study concludes that the adaptation of neurodiverse talent recruitment could foster a more equitable and inclusive work environment while enhancing organisational innovation. Built upon previous findings, this conceptual study provides a strong foundation for empirical studies to identify the impact of recruitment readiness of neurodiverse individuals in MNEs operating in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Atypical Recruitment, Inclusion, Multinational Enterprises, Neurodiverse**

Exploring the Role of Conflict Management in Enhancing Organisational Effectiveness: A Study of Bangladesh's Telecommunication Sector

Md. Shawan Uddin [1], Md. Abdul Hakim [2], Md. Sohel Rana [3]

Department of Management Studies, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh [1]
Department of Business Administration, Notre Dame University Bangladesh [2]
Department of Marketing, University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh [3]

shawanmgt@ru.ac.bd [1], abdulhakim@ndub.edu.bd [2], msohelrana180@gmail.com [3]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of conflict management strategies on the relationship between various levels of organisational conflict and organisational effectiveness within the telecommunications industry in Bangladesh. Given the rapid technological advancements and dynamic work environment in this sector, understanding conflict dynamics is crucial for enhancing organisational performance. Utilising a quantitative approach, data were collected from 370 respondents through convenience sampling and analysed using Partial Least Squares based Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that interpersonal and intragroup conflicts negatively influence organisational effectiveness, while conflict management strategies play a significant moderating role in this relationship. The study highlights the importance of tailored conflict resolution training and fostering a culture of open communication within organisations to improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover. The implications extend beyond organisational boundaries, providing valuable insights for industry regulators aiming to create a conducive working environment. This research contributes to the broader understanding of conflict management in modern industries, particularly in the context of rapid technological change, and offers a model for other sectors facing similar challenges. Future research should explore additional contextual factors affecting conflict management and organisational effectiveness in diverse industries.

Keywords: **Conflict Management, Organisational Effectiveness, Telecommunication Industry**

A Qualitative Exploration of Employee Retention Factors: Insights from Operational and Supervisory Roles in the Apparel Sector, Sri Lanka

Hashini Upadya [1], Isuru Chandradasa [2]

Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management and Finance,
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [1,2]

hashiniupadya0217@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

People are a company's most precious asset in today's business environment. Unlike physical assets, human resources may be developed, improved, and encouraged to meet the goals and objectives of a company. Furthermore, an organisation needs employees to successfully carry out the production process. With today's technological development, without the involvement of the employees, an organisation cannot successfully carry out their production process. As a result, the resource of employees has been given a valuable place in an organisation. Therefore, every organisation focuses on the concept of employee retention. The study focuses on reasons related the failure of employment retention in operational level and supervisory level employees. This study has the purpose of exploring the factors that influence in retaining employees in operational level and supervisory level. Furthermore, this study aims to provide strategies to retain employee in operation and supervisory level. In order to achieve these two objectives, this study was conducted using a total of 14 employees, seven operational level employees and seven supervisory level employees working in the appeal sector. By contacting the human resource manager of a garment factory in Kurunagala district, the necessary employees for this study were obtained. Data was collected using semi structured interviews. The researcher physically went to the place and conducted the interview. Here author used the thematic analysis method to do data analysis. After doing this analysis, the researcher was able to find facts related to the research question. The first question is to identify the factors affecting the retention of operational level and supervisory level employees in an organisation. According to this study, it is possible to identify five factors affecting this. Further, the second purpose of my research is to identify strategies that can be followed to retain operational level and supervisory level employees in the organisation. Also, from the last part, recommendations are given to an organisation to achieve these goals and the Conclusion.

Keywords: **Apparel Industry, Employee Retention, Factors, Operational Level Employees, Strategies, Supervisory Level Employees**

Teacher Emotion Management (TEM) in the Sri Lankan Rural Education Context: A Case Study Based on the Teldeniya Education Zone

Weerasekara W. M. K. N. [1], Fernando P. B. D. [2]

Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]

knweerasekara066@gmail.com [1], bhagyadewmini@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Teacher emotion management, which is a significant aspect in the intersection of the education and emotional intelligence domains is an emerging research area due to its growing importance. There is a lack of recent research relating to the emotional aspect of teaching professionals, indicating a significant population gap. Additionally, rural contexts of the Global South, such as the Teldeniya education zone with its inherent characteristics such as rural poverty, uneducated elder generation and inequalities in the education system remain empirically under-researched. This study aimed to understand how teachers in rural schools view and evaluate the teacher emotion management. Following a qualitative approach, this study used a series of interviews and thematic analysis to analyse data gathered from the sample of ten male and female teachers in the Teldeniya educational zone. Findings were elaborated on two main themes of the teachers' view of the concept of TEM and the inherent values of the TEM. Under the first theme, the emotions of school teachers were clustered and were elaborated in building the four perspectives of teacher emotion management. The second theme elaborated on the nature of the Sri Lankan rural student and society that create the need for TEM values, followed up by an understanding of the teacher emotion management values in the rural education context. Accordingly, the knowledge and directions from this study will contribute to enhancing the rural school teachers' emotional experience while widening the tendency to draw the eye of society towards the development of quality education in rural Sri Lanka and the emotional well-being of rural school teachers.

Keywords: **Emotional Labour, Public Education, Qualitative Research, Rural Sri Lanka, Teacher Emotion Management**

The Role of Accounting in Fostering Circular Economy: A Systematic Literature Review

Upekha Atupola [1], Sanjaya Kuruppu [2], Wei Qian [3], Sumin Kim [4]

Centre for Markets Values and Inclusion, University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia [1,2,3,4]

aywuy001@mymail.unisa.edu.au [1], sanjaya.kuruppu@unisa.edu.au [2], wei.qian@unisa.edu.au [3], sumin.kim@unisa.edu.au [4]

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the role of accounting research in fostering and addressing the challenges of achieving a circular economy (CE). A systematic literature review is conducted to compare business-related studies from accounting and non-accounting journals to understand their distinctive approaches to addressing the role of accounting. The review is further supported by a bibliometric analysis and a content analysis. The findings reveal that a wide range of methods, tools, and perspectives have been used in the relevant literature, with accounting journals focusing more on aligning CE demands with its theoretical foundations of accounting, while non-accounting studies focusing more on innovative approaches such as life cycle assessment and material flow cost accounting, despite in-depth analysis and theorisation. Accounting journals demonstrate a considerable lag in entering the research field and the number of articles produced in terms of accounting for CE. The non-accounting journals introduce a number of new initiatives to measure and monitor circularity in corporate settings; however, there are limitations in such articles when referring to the corporate decision-making process. The findings suggest that a research agenda enabling the integration of both research focuses is in urgent need to enhance accounting for CE. This research further calls for more interdisciplinary research that considers the impact of socio-political-cultural contexts on strengthening accounting's role in CE. The study contributes academically by organising the extant literature meaningfully and establishing a research agenda for future research. The conceptual synthesis of tools and methods is useful for practitioners when applying such in a corporate setting.

Keywords: **Accounting, Circular Economy, Grand Challenges, Systematic Literature Review**

On Digital Transformation in Commercial Banks: An Indexing Methodology for Enhanced Strategic Planning

Bhaskar Podder [1], Jaideep Ghosh [2]

School of Management and Entrepreneurship, Shiv Nadar University,
Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh. India. [1,2]

bp393@snu.edu.in [1], *jaideep.ghosh@snu.edu.in* [2]

ABSTRACT

Digital Transformation (DT) of commercial banks has become indispensable today to effectively perform banking functions by satisfying customers with easy facilities available anytime, anywhere. An appropriate indexing indicator is essential for estimating a bank's level of DT, enabling other banks to assess its competitive position, formulate relevant policies, and facilitate research activities related to DT. This study aims to propose a DT indexing methodology for commercial banks based on secondary data. The initiation of DT in a bank starts with an appropriate strategic vision of making fundamental changes in its operations and services through technological innovation. At the implementation stage of DT, a bank requires large investments in various processes of its transformation. It can be successful if a bank turns its efforts to observable outputs that accelerate its business operations. The proposed methodology is structured on individual commercial banks' DT-related strategic transformation level, investment for its implementation, and outcome as manifested in electronic business operations. The methodology is applied to data collected from Indian commercial banks listed on the Indian Stock Exchanges to derive DT index for each bank annually during the period from 2016 to 2021. The methodology is validated based on the capability of the index to capture consistency, deviations, temporal effects, and size effects. The study's contribution is twofold: firstly, unlike the common one-facet forms of DT, our indexing methodology views DT holistically; secondly, our methodology allows DT indexing of the commercial banks of any country with publicly available data.

Keywords: **Banking, Digital Innovation, Electronic Payment, Strategy Transformation, Technological Spending**

Revealing the Impact of Risk Perception on Cryptocurrency Investment Behaviour among Millennials in Sri Lanka

Dewthmika K. A. T. N. [1], Herath H. M. N. P. [2]

Department of Finance, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [1,2]

tharushidewthmika@gamil.com [1], *nethmih@kln.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

Understanding impact of the risk perception in cryptocurrency investment behaviour has become important, particularly among millennials in Sri Lanka, as digital currencies continue to grow in popularity as an investment method. This study aims to investigate the impact of conceptual clarity, investment education, awareness of investment options, fear-induced psychological factors, and investment experience on cryptocurrency investment behaviour. Conducting a quantitative-deductive approach, data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among millennials in Sri Lankan. The independent variables in this study included risk perception and the factors that impact to the risk perception are conceptual clarity, investment education, awareness of investment options, fear-induced psychological factors, and investment experience, while cryptocurrency investment behaviour served as the dependent variable. Statistical analyses, including reliability tests, descriptive analysis, correlation, and multiple regression, were conducted using SPSS software. The study revealed that conceptual clarity, investment education, and investment experience significantly impact cryptocurrency investment behaviour. Awareness of investment options demonstrated a moderate positive impact, while fear-induced psychological factors negatively affected investment behaviour. These findings show the critical role of risk perception shaping millennials' engagement with cryptocurrency investments. The reliability and validity of the data were confirmed through Cronbach's alpha values, inter-correlation matrices, VIF, and tolerance levels. The findings highlight the importance of enhancing investment education and addressing psychological barriers to promote informed cryptocurrency investment behaviour. Policymakers and financial institutions are encouraged to develop targeted investment education programs and supportive regulatory frameworks to legalise the cryptocurrency in Sri Lanka to increase confidence in cryptocurrency investments.

Keywords: **Cryptocurrency Investment Behaviour, Digital Assets, Millennials, Risk Perception, Sri Lanka**

The Psychology of Investments: Unveiling the Impact of Behavioural Biases on Investor Decisions in the Colombo Stock Market, Sri Lanka

Dinasha Fernando [1], Rhythmani Perera [2]

NSBM Green University, Sri Lanka [1,2]

dinashamerangi@gmail.com [1], rythmani.p@nsbm.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Investment decisions are often influenced by irrational behaviour, driven by psychological factors rather than rational analysis. Given that, this study pertains to exploring the impact of behavioural biases on the investment decisions of individual investors in the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) in Sri Lanka. As there are limited studies conducted to investigate the impact of behavioural biases on investor decisions in emerging markets, especially in the Sri Lankan context, the study pertains to contributing significantly to the development of this field in the country. While employing a cross-sectional research design, this study examines the impact of Herding, Representativeness, Overconfidence, Regret Aversion, and Loss Aversion biases on investment decisions. The investigation is motivated by the observation that many investors are reluctant to trade, largely due to unfavourable outcomes stemming from these biases. Data were collected from 358 individual investors through a structured questionnaire, utilising convenience and snowball sampling to capture a diverse participant pool from the Colombo Stock Exchange. The analysis was conducted using SPSS, focusing on hypothesis testing with the multiple linear regression model. The results indicated that all the tested behavioural biases significantly impact the investment decision-making processes of individual investors within the CSE. The findings contribute to the existing literature by confirming the conjectured relationships derived from behavioural finance theory. Moreover, the research offers practical implications for policymakers and relevant agencies, suggesting that the results could be utilised to encourage more favourable decision-making among individual stock market investors. While the study primarily focuses on behavioural biases, it also highlights the potential for future research to explore various emerging market dynamics and economic indicators, such as political instability and currency devaluation affecting investments in both stock and other financial markets. Overall, this research underscores the need to address behavioural factors to enhance investor participation and drive economic growth.

Keywords: **Behavioural Bias, Behavioural Finance, Colombo Stock Market, Investment Decision-Making**

Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Women's Investment Decisions: Evidence from Andhra Pradesh, India

Kadimi Madhu Babu

Department of Economics, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Andhra Pradesh, India.

drmbecoanu@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Breaking away from conventional stereotypes, women play a pivotal role in household financial decision-making. The study identifies the socio-economic characteristics of women investors and assesses the relationship between their demographic variables and investment preferences, such as gold, silver, bank deposits, life insurance, shares, mutual funds and real estate. Specifically, the study analyses how demographic factors such as age, marital status, educational level, occupational status and annual income influence investment behaviours like the purchase of gold and silver for celebrations, its use as a symbol of social status, perceived liquidity and other investment preferences. The study employs a quantitative methodology, collecting primary data via structured questionnaires and secondary data from relevant literature. The primary data was gathered from 428 women investors across four districts in Andhra Pradesh, with analysis conducted using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The findings reveal that age and annual income significantly affect most investment decisions, including the purchase of gold, the preference for life insurance and the attraction to bank deposits and real estate. The study suggests strategies to enhance women investors' satisfaction levels, such as providing targeted financial education, offering flexible investment products and tailoring financial services based on income and age-specific preferences. These strategies aim to empower women to make informed investment decisions, improve financial security and support greater participation in diverse investment avenues.

Keywords: **Age, Annual Income, Educational Level, Financial Investment Decisions, Marital Status, Occupational Status, , Socio-Economic Variables, Women Investors**

Detecting Financial Statement Fraud through the Fraud Diamond Model with Special Reference to Selected Listed Companies in Sri Lanka

Karunathilaka M. M. M. S. [1], Perera D. A. M. [2]

Accountancy & Business Finance, Faculty of Business Studies & Finance,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka [1,2]

maduwanthika1998@gmail.com [1], aminda@wyb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study aims to detect financial statement fraud through the fraud diamond model with special reference to selected listed companies in Sri Lanka. This study focuses on the four key influencers pressure, opportunity, rationalisation, and capability that drive individuals toward fraudulent behaviour. It investigates external pressure, financial targets as a form of pressure, the nature of the industry, ineffective monitoring as a form of opportunity, change in auditors, total accruals as a form of rationalisation, and changes of directors as a form of capability as independent variables, with the dependent variable analysed in this study was financial statement fraud (Beneish M-score Model). This study followed a quantitative approach by analysing secondary data obtained from annual reports of Beverage Food and Tobacco companies listed in the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) in the 2013-2022 period as the population. A purposive sampling technique is utilised to select a sample comprising 16 Beverage Food and Tobacco companies with ten years of panel data observation. Data were analysed using the application of a Statistical Package for Social Science 26 (SPSS) with a Binary Logistics Regression analysis. The study's findings indicated that of the seven factors investigated, only total accruals were significantly positively related to financial statement fraud in this sector. However, the other six factors, external pressure, financial target, nature of the industry, ineffective monitoring, change in auditors, and change of directors presented no significant positive association with financial statement fraud in the beverage food, and tobacco sectors. The study suggests the importance of closely monitoring accruals as a potential red flag for fraudulent financial statements, providing valuable insights for auditors and regulators in improving fraud detection and prevention strategies. This study strongly supports the development of the fraud diamond model, recommending further research for comprehensive validation and broader industry applications to better understand financial statement fraud.

Keywords: **Beneish M-Score Model, Beverage Food and Tobacco Sector, Financial Statement Fraud, Fraud Diamond, Fraud Triangle**

Examining the Impact of Mental Accounting and Financial Self-Control on Consumption Behaviour among Banking Employees: The Moderating Role of Gender

Anuja Lokeshwara [1], Gayan Bandara [2], Saduni Rathnayaka [3], Anuradha Banneheka [4], Hirushika Vithanage [5], Ravindu Ranathunga [6]

SLIIT Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

anuja.l@sliit.lk [1], gayan.b@sliit.lk [2], bm21557156@my.sliit.lk [3], bm21552656@my.sliit.lk [4], bm21556098@my.sliit.lk [5], bm21535208@my.sliit.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the influence of mental accounting on consumption behaviour and financial self-control. Furthermore, the authors examine the moderation effect of consumption behaviour in the relationship between mental accounting and financial self-control among the genders. This research used primary data, and this quantitative data analysis used a convenience sampling method of data collection. In this research, researchers gathered the data using a questionnaire survey by collecting data from 390 banking employees in Sri Lanka. Correlation and multiple linear regression are the data analysis techniques the researchers used in this research. Further analysis, Cronbach's alpha, and KMO tests have been taken to measure the validity and reliability. This research approach is developing the hypothesis based on existing theory, and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis.

The results indicate that mental accounting, financial self-control, and consumption are closely related, while gender moderates these effects. Based on the literature, the study addresses behavioural biases among bankers that influence financial decisions regarding working people. The consequences of the area call for tailor-made financial education for bank employees, suggesting gender-sensitive training, workshops, and seminars to increase financial self-control and reduce mental accounting's negative impact on consumption, which could lead to more rational financial decisions, reducing cognitive biases. The study showed the requirement for financial education, catering to different behaviours of male and female employees to promote a financially disciplined workforce. This article examines mental accounting, financial self-control, and gender, enhancing the understanding of behavioural finance and offering actionable, gender-specific financial recommendations. By concentrating on professional decision-makers, this article adds a fresh perspective to the literature, allowing insights for future studies to be expanded.

Keywords: **Consumption Behaviour, Financial Self–Control, Gender, Mental Accounting**

Impact of Internal Factors on the Debt Decisions: A Study of Listed Capital Goods Companies in the Colombo Stock Exchange, Sri Lanka

Mithila Gowthaman [1], Lingesiya Kengatharan [2]

Department of Financial Management, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka [1,2]

gmithila@univ.jfn.ac.lk [1], lingesiya@univ.jfn.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the determinants of internal company factors influencing debt financing decisions among listed capital goods companies, a sector that accounts for one of the largest daily turnover sectors among the non-financial companies listed in Sri Lanka. Using panel data from 25 companies within the sector for 10 years (from April 2015 to March 2024), the analysis applies pooled, fixed and random effect tests to explore the relationship between internal factors and debt financing. The study considers Profit Margin (PM), Liquidity level (LIQ), Tangible Fixed Asset (FA), Tax Shield from Non-Interest expenses (TSNI), Cash generated from Operating activities (CO), Cash generated from Investment activities (CI), Average Interest rate paid by the company (INT) as key determinants of internal financing decisions while to measure the debt financing of the companies, total Debt to Total Assets (DA) and Debt to Equity (DE) ratios are utilised. The findings reveal that PM and LIQ, CO and INT negatively and significantly impact DA and DE, suggesting firms with higher profitability, liquidity, internal cash generation or higher financing costs are less reliant on debt financing. On the other hand, TFA and TSNI positively influence DA, highlighting the role of collateral and tax benefits in leveraging decisions. FS and CI are found to be insignificant. Hence this study highlights the importance of considering Profitability, Liquidity, Cash from operations, Non-Debt Tax Shield, Interest rate and Asset Tangibility in making debt financing decisions. These results provide valuable insights for financial managers for optimising capital structure, future researchers in understanding sector-specific dynamics, and policymakers in developing frameworks to enhance corporate financial decision-making. By focusing on the capital goods sector, this research contributes to a broader understanding of financing behaviour within one of Sri Lanka's key non-financial sectors.

Keywords: **Capital Goods Companies, Determinants, Debt Decision, Internal Factors**

Sustainability Optimisation: A Systematic Review Using the PRISMA Model to Explore Business Analytics Contributions to Sri Lanka's Sustainable Apparel Industry

Geethma Pathirana [1], Samantha Thelijjagoda [2], Lumini Gajanayake [3], Rukshan R. M. P. T. [4], Pathirana S. S. B. [5] , Rajapaksha R. P. N. D. C. [6]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology [1,2,3,4,5,6]

ABSTRACT

This systematic review examines the ways Business Analytics promotes sustainable practices in the apparel industry by looking at important research from Sri Lanka following PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines. Sustainability advancements in the apparel industry are contingent upon the effective utilisation of business analytics tools such as predictive analytics to process data efficiently in real time and invent smarter solutions. Our analysis reviews existing research to show how BA methods help the apparel industry become more efficient while reducing waste and protecting the environment. The research objective, how Business Analytics helps apparel businesses improve resource while reducing environmental impact and following worldwide sustainability guidelines. Sri Lanka's apparel industry remains competitive by using BA technology plus ethical production methods such as their 'Garments Without Guilt' initiative. BA technology tracks environmental effects immediately while matching production to consumer needs for sustainable practices. The BA analysis reveals several problems in the research materials including selection bias for published content and limited data availability across locations. The study recommends researching artificial intelligence use for predictive analytics and global sustainability standards plus studying how consumer behaviour impact sustainable practices. The results help apparel researchers understand BA better and show Sri Lanka how to stay ahead in the sustainable apparel industry.

Keywords: **Apparel Industry, Business Analytics, Ethical Production, Predictive Analytics, PRISMA, Sri Lanka, Sustainability, Waste Reduction**

Exploring Stock Price Synchronicity and Market Efficiency in BRICS Nations: Firm, Sector, and Country Perspectives

Srikanth Potharla [1], Hiranya Dissanayake [2]

ICFAI Business School (IBS) [1]
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka [2]

srikanthyadav444p@gmail.com [1], hiranya@wyb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the determinants of stock price synchronicity in BRICS markets, emphasising firm-specific, sectoral, and country-level factors as market efficiency and information integration indicators. Stock price synchronicity, measuring how closely individual stock returns align with broad market movements, is a crucial metric for understanding the incorporation of information into prices. While extensively researched in developed economies, synchronicity still needs to be explored in emerging markets, particularly Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. To address this gap, we analyse a dataset encompassing 1,958 firms and 9,126 company-year observations from 2007 to 2022, employing R-squared values from the Capital Asset Pricing Model (CAPM) as the synchronicity measure. Guided by the Efficient Market Hypothesis, Agency Theory, and Institutional Theory, we utilise Ordinary Least Squares regression models incorporating firm-level variables—such as price-to-book and price-to-earnings ratios and intangible asset ratios—along with sectoral indicators and country-specific interaction terms. Our findings reveal that higher valuation multiples and greater intangible asset ratios correlate with reduced synchronicity, indicating enhanced firm-specific information integration and improved market efficiency. In contrast, greater trading volume and market capitalisation increase synchronicity, reflecting stronger market-wide influences. The sectoral analysis uncovers notable heterogeneity: for instance, the energy sector exhibits high synchronicity in Brazil and China, while utilities show negative synchronicity in Russia and South Africa. Moreover, China and India, with their diversified sectoral structures, tend to have higher synchronicity levels than the more concentrated markets of Brazil and Russia. Temporal patterns indicate synchronicity spikes during periods of global economic turbulence, such as the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 pandemic, underscoring the macroeconomic sensitivity of these markets. These insights hold significant implications for policymakers and investors. Enhanced transparency and governance frameworks may foster stronger firm-level information processing, improving efficiency. Investors can leverage an understanding of sector-country interactions to refine their strategies, balancing macroeconomic conditions with firm-specific dynamics in emerging economies.

Keywords: **BRICS Markets, Firm-Specific Dynamics, Information Disclosure, Market Efficiency, Stock Price Synchronicity**

Uncovering the Drivers of Customer Awareness towards Green Banking Practices in Licensed Commercial Banks: A Study in Colombo District

Gaya Prabhani [1], Kumarasinghe W. S. L. [2], Ravindu Kulawardena [3]

Department of Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

gayaprabhani1999@gmail.com [1], shanikalakmali@sjp.ac.lk [2], ravindudeshan@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Green banking practices are emerging as a pivotal strategy for promoting environmental sustainability within the financial sector. This research investigates the key factors that drive customer awareness of green banking practices in licensed commercial banks within the Colombo District. By examining these drivers, the study aims to shed light on the effectiveness of green banking initiatives and their impact on customer behaviour and perception. The study employs a quantitative approach and data were collected using a survey from 380 respondents selected based on the convenience sampling from selected commercial banks. Data were analysed using the SPSS software version 27.0 and conducted descriptive analysis, factor analysis, correlation, normality tests and regression analysis for hypotheses testing. The study reveals very interesting facts about customer awareness of green banking practices. The research outcomes underscore that paperless banking, green investment, green image and sustainable banking are strong awareness magnets for customers. These elements contribute to a great extent and in a very positive manner to the factors that eventually influence the wanting-posture of the customers toward the ecological-sustainability activities within the banking industry. This study reveals that there is potential for environmental consciousness among the clientele of licensed commercial banks, which is not being tapped fully. This brings out the factor that green banking is an agent of change in that it creates the ability to be environment-friendly when practising banking flexibility. The study offers practical implications for policymakers and banks, but it also plays an authoritative role in the formation of a more sustainable banking network in Sri Lanka. Future research could be conducted on green banking practices and customer knowledge in any environment in Sri Lanka including rural areas, or perhaps comparing the geographic differences on this issue. Moreover, exploring what kinds of customer awareness exist today and how this awareness is manifested in practice, might assist banks to pay more attention to the gap between attitude and behaviour.

Keywords: **Green Banking, Green Investments, Green Image, Paperless Banking, Sustainable Banking**

Decoding Financial Narratives: The Interplay of Readability, Tone, and Earnings Management in Indian Non-Financial Firms

Mithun Samanta [1], Sarathkumara S. M. N. N. [2], Samarakoon S. M. R. K. [3], Rajapakse R. P. C. R. [4]

Vinod Gupta School of Management, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, India[1]
Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka[2]
Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka[3]
Department of Finance, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka[4]

smithun028@kgpian.iitkgp.ac.in [1], naveennirupama8312@gmail.com [2], kithsiri@wyb.ac.lk [3], champa@sjp.ac.lk [4]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the interplay between the readability and tonal qualities of annual reports and the prevalence of earnings management among listed Indian non-financial entities from 2016 to 2023. Analysing 1,674 firms and 7,688 firm-year data points, it utilises the Loughran-McDonald Master Dictionary for evaluating tone and readability metrics of annual reports, converted from PDF to text. The evidence shows an inverse relationship between report clarity, as measured by the FOG and SMOG indices, and earnings management. Reports with lower readability (higher FOG/SMOG scores or lower Flesch scores) correlate with increased earnings management. Additionally, a more negative, uncertain, or litigious tone inversely relates to earnings management levels, suggesting narrative manipulation in financial reporting. These findings highlight the importance of examining the intricacy and presentation of financial disclosures, contributing to the discourse on financial reporting practices in the non-financial sector and emphasising the need for enhanced disclosure transparency.

Keywords: **Corporate Disclosure, Earnings Management, Indian Non-Financial Firms, Readability of Financial Reports, Tone Analysis**

Comparative Analysis of Digital Transformation in Accounting and Finance: A Case Study of Government and Private Commercial Banks in Sri Lanka

Shathurshana Rathakrishnan [1], Ramya Yogarajah [2]

Department of Business and Management Studies, Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka [1,2]

shathurshikrishna@gmail.com [1], ramyayogaraja@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

Digital transformation has dramatically reshaped the banking sector by enhancing operational efficiency, customer experience, and financial transparency. This study compares digital transformation adoption in state-owned versus private commercial banks in Sri Lanka, focusing on accounting and finance innovations. A qualitative research approach was adopted, and data were collected from the annual reports of 2021–2023 of four leading banks: two state-owned, Bank of Ceylon and People's Bank, and two private, Hatton National Bank and Commercial Bank. A thematic analysis was performed to assess digital adoption trends, technological advancement, and regulatory challenges. The results indicate that private banks have a higher rate of digital adoption compared to government Banks, due to investments in AI, blockchain, and customer-focused digital platforms. On the other hand, state-owned banks face the challenge of legacy systems and lower digital literacy, which delays adoption. Key challenges remain in cybersecurity risks, regulatory compliance, and cost-intensive technology upgrades. Hence, the research prescribes that government-owned banks focus more on infrastructure modernisation and financial literacy programs, while private banks should align their AI and blockchain adoption with compliance standards. This has important implications for policymakers, banking executives, and FinTech developers as they shape future digital banking strategies for Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Banking Industry, Digital Transformation, Local Private Commercial Banks, State Owned Commercial Banks**

The Impact of Intellectual Capital on the Financial Performance of Licensed Commercial Banks in Sri Lanka with the Moderating Impact of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Weerakkody D. I. D.[1], Gunarathna K. G. P. V. [2]

University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka [1,2]

ilakshinesh@gmail.com [1], vijitha@mgt.ruh.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

A sound financial system is crucial for a country's economy, as it provides financial and non-financial services to both the public and private sectors. Banks play a significant role in the Sri Lankan financial system, sustaining the confidence and performance of other financial and non-financial entities, and strengthening the economic health of the country. The banking industry has encountered significant challenges stemming from global pandemics, economic crises, political shifts, evolving policies and regulations, and intense competition. These circumstances reveal the importance of determining the strategic sources for enhancing the industry as a whole. It underscores the critical role of intellectual capital (IC) in achieving financial performance, encompassing knowledge, experience, technology, and relationships. With the turbulent economic environment, adopting a competitive perspective further emphasises the importance of IC as a cornerstone for strengthening financial success. This study investigates the influence of intellectual capital (IC) on the financial performance of licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka, focusing on the moderating role of sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). The sample consists of 13 licensed commercial banks registered with the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, with data collected from their annual financial reports for the period 2019–2023. Data analysis was primarily conducted using multiple regression analysis. The findings reveal that structural capital, human capital, and capital employed significantly affect the financial performance of the banking industry, whereas relational capital does not. Overall, IC significantly impacts financial performance, and SCA is shown to moderate the relationship between IC and financial performance in Sri Lanka's banking sector.

Keywords: **Capital Employed Efficiency, Human Capital Efficiency, Intellectual Capital, Relational Capital Efficiency, Structural Capital Efficiency**

From Financial Socialisation to Subjective Financial Well-Being: Investigating How Financial Capability Moderates the Impact of Financial Socialisation on Subjective Financial Well-Being

Weerasinghe D. D. G. R. [1], Buvanendra S. [2]

Faculty of Business, NSBM Green University, Homagama, Sri Lanka [1]
Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [2]

gayani.w@nsbm.ac.lk [1], bkshanthy@dfn.cmb.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Past studies reveal that the role of financial socialisation in predicting subjective financial well-being (SFWB) remains inadequately understood. Literature highlights financial capability as a critical determinant of how effectively individuals apply knowledge and skills acquired from social agents. While previous studies have identified financial capability as a mediator, this study focuses on its moderating role, offering new insights into the dynamics of financial socialisation. The study investigates how financial interactions and discussions with social agents in professional settings influence professionals' perceptions of their financial well-being, with a focus on the moderating role of financial capability. Concentrating on the banking sector in a developing country, the study addresses a gap in the literature, as most research has been conducted in developed countries. This developing context highlights unique challenges and opportunities influencing financial socialisation processes and outcomes. Despite numerous studies on consumer SFWB, there is limited research addressing the SFWB of employees in the banking sector. Given the critical role of the banking industry in a country's economy, understanding how employees perceive their financial well-being is essential. This research employs a quantitative approach, utilising a cross-sectional study design to analyse the effects of various factors on SFWB. The target population consists of 52,263 employees working in 24 licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. Using purposive sampling, 384 bank employees from the Western province were surveyed with a structured questionnaire. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis revealed that financial socialisation significantly influences SFWB. Furthermore, financial capabilities derived from financial socialisation significantly moderate the relationship between financial socialisation and SFWB. Employees who receive better financial education and support from families and institutions exhibit higher financial capability, strengthening the positive link between financial socialisation and perceptions of financial well-being. The study highlights the importance of financial literacy programs and workplace initiatives aimed at enhancing employees' financial socialisation experiences and financial knowledge, skills, and competencies. The findings inform policymakers and financial institutions in developing targeted interventions to improve financial literacy and capability among employees, leading to better financial well-being outcomes, enhanced employee satisfaction, and retention, ultimately contributing to the sector's stability and growth.

Keywords: **Banking Sector, Sri Lanka, Financial Capability, Financial Socialisation, Subjective Financial Well-Being**

Impact of Big Data Volume on Strategic Decision-Making Process among Executives in the Finance Sector in Sri Lanka

Janadhi Weranja [1], Dillina Herath [2]

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [1,2]

jweranja@gmail.com [1], dilinaherath@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

In an era of rapid data growth, Big Data has revolutionised the decision-making process within organisations by enabling the analysis of vast and complex datasets. This study addresses a significant research gap by exploring the impact of Big Data volume on the decision-making process, specifically within Sri Lanka's financial sector, where empirical evidence is scarce. While global research has explored the transformative potential of Big Data, few studies focus on its sector-specific applications, or the unique challenges faced by emerging economies. A sample of 362 respondents was surveyed using a structured questionnaire, examining four key dimensions of data volume: size, growth rate, storage capacity, and retention period. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between data volume and the decision-making process, supported by a strong Pearson correlation coefficient and a robust regression model. Over 80% of executives recognise the value of large datasets in providing historical insights that have a significant impact on the strategic decision-making process. The majority of participants acknowledged that data volume significantly enhances the accuracy, speed, and reliability of decision-making. The findings indicate that executives perceive data volume as a critical factor in driving informed and strategic decision-making within the finance sector. These results align with existing literature, which emphasises the transformative role of Big Data in generating actionable insights and accelerating decision-making. This study highlights the importance for the financial sector to prioritise investments in scalable data infrastructure and advanced analytics tools to strengthen the strategic decision-making process. It contributes to the growing body of knowledge by establishing data volume as a critical driver of decision-making in the financial sector. Despite ongoing challenges in managing large datasets, the findings emphasise the significance of utilising data volume to enhance decision-making. Additionally, this research provides a basis for developing policies and organisational practices that effectively leverage data volume to optimise decision-making processes.

Keywords: **Big Data, Financial Sector, Sri Lanka, Strategic decision-making process, Volume**

Factors Influencing Access to Formal Finance for Small and Medium Enterprises: A Case Study of the North Western Province of Sri Lanka

Wijesooriya A. C. [1], Niluka Rajakaruna [2], Priyadarshanie W. A. N. [3]

Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies & Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

washikachalani@gmail.com [1], niluka@wyb.ac.lk [2], nadeesha@wyb.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The paper links the availability of formal finance to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) owners because it allows these individuals to secure competitive capital for growth, innovation, and financial sustainability. Therefore, the study focuses on the factors affecting access to formal finance for SMEs in the North Western Province of Sri Lanka. Despite the critical role SMEs play in economic development, many struggle to obtain formal financial support due to various constraints. Through a quantitative approach, the study examines key factors, including managerial experience, financial literacy, the presence of a comprehensive business plan, and adherence to management regulations. A sample of 100 SMEs was surveyed using a convenience sampling technique to gather data on these variables, and statistical analyses, including regression analysis and factor analysis, were employed to identify relationships and impacts. The findings reveal that managerial experience and financial literacy are positively correlated with improved access to formal finance, while well-structured business plans and compliance with management regulations further enhance this access. Entrepreneurs' Financial literacy needs to be enhanced through training in financial analysis, loan cost calculations, cash flow valuation, business planning, and financial reporting. Improvement in managerial skills regarding finance, marketing, business planning, production, and human resource management is also important for better decision-making and operational efficiency. Therefore, this research contributes to a better understanding of the challenges faced by SMEs in securing formal finance and provides actionable recommendations for policymakers and financial institutions to support this vital sector in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Access to Finance, Business Plan, Financial Literacy, Managerial Experience, Small and Medium Enterprises**

Continuous Integration and Continuous Deployment (CI/CD) in Modern Software Development: Implications for Software Quality, a Systematic Review

Abeyruwan N. Y. [1], Amarasekera M. A. B. [2], Dias S. M. D. T. H. [3]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology [1,2,3]

bm21501234@my.sliit.lk [1], bm21506048@my.sliit.lk [2], thisuru.d@sliit.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this review is to explore the impact of Continuous Integration (CI) and Continuous Deployment (CD) on software quality. It emphasises their pivotal role in modern software development and how they address challenges in traditional software development approaches. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was used to carefully filter and recognise previous literature under the scope of the study. The recognised studies were analysed using keyword co-occurrence clustering to identify key thematic areas. The analysis resulted in six clusters: 1) Automation in CI/CD for Enhancing Software Quality, 2) CI Adoption and Practices in Open-Source Software Development, 3) CI/CD and Quality Standards in Distributed and Agile Software Development, 4) CI-Driven Software Quality Improvement through Change Analysis and Automation, 5) CI/CD Maturity and Its Impact on Software Architecture, Maintenance, and Quality, and 6) Machine Learning in CI/CD: Test Optimisation and Prioritisation. The study demonstrates how CI/CD enhances software quality in different development contexts and presents real-world case studies to illustrate the practical benefits of CI/CD adoption. The study concludes by providing insights for future research directions and establishing CI/CD as a crucial practice for enhancing software quality and streamlining development efficiency.

Keywords: **Continuous Integration, Continuous Deployment, CI, CD, Software Quality**

A Modified Genetic Algorithm Approach for Solving Balanced and Unbalanced Assignment Problems

Dhananjalee S. B. R. D. [1], Ekanayake E. M. U. S. B. [2]

Department of Physical Science, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka [1,2]

dinushidhananjalee@gmail.com [1], uthpalaekana@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

This paper suggests using a genetic algorithm to manage assignment problems. This method can help lower costs or increase profits by finding the best way to allocate resources for tasks, whether the problems are balanced or unbalanced. A genetic algorithm (GA), an evolutionary algorithm known for its adaptability in optimisation problems and inspired by natural selection, is proposed in this study to overcome these limitations. Using tournament selection to find the top candidates based on a fitness function that minimises overall costs and incorporating crossover operations that prioritise the lowest cost associated with the highest penalty cost, the suggested method ensures efficient resource allocation decision-making. Additionally, redundant assignments are avoided by using swap mutation, which preserves solution diversity and delays premature convergence. The thorough numerical examples show how the suggested method can be used in real-world situations. To solve assignment problems, many techniques have been developed over time, such as the Maximum Difference Cost Method, the New Revised Zero's to One's Method, the Bottleneck Cost Method, the Modified Ant Colony Optimisation Algorithm, and Matrix One's Assignment Method. The Hungarian Method, first presented in 1955, is well known for effectively resolving small to medium-sized issues by offering precise answers. This study emphasises a fresh viewpoint on using heuristic methods, like genetic algorithms, for resource allocation, highlighting how well they can handle complex assignment problems in operations research. Moreover, the proposed algorithm is the most generalised one. Also, it addresses the assignment problem for any number of machines and jobs. The new approach has been tested on benchmark problems and randomly generated assignment problems for both balanced and unbalanced cases to validate its effectiveness. The numerical results demonstrate the robustness and practical applicability of the proposed method in real-world scenarios, reinforcing its potential as a powerful tool for optimising assignment problems.

Keywords: **Assignment Problem, Genetic Algorithm, Hungarian Method, Penalty Cost, Tournament Selection**

Is Machine Learning an Angel or a Devil? An Exploration of the Executives' Intention to Adopt Machine Learning for the Sustainability within the Sri Lankan Corporate Sector through Triple Bottom Line Concept: An Empirical Case Study

Lal Kumarasiri Doluweera

The American College of Higher Education Sri Lanka - The International Center of Keiser University, Florida USA

doluweera.lalkumarasiri@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the turbulent global business arena, futurists warn that advancements in artificial general intelligence (AGI) could create existential risks, potentially leading to human extinction or catastrophic global consequences. If AI surpasses humanity in general intelligence and becomes "super-intelligent", whether the fate of humanity depends on the actions of a future machine superintelligence or not is in question. Even though Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) have advanced business analytics to excavate into insights that were otherwise unattainable by humans, data-driven decision-making can be a "Black Box" because machine learning & deep learning algorithms can be inscrutable, inhibiting traceability of reasoning processes. Hence, empirical research related to superiors' intention to adopt AI technologies is sporadic and is in a lacuna in Sri Lanka. The main objective of this research is to explore the negative and positive associations that can change managers' behavioural intention in adopting Machine Learning fostering sustainability by empirically interviewing a purposive sample of executives practically engaged in developing AI technologies in eight Sri Lankan reputed companies by physically conducted in-depth interviews. Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology- UTAUT and Triple Bottom (TBL) Line Approach -for sustainability were utilised as the theoretical Lenses. Despite policy formulations -Ministry of Technology (2024) AI Sri Lanka 2028- Sri Lanka's National Strategy on AI, ICTA (2022) "Digital Maturity Model", the degree of adoption of AI technologies & Machine Learning in private corporations remains a less audited arena. Surprisingly, executives showed an enthusiastic behavioural intention to adopt AI-embedded Machine Learning for sustainability, leveraging predictive analytics and maintenance since its creation of a safe work environment, cost minimisation, and optimisation of resource consumption. This indicates that the bright side of machine learning outweighs the dark side despite the threat of Cyber Security Dilemma. Exploration of the Executives' Intention to Adopt AI-based Machine Learning for sustainability within the Sri Lankan Corporate Sector for enhanced productivity and the economic growth of the nation is rarely empirically investigated, even though the private corporate sector is a catalyst for enhancing the economy nationwide.

Keywords: **Artificial Intelligence, Behavioural Intention, Industry 5.0, Machine Learning, Sustainability**

A Novel Approach for Determining Penalty Costs in Vogel's Approximation for Solving Balanced and Unbalanced Transportation Problems

Ekanayake E. M. K. C. [1], Ekanayake E. M. U. S. B. [2]

Department of Physical Sciences, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka [1,2]

koshilaekanayake1999@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Transportation Problem is a key Optimisation challenge in Operations Research focused on minimising the total costs incurred when transporting products from various sources to multiple destinations. This problem is characterised by the need to allocate resources efficiently, ensuring that products are delivered cost-effectively while satisfying customer needs without exceeding the available supply from suppliers. Vogel's Approximation Method is the most well-known of several traditional approaches to solving the Transportation Problem. This research study proposes a model for determining the basic, feasible solution to transportation problems, both balanced and unbalanced. The approach is based on the penalty cost values of the rows and columns. Penalties for each row and column are calculated by repeatedly finding the difference between the second-largest value and the minimum value within the corresponding cells. When only two values remain, calculate their difference. Then, identify the penalty cost with the highest value and locate the cell within that row or column that has the lowest cost. We illustrate the usefulness of the proposed algorithm through numerical examples, comparing its performance with that of existing methods. The analysis includes various types of transportation problems, such as balanced and unbalanced Transportation Problems, with different origins and destinations. According to the results, the suggested algorithm outperforms other existing methods in terms of computational efficiency and solution quality, producing optimal or near-optimal results. By using this improved method, we want to offer a more reliable solution that lowers Transportation expenses and boosts the overall effectiveness of the distribution process in a variety of supply and demand scenarios. Our method enhances cost forecasts and optimises transportation routes, potentially having a significant effect on the transportation sector. Manufacturing, supply chain management, and logistics are just a few of the many areas in which it can be used. By analysing data and identifying the most efficient routes, the algorithm helps businesses reduce their transportation costs. It also increases efficiency by reducing delays and resource waste.

Keywords: **Initial Basic Feasible Solution, Optimal Solution, Penalty Cost, Transportation Problems, Vogel's Approximation Method**

A Creative Method for Using Harmonic Mean to Solve Tri-Objective Transportation Problems

Tharika Ekanayake [1], Uthpala Ekanayake [2]

Faculty of Natural Sciences, The Open University of Sri Lanka.[1]
Department of Physical Sciences, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.[2]

tharikadkekanayake@gmail.com [1], uthpalaekana@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

Transportation problems are a component of operations research, especially optimising supply chain operations regarding cost and resource usage management. However, due to the Industrial Revolution, the development of technology, and other factors, classical transportation problems wouldn't provide accurate solutions, especially since they wouldn't handle imprecise data in uncertain environments. Fuzzy logic deals with ambiguity around cost, demand, and supply data, all of which can be learned as actual problems for every business. When imprecision or ambiguity exists in data, Triangular Fuzzy Numbers are often used to assist such uncertainties. The proposed method is based on a computational algorithm, where fuzzification is achieved via Harmonic Mean and when the robustness of the proposed method is compared with conventional approaches (ranking methods) via inherent effectiveness, accuracy, consistency, and plasticity. The novel algorithm gains by demonstrating relevance in providing the Initial Basic Feasible Solution used to optimise their logistics and distribution planning. For example, this approach has consequences for logistics, supply chain management, and other domains that need fuzzy optimisation. Future work may extend its use to multi-objective and dynamic fuzzy environments to widen its applicability and effectiveness.

Keywords: **Fuzzy Transportation Problem, Harmonic Mean, Initial Basic Feasible Solution, Triangular Fuzzy Numbers**

A Study on the Performance Comparison of Group Chain Acceptance Sampling Plans for Non-Symmetrical Data Using the First Quartile and the Median

Haalisha M. A. [1], Kumari D. A. T. M. [2]

Department of Mathematical Sciences, Faculty of Applied Sciences,
Southeastern University of Sri Lanka, Sammanthurai, Sri Lanka.[1,2]

haalisha90@seu.ac.lk [1], tharangamadumali18@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

Acceptance sampling is a widely used quality control method that serves as an alternative to both zero and 100% inspection. In reliability assessment, truncated life testing is integrated into acceptance sampling to evaluate product durability within a limited testing period, addressing the impracticality of prolonged failure time inspections. Among various acceptance sampling methods, the Single Sampling Plan is the most commonly used approach in truncated life testing, where the acceptability of the lot is determined based on a randomly selected sample. However, this plan has limitations such as a rapid decline in the probability of lot acceptance when the acceptance number is set to zero or one and the inability to incorporate multiple inspections to enhance efficiency. The Group Chain Sampling Plan (GChSP-1) was introduced as a more effective alternative to address these issues. Originally, the mean life was used as the quality parameter for the GChSP-1; however, the mean is more suitable for symmetrical data. In 2023, the median was explored as an alternative and demonstrated better performance for non-symmetrical data. Expanding on this recent development, this study introduces the 1st quartile as a new quality parameter for the GChSP-1 and compares its performance with the median. The Minimum Angle Method was used in designing the sampling plan, as it ensures a balance between the producer's and the consumer's risks. The optimal number of groups (g) and the corresponding smallest angle (θ) were determined for various design parameter combinations. The outputs were generated using Sci-Lab programming, followed by a comparison of the results. The behaviour of the optimal number of groups was consistent with previous studies, showing that it increases with higher shape parameter values and quartile ratios. Conversely, the optimal number of groups decreases as the specified constant, the number of preceding lots, and the number of items in a group increase. Ultimately, the comparison between the median and the 1st quartile reveals that the design with the median produces the smallest number of groups than the 1st quartile and confirms that the median remains the best parameter for non-symmetrical data.

Keywords: **Consumer's Risk, First Quartile, Group Chain Accepting Sampling Plan, Minimum Angle Method, Producer's Risk**

Optimising Cost, Emissions, and Delivery Delays in Multi-Modal Logistics Networks under Uncertainty

Shraddha Mishra [1], Anurag Kumar [2]

International Management Institute, New Delhi, India [1,2]

shraddhamishra625@gmail.com [1], anuragkumar.du.aor@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

In this work, we proposed a novel neutrosophic mixed integer linear programming (NMILP) model for designing a resilient multi-period, multi-country, and multi-modal network in an uncertain environment. The proposed model accounts for three distinct transportation modes, strategically balancing cost considerations and travel time trade-offs simultaneously regulating carbon emissions using cap and trade regime. The uncertainty related to demand, production cost, transportation cost, carbon emissions, capacity and delivery time is handled with triangular neutrosophic numbers. Using cuts (variation parameters for truth, indeterminacy and falsity membership functions), NMILP is transformed into an equivalent interval mixed-integer linear programming model. The proposed model provides joint decision-making under dynamic settings for a number of critical supply chain issues such as order allocation, inventory management, distribution planning simultaneously balancing carbon emissions, delivery delays and overall cost. In addition, the proposed model also provides the number of carrier requirements along with the transportation mode selection in the context of global supply chain. Further, the proposed work offers a framework to develop a resilient and reliable transportation network that can adapt to future challenges.

Keywords: **Global Supply Chain, Multimodal, Neutrosophic Fuzzy, Resilience**

Factors Influencing Big Data Adoption in Forecasting in the Apparel Manufacturing Sector in Sri Lanka

Rajasuriya R. R. H. [1], Ravindu Kulawardena [2], Kumarasinghe W. S. L. [3]

Department of Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2,3]

himara.rajasuriya13@gmail.com [1], ravindudeshan@sjp.ac.lk [2], shanikalakmali@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The research aims to investigate adoption factors comprehensively and their impact on forecasting in Sri Lanka's apparel manufacturing sector. While big data adoption has been studied in developed economies, insufficient research explicitly examines the apparel manufacturing sector in developing countries like Sri Lanka. The unique characteristics and challenges of this context remain unexplored. While the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework has been widely used for technology adoption studies, its application to big data analytics in Sri Lanka's apparel sector remains limited. The research addresses the limited adoption of big data analytics for forecasting in Sri Lanka's apparel manufacturing sector, a critical industry for the nation's economy. The study pursues quantitative adoption using the Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework to examine the factors affecting big data adoption in forecasting. This research adopts a quantitative method. Data was collected by surveying 322 managerial-level employees from apparel manufacturing firms in Sri Lanka. Quota sampling method was used to gather data. The data was analysed using the SPSS software. This study identifies the factors affecting the adoption of big data in forecasting in the apparel manufacturing sector in Sri Lanka. Specifically, the findings find that technological factors largely determine the significance of big data adoption in forecasting, particularly relative advantage and compatibility. Besides, organisational factors (such as top management support and readiness) are also vital. Environmental factors such as competitive pressure and government regulations also moderately affect adoption decisions. A significant relationship was found between TOE factors and big data adoption in forecasting in the apparel manufacturing sector. Firms employing big data analytics in forecasting indicated improved accuracy and reduced inventory levels based on employees' viewpoints. This research offers an opportunity to add to the technology adoption literature in developing countries and brings engaging lessons for apparel manufacturers in Sri Lanka. The results inform decision-makers on overcoming adoption barriers and how big data analytics can be exploited to improve forecasting accuracy. The study recommends that policymakers support digital transformation in the apparel industry. Future research could explore the longitudinal effects of big data adoption on forecasting and extend its geographical scope to other regions in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Apparel Manufacturing, Big Data, Forecasting, Technology Organisation Environment Framework**

Hybrid Optimisation Using Ant Colony Algorithm Combining with Different Means to Find the Solution to the Traveling Salesman Problem

Ruwan S. M. T. [1], Ekanayake E. M. U. S. B. [2]

Department of Physical Science, Faculty of Applied Sciences,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka [1,2]

tharakaruwan420@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Traveling Salesperson Problem (TSP) is a widely recognised and extensively studied combinatorial optimisation problem, where the goal is to determine the shortest route for a salesperson to visit each city exactly once before returning to the starting point. As an NP-hard problem, its computational complexity increases exponentially with the number of cities, presenting significant challenges for solving larger instances. Exact solution approaches, such as branch-and-bound and dynamic programming, provide guaranteed optimal solutions by exploring all possibilities within the solution space. However, these methods are computationally expensive and impractical for real-world scenarios involving a large number of cities. In contrast, heuristic and metaheuristic methods, including genetic algorithms, Genetic algorithm, particle swarm optimisation, and ant colony optimisation (ACO), offer more computationally efficient solutions. This study proposes an innovative hybrid optimisation framework that combines the strengths of a modified Ant Colony Algorithm with mean-based heuristics to address these limitations. By incorporating the central tendencies of the distance matrix as a guiding metric, the algorithm enhances pheromone deposition and edge selection processes. This structured approach classifies edges into necessary, primary, secondary, and unnecessary categories, streamlining the solution process by narrowing the search space to focus on the most promising paths. A distinctive feature of this method is the integration of a vertex-centric averaging mechanism, which is done by considering the arithmetic average of each vertex, which ensures more intelligent and adaptive decision-making during path construction, allowing the algorithm to effectively prioritise edges that contribute to optimal solutions. An illustrative example showcases the robustness and practicality of the method, highlighting its superior performance compared to traditional ACO algorithms. The hybrid approach consistently identifies shorter routes with fewer iterations, proving its capability to tackle complex optimisation challenges effectively.

Keywords: **Arithmetic Mean, Geometric Mean, Harmonic Mean, Traveling Salesman Problem**

Digital Strategy Development for Adopting Emerging Technologies in Supply Chain Management – Challenges and Best Practices: A Systematic Literature Review

Amaya Senarathne [1], Hasali Edirisinghe [2], Ruwan Wickramarachchi [3]

Department of Industrial Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

amayasenarathne31@gmail.com [1], hasaliedirisinghe@gmail.com [2], ruwan@kln.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The digital transformation of supply chain management (SCM) is increasingly driven by the adoption of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and big data analytics. While these technologies have the potential to enhance operational efficiency and value delivery, their integration introduces significant challenges that hinder the formulation of effective digital strategies around them. Poor integration can lead to inefficiencies, increased operational risks, and missed opportunities to fully leverage the potential of these technologies to drive innovation and competitiveness. This systematic literature review aims to identify these challenges and consolidate best practices for developing effective digital strategies in SCM. Although previous studies have examined the role of such emerging technologies in SCM, there is limited synthesis of the specific challenges and actionable strategies required for successful digital strategy development when adopting emerging technologies to SCM. To address this gap, the study employs the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework to analyse 31 studies published since 2020, ensuring a rigorous and comprehensive review process. The findings categorise the challenges organisations face in digital strategy development into four main areas: technological, organisational, market-related, and security concerns. To overcome these barriers, the study identifies five frameworks and additional best practices, including the development of well-defined strategic roadmaps, robust change management approaches, and strong leadership commitment to aligning infrastructure investments with organisational goals. Further, collaboration among stakeholders, adherence to regulatory frameworks, and the integration of ethical considerations are highlighted as critical for ensuring operational efficiency, trust, and sustainable transformation. The findings offer valuable insights for practitioners and researchers, providing a comprehensive resource for refining digital strategies in SCM. By addressing key barriers and adopting recommended practices, organisations can enhance operational efficiency, improve adaptability, and foster sustained innovation. This study highlights the transformative potential of emerging technologies in SCM and offers practical guidance for organisations seeking to optimise their digital strategies.

Keywords: **Digital Transformation in SCM, Digital Strategy Development, Emerging Technology Adoption, Strategy Development Frameworks, Supply Chain Management**

Challenges and Barriers to Digital Transformation in Sri Lankan Government Organisations: Managers' Perceptions

Dilini Aruppala [1], Kennedy Gunawardana [2], Razi M. J. M. [3]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1]
Department of Accounting, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [2]
Department of Commerce and Financial Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [3]

dilini@kln.ac.lk [1] kennedy@sjp.ac.lk [2] razim@kln.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Despite facing significant challenges, the Sri Lankan government actively supports digitising its organisations, recognising its potential to enhance governance, optimise operations, and improve citizen services. This study investigates the key challenges and barriers hindering the effective implementation and adoption of digital transformation in Sri Lankan government organisations. This research analyses the perspectives of 147 managers working on digital transformation projects and information technology departments at different government organisations. Data is collected using a structured survey questionnaire, and analysed through SPSS, employing demographic analysis and frequency analysis to identify significant challenges and barriers. The study employed the Technology, Organisation, and Environment (TOE) framework, to categorise technological, organisational, and environmental factors that hinder digital transformation in the public sector. The findings reveal inadequate communication, high costs, insufficient digital skills, employee resistance, absence of a digital-centric organisational culture, system integration issues and insufficient regulatory frameworks as main barriers to digital transformation. However, despite all the challenges managers hold a largely positive view on digital transformation by acknowledging improvements in organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Managing these challenges, Sri Lankan government organisations can leverage emerging technologies to enhance public sector efficiency and productivity, to achieve sustainable digital transformation ultimately driving operational excellence.

Keywords: **Challenges and Barriers, Digital Transformation, Digital Technology Adoption, Sri Lankan Government Organisations**

Challenges in E-Waste Management and Its Environmental and Health Impacts: Insights from the Western Province of Sri Lanka

Gayan Jayawardene [1], Seshika Kariyapperuma [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

gayangunasinghe160@gmail.com [1], seshika@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges in managing e-waste and its impacts on the natural environment and human health in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This research employs a qualitative approach and is grounded in a constructivist epistemology. The population consists of key stakeholders involved in e-waste management in the Western province. The selected sample consisted of nine stakeholders, selected through a purposeful sampling technique. The semi-structured interview method with an interview guide was used to collect data from the participants. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants, and the audio recordings were transcribed and manually coded for analysis. The six-step thematic analysis technique, which was introduced by Braun and Clarke (2006), was used to analyse the data. The study revealed five main challenges: financial matters, ineffective government intervention, negative attitudes, lack of technical knowledge, and lack of infrastructure facilities. The natural environmental impacts included air pollution, soil contamination, and the disruption of biodiversity. Moreover, e-waste has been found to negatively impact human health, causing various diseases such as lung cancer, thyroid dysfunction, skin rashes, reduced fertility, muscle weaknesses, and liver, kidney, heart, and eye diseases. This research offers a holistic approach to e-waste by integrating different perspectives of environmental science, public health, waste management, and behavioural sciences. This contributes to institutional theory by demonstrating how weak regulatory frameworks and financial constraints in developing countries hinder sustainable waste management practices. Furthermore, it extends the Theory of Planned Behaviour by showing that in e-waste management, even when awareness exists, technical knowledge gaps and negative perceptions prevent action. The lack of infrastructure facilities suggests that e-waste management requires both technological and social interventions. This supports the Socio-Technical Systems Theory, which posits that effective problem-solving requires aligning social, technical, and policy aspects. Moreover, it contributes to environmental health theories by examining the influence of e-waste mismanagement on human health risks. Finally, it provides a deep understanding of systematic challenges faced by formal and informal e-waste collectors, governments in developing countries, and the people in effectively managing e-waste. These findings will help to propose a comprehensive model for e-waste management, addressing challenges with suitable strategies in the future.

Keywords: **E-Waste, E-Waste Management System, E-Waste Challenges, Health Hazards, Natural Environmental Hazards**

Impact of Banning Inorganic Fertiliser on Tea Farmers: With Reference to Ratnapura District in Sri Lanka

Pathirana P. D. B. S. [1], Fernando R. L. S. [2]

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka.[1]

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.[2]

bhagyapathirana@yahoo.com [1], *rlsf@sjp.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka has been recognised as an agricultural-based country since ancient times, with tea, coconut, and rubber as its main plantation crops. The country is a global leader in both tea production and export and tea export revenue helps reduce Sri Lanka's foreign trade deficit while providing socio-economic benefits to rural farmers. However, in May 2021, the Sri Lankan government imposed an immediate ban on importing inorganic fertilisers, severely impacting the agricultural sector, including tea plantations.

This study examines the impact of the fertiliser ban on tea farmers in the Ratnapura district, focusing on economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It also explores farmers' perceptions of organic and inorganic fertilisers in tea farming. A qualitative research approach, supported by some quantitative data, was adopted. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews and discussions with tea farmers, extension officers, and factory owners and gathered data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The study highlights its significance to stakeholders, including farmers, factory owners, state employees, government institutions, and policymakers. The findings reveal that the fertiliser ban adversely affected tea farmers in Ratnapura economically and socially and harmed tea-cultivated lands environmentally. Farmers identified inorganic fertilisers as more practical than organic options, suggesting that a complete shift to organic agriculture in tea cultivation may not be feasible.

The study proposes solutions to mitigate tea farmers' challenges, such as establishing demonstration plots, conducting awareness programs, introducing high-tech fertilisers at subsidised prices, and experimenting with fertilisers to enhance tea production in the Ratnapura district.

Consequently, the study contributes to the existing literature by emphasising the impact of the fertiliser ban on tea farmers of the Ratnapura district and their perceptions of organic and inorganic fertilisers.

Keywords: **Impact, Inorganic Fertiliser, Organic Fertiliser, Perception, Tea Industry**

The Impact of Digital Self-Efficacy and E-Governance on the Intention to Utilise E-Government Services:
A Theoretical Framework for the Public Sector

Arani Rodrigo [1], Trevor Mendis [2]

Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Business, NSBM Green University, Sri Lanka. [1]
Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka. [2]

arani.r@nsbm.ac.lk [1], trevor@pim.sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

In an era where digital service delivery has become the norm, it is natural for public sector to adopt e-government services. Despite the efforts to establish e-government services, it is evident that governments face challenges in persuading citizens to transition to e-services over traditional methods. This paper brings forth a novel perspective in an attempt to understand the underlying causes of the reluctance to utilise e-government services. The application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour provides insights of factors which lead towards the intention to utilise e-government services in terms of the attitude, subjective norms as well as perception of e-government services that citizens hold with regard to e-government services. Furthermore, empirical studies reveal that the intention and antecedents of the intention are mediated by the confidence citizens hold regarding their abilities to successfully engage with e-government services, which refers to digital self-efficacy stemming from the Self-Efficacy Theory. Hence, this paper argues that the intention to utilise e-government services is governed through the attitudes, subjective norms and the perception of e-governance which are determined through the level of digital self-efficacy of an individual. The conceptual model grounded in existing literature which highlight the relationships between the aforementioned constructs can be empirically tested through the methodology recommended in this paper. The model developed brings forth the connection between the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Self-Efficacy Theory, which expands the applications of the theories to understand the functioning of intentions to utilise e-government services while incorporating Digital Self-Efficacy. Connections brought forward through this paper can be applied in efforts of policymakers to encourage the use of e-government services.

Keywords: **Digital Self Efficacy, E-Government Services, E-Governance, Self-Efficacy Theory, Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The Role of Political Actors in Shaping Race-Based Crisis with Accounting Practices: Critical Race Theory (CRT) Perspective

Senevirathne K. M. S.

Faculty of Business, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
Faculty of Business and Law, Queensland University of Technology, Australia

manulas@uom.lk

ABSTRACT

This study aims to uncover the role of various political actors who take race to advance their political agendas in categorising people, resulting in a crisis. This research argues that race has been socially constructed throughout history, where the rationalities of the political actors and their programs and practices are considered critical factors influencing crisis. This qualitative research study focuses on historical standpoints using a vital perspective to explain how race is created and perpetuated in accounting practices to advance the objectives of various political actors in a crisis. This research incorporates Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explain the racial differentiation among the population categories. The research methods include document analysis from Census and Statistics and public sources. The data analysis revealed that starting from the British colonial government and then the Ceylonese government reporting practices have categorised population based on race. The inequality between Ceylonese and other categories was created, including Indian Tamils and other population categories, which resulted in a citizenship problem that resulted in a crisis in the long term. The findings emphasised that accounting practices and programs introduced by political actors created and perpetuated a race-based crisis in Sri Lanka in history after the independence. This research contributes to critical accounting history literature and CRT on how accounting reflects race as a crucial factor in deviating categories in the population.

Keywords: **Accounting, Crisis, Critical Race Theory, Indian Tamils, Politics**

Impact of Electronic Services Quality on Its Perceived Service Value: Evidence from Undergraduates of Faculties of Management in State Universities in Sri Lanka

Silva S. G. J. [1], Fernando R. L. S. [2]

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Ratmalana, Sri Lanka[1]
Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka[2]

jayathrislv@gmail.com [1], rlsf@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

The quality-of-service delivery is a critical factor in shaping and influencing stakeholder satisfaction. The increasing adoption of technology by organisations has significantly enhanced the provision of public services via e-services. Within the context of Sri Lankan state universities, this study evaluated the quality of e-services, measured the level of Perceived Service Value, identified key attributes contributing to overall e-service quality, and analysed the impact of e-service Quality on Perceived Service Value.

The study followed a positivistic research paradigm with a quantitative methodological approach. Primary data were collected from undergraduates of faculties of management of state universities in Sri Lanka who used e-services in Sri Lankan higher educational institutions. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data. The collected data was analysed using multiple analysis methods (mean ranking, one-sample t-tests, factor analysis, and regression analysis).

The findings of the study indicate that e-service quality has a positive influence on perceived service value within the context of Sri Lankan universities. The study suggests the need for improved university websites, portals, and social media, especially for Gen Z students who prefer handheld devices.

The study was limited to students' perceptions of e-services at Sri Lankan state universities by examining university websites. However, this study contributes to academics and practice by examining e-service quality in state-owned higher educational institutions.

Keywords: **E-Service Quality, Higher Education, Perceived Service Value, University Websites**

Blurred Lines: Analysing Judicial Tests for Determining Worker Status in the Gig Economy

Rajapakse R. L. W.[1], Senevirathne P. K. [2], Senevirathne P. K. S. K.[3]

The Open University of Sri Lanka [1,2]
The University of Colombo, Sri Lanka [3]

lwrajapakse@gmail.com [1], senevirathnepriyantha@gmail.com [2], sar@sci.cmb.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

In the modern labour market, gig workers and independent contractors are increasingly replacing traditional employees, a shift that has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly boosted the prevalence of contingent work. However, the labels employers assign to workers such as "employee" or "independent contractor" do not necessarily determine the true nature of their employment relationship. Proper worker classification is critical for ensuring the correct application of labour and social security laws, tax obligations, tort liabilities, and intellectual property rights. Yet, the classification process remains inherently complex and often ambiguous, with employers sometimes misclassifying workers to evade legal responsibilities. Over time, courts have developed a range of judicial tests to distinguish between employees (engaged in a contract of service) and independent contractors (engaged in a contract for service). These tests include the control test, integration test, economic realities test, and mutuality of obligations, among others. However, the rise of nontraditional work arrangements, particularly within the gig economy, has raised questions about whether these traditional tests are still adequate for addressing the increasingly complex and dynamic nature of modern labour relations. This paper critically examines the judicial frameworks used for worker classification, exploring their relevance in the context of contemporary shifts in the world of work. By employing a qualitative methodology, the study synthesises insights from a range of primary and secondary sources to evaluate the effectiveness of these tests in today's labour landscape. Results indicate that, while existing judicial tests provide a foundational framework for worker classification, courts are increasingly challenged to apply these frameworks creatively to adapt to the demands of the modern labour landscape. This research highlights the need for judicial flexibility and suggests that further research is warranted to assess whether legislative reforms could enhance consistency and fairness in worker classification standards within the gig economy.

Keywords: **Contract of Employment, Employee, Gig Economy, Independent Contractor, Worker Classification**

Consumer Preference in Packaging Colour and Fragrance Types: A Study on Beauty and Personal Care Consumers of Sri Lanka

Bandara H. M. V. D. [1], Kavirathna C. A. [2]

Department of Industrial Management, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [1,2]

bandara-im19046@stu.kln.ac.lk [1], chathumi@kln.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This research investigates consumer preferences for packaging colour and fragrance within the beauty and personal care market in Sri Lanka, addressing significant gaps in existing literature. The study examines the factors influencing these preferences, focusing on personal, socio-cultural, psychological, and market-related factors. To provide a comprehensive understanding, a systematic literature review was conducted to identify key variables, common packaging colours, and fragrances widely used in the industry. Based on this, two conceptual frameworks were developed for packaging colour and fragrance to explore the relationships between these factors and consumer preferences, with age and gender incorporated as moderating variables to capture demographic influences. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to a diverse sample of consumers across various regions in Sri Lanka, ensuring the representation of a broad spectrum of preferences. The data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), a robust method for hypothesis testing and model validation. The results revealed that psychological factors, such as emotional connections and brand loyalty, were the most influential in shaping preferences. Socio-cultural factors, including traditions and norms, played a significant role, particularly in preferences for culturally symbolic packaging colours like gold and red and fragrances such as jasmine and sandalwood. Personal factors, such as shopping frequency and family orientation, also contributed moderately to consumer choices. These findings offer practical recommendations for marketers and product developers to design packaging and fragrances that resonate with specific consumer segments, considering age, gender, and cultural alignment. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotional and cognitive dimensions of consumer behaviour, emphasising the importance of sensory elements in product packaging. It lays a foundation for future research on cross-cultural comparisons, rural consumer preferences, and longitudinal trends, advancing the field of sensory marketing and consumer behaviour in culturally distinct markets.

Keywords: **Beauty Products, Consumer Behaviour, Fragrance, Packaging Colour, Personal Care**

Exploring the Interplay of Wealth, Materialism, Impulsive Buying, and Waste through a Value-Attitude-Behaviour Lens

Dayapathirana N. N. [1], Galdolage B. S. [2], Siriwardhane D. R. J. [3]

Department of Business Management, SLIIT Business School Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka [1]
Department of Marketing Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [2]
Department of Business Economics, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [3]

nirmani.d@sliit.lk [1], sandamali@sjp.ac.lk [2], d.siriwardhane@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The exponential rise in consumerism has intensified the challenges associated with waste generation, driven largely by materialistic values and impulsive buying behaviours. Wealth, both perceived and actual, amplifies this cycle, fostering unsustainable consumption patterns. This paper proposes a conceptual framework grounded in the Value-Attitude-Behaviour (VAB) model shows the interplay between wealth, materialism, impulsive buying, and waste. This framework emphasises the hierarchical relationships between values, attitudes, and behaviours to provide actionable insights for sustainable consumption practices. Recent studies (2020-2024) highlight the exacerbation of these dynamics by digital technologies, particularly e-commerce platforms, which normalise impulsive buying behaviours. By integrating insights from psychology, economics, and environmental science, the framework aims to bridge theoretical gaps and inform practical interventions. Key contributions include identifying wealth as a driver of materialism, understanding how impulsive buying mediates waste generation, and exploring strategies to realign consumer values with sustainability goals. Findings from this study have implications for policymakers, marketers, and environmental advocates seeking to mitigate wasteful behaviours while promoting sustainable lifestyles. Interdisciplinary approaches are emphasised as critical to tackling the complexities of modern consumer culture, especially in the context of global environmental sustainability initiatives. By fostering value systems that prioritise sustainability, the framework offers a roadmap for transitioning from materialism-driven behaviours to environmentally conscious decision-making. This research positions itself at the intersection of theory and practice, advocating for a paradigm shift that aligns personal aspirations with collective ecological responsibility.

Keywords: **Disposal Behaviour, Household Wealth, Impulsive Buying Behaviour, Materialism, Subjective Well Being, Waste Generation**

The Relationship between Social Media Influencer Marketing, Purchase Intention and Electronic Word of Mouth Communication: A Conceptual Study

Fernando P. J. L. R. [1], Asanga Ranasinghe [2], Fernando P. B. D. [3]

Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]
Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [3]

lahiru.r.fdo@gmail.com [1], asanga@pim.sjp.ac.lk [2], bhagyadewmini@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Social media influencer marketing has become a frequently used mechanism to improve consumer sales, awareness, and brand strength across the globe, including in emerging economies in the Global South, such as Sri Lanka. This paper proposes to explore how social media influencer marketing impacts consumer purchase intention, focusing on key variables of social media influencer marketing, such as influencers' experience, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and content usefulness. Additionally, this paper proposes to investigate the moderating role of electronic word-of-mouth communication, which includes aspects such as resharing and commenting, on the relationship between SMI marketing and purchase intention. The study builds on social capital theory to examine the dynamics between influencers and consumer purchase intention, emphasising how social networks contribute to marketing success. By incorporating insights from the existing literature, this paper proposes a novel conceptual model that bridges gaps in understanding the effectiveness of SMI marketing strategies, particularly in Sri Lanka, which is considered an emerging market. The proposed study will contribute to the social capital theory by providing empirical support from a Global South perspective and generate managerial implications such as optimising influencer marketing strategies in emerging markets in the domain of social media influencer marketing.

Keywords: **Consumer Behaviour, E-WOM Communication, Purchase Intention, Social Capital Theory, Social Media Influencers**

Factors Affecting the Branding of Small and Medium Enterprise Products in the Kandy District

Karunaratne M. M. U. L. [1], Sathana V. [2]

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka [1,2]

udithlk9@gmail.com [1], vsathana@univ.jfn.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the factors affecting small and medium enterprise product branding in the Kandy district. The researcher applied a deductive approach since this enables researchers to apply statistical tests to ascertain the relationships between variables. This study used a survey as a research strategy. The sample unit was the owners of small and medium enterprises operating in Kandy, and the study used simple random sampling as the sampling technique. The researcher used the questionnaire to collect primary data, and the questionnaire comprised close-ended questions with a five-point Likert scale. Correlation and regression analysis were used to analyse collected data via questionnaires. The result reveals the significant impacts of *Market Size, Brand Associations, Competition, and Product Influences* on the branding of small and medium enterprise products in the Kandy district. The most important predictor was product influences, followed by market size and competition. Brand associations had barely any impact on branding. The findings confirmed the correlations among elements of brand associations, product influences, competition, and market size and branding results, and the study adds to the body of information already in use on branding. Therefore, small and medium enterprises must develop strategy frameworks focusing on product quality and distinctiveness from rivals. The study provided important theoretical contributions to the knowledge of branding dynamics, especially in the small and medium enterprise sector and practical consequences that can direct small and medium enterprises to improve their branding initiatives. By concentrating on these elements, small and medium enterprises in the Kandy district must focus on negotiating the complexity of branding in a competitive environment more effectively, thus increasing market success and customer loyalty. Building on these results, future studies can investigate other elements affecting branding and look at their effects in many sectors and environments. Larger and more varied samples reflecting several sectors, areas, and demographic groupings should be included in future research projects; longitudinal studies enable one to monitor changes in results and branding elements across time.

Keywords: **Branding, Brand Associations, Competition, Product Influences, Small and Medium Enterprises**

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Purchasing Behaviour in the Fast-Food Industry: A Study in the Colombo District

Kulathunga R. C. D [1], Kuruppu I. V. [2], Ruhunuge I. J. A [3], Fernando S. P. [3]

Department of Agri-Business Management, Aquinas College of Higher Studies, Colombo, Sri Lanka [1]
Department of Agribusiness Management, Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka [2]
Data Management Division, Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo [3]

isuriruhunuge999@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Social media marketing has become an essential tool in the fast-food industry, significantly influencing consumer behaviour and shaping purchasing decisions. This study explored the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchasing behaviour in the fast-food sector within the Colombo District, Sri Lanka. Despite the global prevalence of social media marketing in various industries, limited research has been conducted on its effect on the Sri Lankan fast-food market. Explanatory Sequential Design under a mixed-methods approach was applied. This study assessed the influence of social media platforms, advertisements, promotions, online reviews, and influencer content on consumer decision-making. 250 respondents, primarily young individuals and students, participated in an online survey. Young individuals and students were selected as respondents because they represent a significant portion of social media users and are highly active on platforms like Facebook and YouTube. The findings revealed that Facebook and YouTube are the most widely used platforms for brand engagement, with significant influence on consumer decisions, particularly through advertisements, reviews, and promotions. Price was identified as the most important factor influencing fast-food purchases, followed by convenience, while nutritional value ranked lower in priority. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) further identified three components shaping consumer behaviour: social and convenience-driven choices, marketing influences, and health-conscious considerations. These results suggested that social media marketing is crucial in shaping consumer perceptions, engagement, and purchasing behaviour in the fast-food sector. This research offered valuable insights for fast-food brands in Colombo to refine their digital marketing strategies, emphasising social media promotions, influencer collaborations, and health-conscious messaging to enhance consumer engagement and loyalty.

Keywords: **Fast-Food Sector, Principal Component Analysis, Purchasing Behaviour, Social Media**

Emerging Themes of Sustainability in Food, Adventure, Wildlife, Wellness, Creative, Cultural, and Heritage Tourism: A Systematic Review

Amandi Madanayake [1], Keshini Paul [2], Thithira Perera [3], Mathusayi Vasanthakumar [4],

Anuja Lokeshwara [5], Madara Jayasinghe [6]

SLIIT Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology,
New Kandy Road, Malabe, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

*amandimadanayake@gmail.com, keshinipaul2020@gmail.com, thithiraperera@gmail.com,
sayivasanthakumar@gmail.com, anuja.l@sliit.lk, madara.j@sliit.lk*

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to review emerging themes in sustainability across various aspects of tourism. It systematically examines various types of tourism: food, adventure, wildlife, wellness, heritage, and creative tourism and the application of sustainability relating to economic, social and environmental elements in the afore-mentioned tourism aspects. The study's objective is to explore how sustainability is integrated into these diverse tourism sectors, and to explore the application of sustainability within each sector to analyse their emerging themes. Further this study identifies how the sustainable tourism practices impact on tourist experiences, destination management, and local community well-being. This study addresses the empirical gap on research combining multiple areas of tourism in their applications to sustainability. The research is based on a systematic literature review of 81 academic articles sourced from databases such as ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and ResearchGate. The PRISMA model was employed to ensure a rigorous and transparent review process. The findings of this study involve a comparative analysis on the implementation of sustainability across six areas of tourism and the emerging trends in these tourism categories, addressing the empirical gap in conducting a comparative study combining different areas of tourism. The study also explores how the sustainable practices in various tourism aspects contribute to impact tourists, the economy, the environment, and society. Key findings include the implementation of sustainable culinary tourism in the promotion of traditional cuisine, sustainable growth in wellness tourism, application of sustainable wildlife tourism in protecting wildlife and biodiversity, responsible practices in adventure tourism, sustainability in creative tourism activities, cultural preservation on heritage in cultural tourism, while investigating economic, social and environmental impacts. This study will provide valuable insights into both the theoretical and practical aspects of current sustainable practices in emerging tourism sectors which may pave the way to identify the future limitations. Overall, this paper combines various tourism categories and how sustainability integrates with the activities in these areas of tourism and provides a foundation for further research into its integration across diverse tourism practices.

Keywords: **Adventure Tourism, Creative Tourism, Food Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Wellness Tourism, Wildlife Tourism**

Social Media Usage in Promoting Sustainable Tourism Actions among Domestic Sri Lankan Tourists: A Study Based on the AIDA Model

Madhushan D. D. A. [1], Jayasinghe J. A. P. M. [2], Dassanayake D.M.C. [3]

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.[1,2,3]

amilamadushan330@gmail.com[1], prabath@mgt.rjt.ac.lk[2], chamindad@mgt.rjt.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping consumer behaviour and influencing decision-making in various industries, including tourism. This study examines the impact of social media usage on promoting sustainable tourism actions among domestic Sri Lankan tourists, utilising the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) model as a conceptual framework. Given the increasing concerns regarding sustainability in tourism, this research explores the extent to which social media can drive awareness, engagement, and responsible travel behaviours. The study employs a quantitative research design, collecting data from 368 Sri Lankan domestic tourists via a structured questionnaire. Findings indicate a strong correlation between social media engagement and sustainable tourism behaviour, with social media platforms playing a crucial role in influencing tourist actions. WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram emerged as the most influential platforms for disseminating sustainability-related content. Regression analysis confirms that attention and interest generated through social media significantly impact tourists' desire to adopt sustainable practices, ultimately leading to responsible tourism actions. The results underscore the importance of leveraging social media to promote eco-friendly travel behaviours, offering valuable insights for policymakers, tourism operators, and destination management organisations. By strategically utilising social media campaigns, stakeholders can enhance sustainability awareness, encourage responsible travel, and foster a culture of environmental and cultural preservation in Sri Lanka's tourism sector.

Keywords: **AIDA Model, Domestic Tourism, Responsible Travel Behaviour, Social Media, Sri Lanka, Sustainable Tourism**

Promotion through Social Media Platform Marketing: Evaluating the Ethical Role of Social Media Influencers in Sri Lanka's 2024 Political Campaigns

Nimesha K. H. A.[1], Shivany S. [2]

Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna [1,2]

khanimeshakumarasingha@gmail.com [1], shanshivany@univ.jfn.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study examines the role of influencer marketing in political campaigns during Sri Lanka's 2024 presidential election, focusing on the impact of social media on voter perceptions and engagement. As political discourse increasingly shifts to digital platforms, influencers have emerged as central figures in shaping political narratives and mobilising support. The study employed purposive sampling to collect data through in-depth interviews with six social media influencers, four political candidates, and sixteen voters, continuing until data saturation was reached. Through thematic analysis, this study identified the following key themes: voter trust, voter engagement, the impact of influencers, ethical dilemmas, and the overall role of influencers, aiming to uncover the key factors influencing the effectiveness of influencer marketing in this context. The findings suggest that influencers are viewed as credible and relatable sources of information, especially among younger voters who are more engaged with digital content. Many participants noted that influencers can humanise political candidates, making messaging more accessible and engaging. The study found that campaigns that effectively leveraged influencers experienced improved visibility and a stronger connection with their target audience, which led to increased voter engagement. However, the investigation also revealed challenges such as spreading misinformation and concerns regarding the authenticity of influencer endorsements. Participants emphasised the need for transparency in influencer partnerships to maintain trust in political messaging. Furthermore, ethical considerations emerged as a prominent theme, underscoring the significance of responsible marketing practices in this context. This research emphasises that political parties must strategically incorporate influencer marketing into their campaign strategies to cultivate voter engagement and trust. By upholding ethical standards and ensuring authenticity, campaigns can leverage influencer marketing to amplify their effectiveness in the evolving digital landscape. Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights into the intersection of social media and political marketing, offering a foundation for future research on digital engagement in political contexts within Sri Lanka and beyond.

Keywords: **Digital Marketing, Influencer Marketing, Political Campaigns, Social Media, Voter Engagement, Sri Lanka 2024**

A Quantitative Study on the Customer's Attitude towards Fast Food Restaurants in Sri Lanka

Patabendi M. C. [1], Fernando P. B. D. [2]

Department of Business Administration, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2]

malmicpatabendi2000@gmail.com [1], bhagyadewmini@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

The fast-food restaurant sector is a competitive and rapidly growing industry in Sri Lanka. Hence, understanding the factors that can influence customer attitude is significant for fast food restaurants to maintain competitive advantage and facilitate growth. However, there is a notable literature gap on the customer attitude towards fast food restaurants in the Global South context, such as Sri Lanka, as the majority of extant literature in this domain is limited to studies conducted in the Global North. The main purpose of this research is to understand the relationship between determinants of customer attitude and the customer attitude towards fast food restaurants in the Sri Lankan context. Accordingly, based on a review of the literature, five determinants of customer attitude were considered for this study, namely, food quality, atmosphere, affordability, promotion and culture. This study was conducted on the positivist epistemological position and objectivist ontological position. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed following a deductive approach, and the survey method was used for data collection. A sample of 164 respondents was selected through convenience sampling. The collected data were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The findings indicate that there is evidence to state that food quality, affordability and promotion have a significant positive relationship on the customer attitude towards fast food restaurants in Sri Lanka. However, there is a lack of evidence to establish a significant relationship between the atmosphere and customer attitude towards fast food restaurants and between culture and customer attitude towards fast food restaurants in Sri Lanka. This research provides important managerial insights for the employees and owners of fast-food restaurants, as well as for the marketing personnel in post-colonial Sri Lanka, by providing a greater understanding of the determinants of the attitudes of customers of fast-food restaurants.

Keywords: **Affordability, Attitude towards Fast Food Restaurants, Food Quality, Promotion, Quantitative Research**

Networked Celebrification on Instagram: The Role of Follower-Generated Content in the Cultural Production of Instagram Mega-Influencer Brands

Dilan Tharindu Rathnayake

Department of Marketing Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

dilan@sjp.ac.lk

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of follower-generated content, specifically hash tagged conversations, in constructing the influencer capital and emotional capital of Instagram mega-influencers. Drawing on Bourdieu's field of cultural production and related theories, the research explores how audiences act as cultural intermediaries, shaping influencer branding through their interactions within the digital field. Using network theory and sentiment analysis, the study investigates thematic clustering and emotional expressions across three mega-influencers' hashtag networks, revealing how user-generated content contributes to influencer celebrification. Three dominant themes emerged from the network analysis: nostalgia, personal charisma, and connections to mainstream celebrities. Nostalgia, particularly related to historical group affiliations, reinforces influencers' cultural relevance by activating collective memories. Personal charisma, reflected in narratives about family dynamics and individual traits, enhances trust and relatability. Connections to mainstream celebrities situate influencers within broader networks of cultural capital, emphasising the hierarchical and nested subfields within the digital landscape. Sentiment analysis further uncovered the role of positive emotions, such as joy and trust, in fostering authenticity and audience loyalty, while highlighting the engagement potential of negative emotions, such as anger, in controversy-driven visibility. The findings contribute to the theorisation of online fields, extending the concept of digital social capital as a networked dynamic where followers play a co-creative role. By linking thematic and emotional expressions to influencer branding, the study offers actionable insights for marketers, such as leveraging nostalgia, fostering emotional connections, and strategically navigating controversies. Future research should explore how platform-specific dynamics shape influencer celebrification and investigate the evolution of influencer capital over time. These directions would deepen the understanding of the interplay between digital and emotional capital across diverse cultural subfields, offering a richer framework for analysing influencer branding in the evolving social media landscape.

Keywords: **Cultural Production in Social Media, Emotional Capital, Follower-Generated Content, Influencer Capital, Networked Celebrification**

Exploring Wellness Tourism Experiences and Motivations of Tourists in Sri Lanka: A Qualitative Study of Key Influences and Perceptions

Rupasinghe R. R. D. [1], Madhumali B. K. K. U. [2], Wediwela C. D. [3], Thanne T. W. G. C. [4],

Anuja Lokeshwara [5], Charuka Kothalawala [6]

Department of Business Management, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology,
Colombo, Sri Lanka.[1,2,3,4,5,6]

*bm21553578@my.sliit.lk [1], bm21551352@my.sliit.lk [2], bm21555176@my.sliit.lk [3],
bm21554636@my.sliit.lk [4], anuja.l@sliit.lk [5], charuka.k@sliit.lk [6]*

ABSTRACT

This research study explores the tourists' perceptions of wellness tourism in Sri Lanka and its potential to increase the destination's attractiveness. With its rich cultural legacy and stunning natural beauty, Sri Lanka offers real and unique wellness experiences, mixing traditional Ayurveda with distinct wellness therapies, meditation, and yogic practices in a serene environment. In particular, the study's objective is to understand tourists' experiences, motivations, and general perceptions concerning wellness tourism in Sri Lanka. The literature review analyses how emotional well-being, cultural immersion, and natural environments relate to satisfaction from wellness tourism worldwide. It also examines the traditions of various countries, their incorporation of wellness tourism, and the perceptions formed of the traditional wellness experience. Tourists' expectations and experiences are examined, considering in particular the role of wellness offerings in shaping their perceptions of Sri Lanka as a destination. This study adopted a qualitative method using word clouds and thematic analysis to analyse the data collected. The findings provide insight into the perception of tourists regarding wellness tourism in Sri Lanka, ensuring an experience typified by relaxation, authenticity, and tranquillity. Drawing from these perceptions, suggestions are offered to enhance and advance the wellness tourism industry in Sri Lanka, which encompasses the promotion of authentic wellness experiences. This study will provide a thorough overview of the wellness tourism phenomena in Sri Lanka, emphasising the potential for improving the country's wellness tourism offerings and informing strategies for attracting and satisfying well-being-oriented visitors. The conclusion synthesises the study's themes, highlighting the significance of comprehending tourists' motivations and experiences related to wellness to refine Sri Lanka's wellness tourism offerings. In summary, this study provides significant dimensions for developing wellness tourism in Sri Lanka. It indicates the potential of wellness experiences in Sri Lanka as an exciting and life-transforming destination for international tourists.

Keywords: **Qualitative Research, Tourism Experience, Visitor Motivations, Sri Lanka, Wellness Tourism**

Omnichannel Integration and Positive Word of Mouth among Customers in Sri Lanka's Supermarket Sector: The Mediating Role of Flow Experience

Sewwandi D. M. P. [1], Walpola W. K. C. S. [2], Banduge R. H. [3]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

piyumisewwandi@sjp.ac.lk [1], charukawalpola@sjp.ac.lk [2], hansajabanduge@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of omnichannel integration on Positive Word of Mouth (PWOM) among supermarket customers in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on the mediating role of flow experience. Omnichannel integration, which encompasses informational, transactional, and relational integration, has emerged as a critical strategy for delivering seamless and engaging customer experiences across physical and digital platforms. PWOM represents a pivotal aspect of consumer behaviour, significantly contributing to brand advocacy, customer retention, and market expansion. However, the mechanisms through which omnichannel integration drives PWOM, particularly through psychological mediators such as flow experience, a state of deep immersion and engagement are not well understood and recognised. This research addresses these gaps by analysing the direct and mediated effects of omnichannel integration on PWOM within the context of the supermarket sector in Sri Lanka. Adopting a quantitative, cross-sectional research design, the study collected data from 350 supermarket customers via an online questionnaire. Statistical analyses, including mediation analysis using the PROCESS macro in SPSS, showed that all types of omnichannel integration significantly influence PWOM. Informational and transactional integration demonstrated robust direct effects, whereas relational integration exhibited pronounced indirect effects mediated by flow experience. These findings underscore the role of flow experience in enhancing consumer engagement, satisfaction, and advocacy, thereby amplifying the impact of omnichannel integration on PWOM. The theoretical contributions of this study are substantial, highlighting flow experience as a critical mediator in the relationship between omnichannel integration and PWOM. By placing the research in an emerging market, the study underscores the influence of contextual factors on omnichannel effectiveness. From a practical perspective, the findings emphasise the importance of integrating informational, transactional, and relational elements across channels to deliver personalised and immersive experiences. Retailers are advised to prioritise strategies that foster flow experience, such as unified payment systems, personalised promotions, and seamless interactions, to enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy.

Keywords: **Flow Experience, Informational Integration, Omnichannel Integration, Positive Word of Mouth, Relational Integration, Transactional Integration**

Self-Image Types and Brand Personality Mediation: A Study of Purchasing Intentions in Sri Lanka's Motorcycle Industry

Samarasinghe K. G. S. A. [1], Patabendige S. S. J. [2], Thennakoon T. M. B. N. [3]

Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

Samarasibm17376@stu.kln.ac.lk [1], sugeeth@kln.ac.lk [2], tmbnt201@kln.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Consumer purchasing intentions transcend mere functionality, often shaped by the powerful alignment between a consumer's self-image and a brand's personality. This dynamic is particularly significant in industries where products function as symbols of identity and foster emotional connections. While self-image congruence and brand personality have been extensively studied, there is a pronounced gap in exploring their interaction within the context of emerging markets, especially in the motorcycle industry. This study seeks to address this critical void by investigating the impact of actual self-congruity and ideal social self-congruity on purchasing intentions within Sri Lanka's motorcycle industry, with a specific focus on the mediating role of brand personality. The research aims to provide insights into how self-image congruence influences consumer decision-making and drives purchasing behaviour. Data were collected from 337 undergraduates through a structured survey employing a convenience sampling technique. Using SPSS 23, correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to explore the hypothesised relationships. The findings reveal that both actual self-congruity and ideal social self-congruity have a significant and positive effect on purchasing intentions. Furthermore, brand personality mediates these relationships, serving as a crucial link between a consumer's self-concept and their purchasing decisions. The results underscore the strategic importance of developing brand personalities that resonate with consumers' current perceptions of themselves and align with their aspirational identities. This alignment is particularly pertinent in Sri Lanka's motorcycle market, where motorcycles symbolise both functionality and social status. Businesses can leverage these insights to create emotionally resonant branding strategies that enhance customer loyalty and encourage purchasing behaviour. This research contributes to the limited body of knowledge on self-image congruence in emerging markets, particularly in the context of the motorcycle industry. The findings provide actionable insights for marketers aiming to differentiate their brands and strengthen emotional connections with their target audience, thereby driving sustained business success.

Keywords: **Actual Self-Congruity, Brand Personality, Ideal Social Self-Congruity, Purchasing Intentions, Sri Lankan Motorcycle Industry**

A Concept Paper on Impact of Consumption Values on Patronage Intention in Phygital Retailing: A Theory of Consumption Values Approach

Vidarshika W. O. [1], Asanga Ranasinghe [2], Jayawardana A. K. L [3], Dayapathirana N. [4]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka [1,4]
Postgraduate Institute of Management, Sri Lanka [2,3]

oshani.v@sliit.lk [1], asanga@pim.sjp.ac.lk [2], ananda@pim.sjp.ac.lk [3], nirmani.d@sliit.lk [4]

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's retail landscape is experiencing notable technological advancements, driving the evolution of shopping experiences through Phygital retail environments that blend physical and digital interactions. While digital and physical retailing have been extensively studied separately, there is a notable lack of focus on the integration of digital and physical elements (Phygital) in existing literature. This is despite its emergence as an innovative approach to meeting consumer needs effectively. These environments cater to the modern consumer's need for convenience, personalisation, and experiential engagement. This research seeks to examine the influence of consumer values—such as hedonic value, utilitarian value, and social value, epistemic and conditional values within Phygital retail settings on patrons intentions of retail shoppers, mediated by consumer attitudes. The study also explores how these values interact with the features of Phygital retailing, such as immersive technology to shape consumer behaviour in the context of modern retailing. This study highlights the importance of considering consumer values in Phygital (physical-digital integrated) environments, emphasising their significant impact on patronage intentions. Present study is one of the scarcely researched areas in the Sri Lankan retail sector which intends to bring valuable insights for retailers. It provides valuable insights for decision-makers in the retail sector to develop strategies that effectively facilitate consumer values within Phygital retail atmospheres, thereby enhancing patronage intentions in modern retailing. From a theoretical perspective, this study utilises the Theory of Consumer Values (TCV) contributing to the existing knowledge with applying consideration given for Phygital retailing as a novel creation in retailing literature. Secondly, from the theoretical point of view highlighted with the contradictory viewpoints of Theory of Consumer Values in extant literature and identified values on patronage intention considering the five value aspects within Phygital retailing. Thirdly, this study contributes to the theory by considering consumer attitudes as a mediator for the relationship of consumer values on phygital patronage intention. This concept paper identified review on extant literature based on the Theory of Consumer Values (TCV) for the past 10 years and based on and proposed a new conceptual model applying for phygital retailing mediated with consumer attitudes.

Keywords: **Phygital Retailing, Phygital Patronage Intention, Theory of Consumer Values (TCV)**

Exploring the Influence of Celebrity Endorsements of Fast-Food Restaurants on Youth Consumer Behaviour in Sri Lanka: With Special Reference to Colombo District

Weerakkody W. A. D. M. [1], Kulawardena L. K. R. D. [2], Nayanapriya G. D. W. [3]

Department of Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda [1,2,3]

minushaw@sjp.ac.lk [1], ravindudeshan@sjp.ac.lk [2], vishwajithnayanapriya556@gmail.com [3]

ABSTRACT

This concept paper explores the role of celebrity endorsements in influencing youth consumer behaviour within Sri Lanka's fast-food industry. The rapid expansion of this sector, coupled with increased competition, has driven brands to adopt celebrity-driven marketing strategies. While numerous global studies highlight the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements, research addressing the cultural, psychological, and socio-economic contexts of developing nations like Sri Lanka remains limited. This study aims to bridge that gap by exploring the specific attributes of celebrity endorsers; attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise and their impact on youth purchasing behaviour. A qualitative methodology will be employed to gain deeper insights into the emotional and psychological drivers behind youth purchasing decisions, with a focus on the Colombo District. The study leverages the Source Credibility Model and acknowledges the influence of social media in amplifying endorsement effects. By adopting an exploratory lens, this study will provide a theoretically grounded understanding of how celebrity endorsements interact with cultural and social dynamics in Sri Lanka. Findings from this research are anticipated to offer valuable theoretical contributions by expanding the application of existing models to non-Western contexts and providing actionable recommendations for fast-food marketers, aiming to optimise celebrity-driven campaigns. The study's qualitative depth ensures a richer understanding of consumer attitudes, ultimately aiding fast-food brands in crafting culturally resonant and psychologically impactful marketing strategies.

Keywords: **Celebrity Endorsements, Fast-Food Industry, Source Credibility Model, Sri Lanka, Youth Consumer Behaviour**

Revolutionising Learning: Integration of AI in Higher Education Institutions in Bangladesh

Nilufa Akter [1], Solaiman Chowdhury [2], Mehedi Hasan [3], Iqbal Hossain Moral [4], Shibley Sadique [5]

Department of Management Studies, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, Bangladesh [1,2]
Khulna University, Bangladesh [3]
Department of Business Administration, Northern University of Business and Technology Khulna, Khulna, Bangladesh [4]
Department of Finance, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, Bangladesh [5]

nilufaakter780@gmail.com [1], schowdhury@ru.ac.bd [2], mehedihasan@ku.ac.bd [3], iqbalmgt@gmail.com [4], sadique@ru.ac.bd [5]

ABSTRACT

This study examines how Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in higher education in Bangladesh can transform learning experiences and improve educational outcomes. It focuses on key factors influencing AI adoption, including perceived risks, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, utilitarian value, and behavioural intentions. The primary objective of this research is to assess the impact of these factors on the adoption of AI in higher education institutions across the country. Stratified random sampling has been used to collect relevant data from public and private universities across major cities. Data collection involved a structured questionnaire designed with a 5-point Likert scale to measure constructs related to AI adoption, such as perceived risk, utilitarian value, performance expectancy, and social influence. The findings show that utilitarian value, performance expectancy, and social influence positively affect attitudes and intentions toward AI adoption, with a substantial direct effect of behavioural intention on actual adoption. These results provide valuable insights for stakeholders, supporting AI's successful implementation in higher education institutions in Bangladesh.

Keywords: **Artificial Intelligence (AI), AI Integration, Higher Education, Bangladesh**

Developing an Instrument to Measure University Undergraduates' Oral Communication Proficiency in English

Azees H. Y. [1], Siriwardhane H. D. P. [2], Dewmini B. L. I. [3], Makaduwawa H. M. S. P. B. [4],

Suraweera T. [5], Dayapathirana N. N. [6], Jayasuriya N. A. [7]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6,7]

bm21531248@my.sliit.lk

ABSTRACT

English-speaking proficiency is critical for academic and professional success in post-colonial countries, where English is a bridging language for gaining global opportunities. Despite getting over 12 years of English education in the Sri Lankan school system, it is evident that first-year undergraduates in universities continue to face significant difficulties in English oral communication. This becomes a serious issue when it comes to assessments where English speaking plays a key role. Thus, it is inevitable to take stringent steps to improve their English-speaking skills. Assessing oral communication proficiency is an essential step toward making such improvements. In this backdrop, an action research project was undertaken to enhance the English-speaking skills of first-year undergraduates of SLIIT business school. This paper presents the findings of the first phase of this research project. Though certain tools are available to assess English communication skills in general; no such instruments cater to this specific need. Thus, a new instrument was developed and validated in this research. The instrument development and validation process is detailed here. A mixed-method approach with qualitative in-depth interviews and expert opinion reviews followed by quantitative methods was adopted in this study. After a comprehensive literature review and an interview process, a self-assessment questionnaire with 75, 5-point Likert scale statements was drafted. Having refined version, 393 first-year undergraduates of SLIIT Business School were used to collect data. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses followed by structural equation modelling were the adopted quantitative analysis methods. The research resulted in a self-assessment tool consisting of 26, 5-point Likert scale statements. These statements were designed under four dimensions; Anxiety, Confidence, Language Competence, and Fearfulness. Furthermore, it was observed that the overconfidence of the speaker and an attempt to use "correct" English grammar and vocabulary, (i.e. two dimensions- confidence and Language competence) hinder speaking proficiency. The resulting instrument would pave the way for educators and students alike to improve this critical skill.

Keywords: **English Speaking, Instrument Development, Oral Communication Proficiency, Non-Native English Speakers, Structural Equation Modelling**

An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Short-Term Pre-Service Graduate Teacher Training Programmes: Special Reference to the Sri Jayewardenepura Education Zone

Dangalla D. L. S.

Zonal Education Office, Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

lilanidangalla@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Teachers have a greater influence on the quality of education than any other factor. Therefore, the demand for effective and capable teachers is paramount in the ever-evolving field of education. One of the emerging trends in teacher education worldwide in the 21ˢᵗ century is teacher training. For that reason, short-term pre-service teacher training programs are important to quickly equip aspiring teachers with essential skills and knowledge. Short-term pre-service teacher training programs are instrumental in enhancing teachers' confidence in their ability to motivate students and improve learning, significantly influencing student performance. Presently the effectiveness of such short-term training is a topic of considerable debate. However, there is a lack of data on the effectiveness of such initiatives, notably among government school teachers in Sri Lanka, resulting in unrecognised strengths, weaknesses, and areas for continual improvement. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a 30-day pre-service teacher training programme held in May 2024 for graduate teachers in the *Sri Jayewardenepura* education zone in Sri Lanka. Implementing changes in teaching and learning practices is essential to encouraging skilled individuals who can effectively apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations during this era. The methods in this research consisted of a self-administered questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 'Excellent' to 5 'Fair'), a cross-sectional time horizon, distribution to all the participants (92% response rate), and data analysis using descriptive statistics and an effectiveness score. Findings show 38% find it extremely effective, 55% effective, and 7% ineffective. Furthermore, the study identified areas for improvement in future training sessions. These findings have significant implications for enhancing teacher training programs and guiding future initiatives. This study will be instrumental for decision-makers at the divisional, zonal, and provincial levels, as well as national policymakers, in improving the effectiveness of pedagogical strategies.

Keywords: **Effectiveness, Graduate Teachers, Pre-service Teacher Training**

Effectiveness of Higher Education System Leading to Freelance Platforms: A Case Study of Sri Lanka

Dasanayaka L. N [1], Madanayake A. A. D. T. B. [2], Jayasekara D. P. A. K. G. [3], Dinidu I. A. D. T. [4], Chandrasiri R. [5], Bandara G. [6]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

lihinidasanayaka99@gmail.com [1], thuvindu12345@gmail.com [2], Gimantha2001@gmail.com [3], thilinadinidu2000@gmail.com [4], ruwanthika.c@sliit.lk [5], gayan.b@sliit.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

Online freelancing has experienced remarkable growth, resulting in an increased demand for these platforms. The purpose of this research study is to examine the skills, attitudes, and behaviours that graduates should develop as they transition into online freelancing. Numerous researchers have emphasised that higher education in Sri Lanka is focused on enhancing employability, effectively equipping undergraduates with skills suitable for both government and private sectors. However, the number of job vacancies is limited, while universities continue to graduate more students annually than there are available positions. Previous studies suggest that online freelancing, as a form of digital self-employment, offers a viable solution to this issue. This study explores the necessary attitudes, behaviours, and skills for achieving success in online freelancing. A qualitative approach was employed, involving in-depth interviews with 17 undergraduate freelancers. Data collection concluded once saturation was reached, indicating that no new information emerged. The target population for this study consisted of undergraduate online freelancers in Sri Lanka, and thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo as the analytical tool. The findings revealed that a growth mindset, work-life balance, and flexibility are essential attitudes and behaviours for success in online freelancing. Additionally, effective communication and proactive engagement were identified as critical skills. The results also highlighted the importance of developing core competencies specific to freelance platforms, which is an important area of interest for undergraduates seeking to enhance their higher education experience. In conclusion, findings are expected to reveal attitudes, behaviours, and skills that need to be included in the Sri Lankan higher education system, which helps undergraduates to influence online freelancing.

Keywords: **Attitudes, Behaviours, Higher Education System, Online Freelancing, Sri Lanka**

Exploring the Mediatory Effect of Academic Quality on Examination Mode and Undergraduates' Satisfaction of State Universities in Sri Lanka: A Concept Paper

Madhavi Jayasekara [1], Buddinee Ranasinghe [2]

Department of Decision Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

jpjmadhavi@sjp.ac.lk [1], buddineeranasinghe@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This concept paper outlines a future study investigating the mediating role of academic quality in the relationship between examination mode and student satisfaction among undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities. Students, as the primary beneficiaries of educational services, require a high level of satisfaction with academic activities provided by universities. In this context, academic quality plays a critical role in achieving students' satisfaction, as the effectiveness of educational services depends on their ability to meet specific quality standards. Notably, the way of delivering the academic activities, including examination methods influences the academic quality. Students consider how examinations are conducted to ensure their satisfaction with the process, as examinations are one method of assessing their performance. The initiatives implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a significant transformation in examination methods, with traditional examinations shifting to online or computer-based formats. This underscores the importance of conducting a thorough inquiry into their impact. While prior research has extensively explored shifts in lecture modes, the effects of examination modalities on academic quality and student satisfaction remain underexplored. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the impact of examination modes on student satisfaction through academic quality and developing a robust conceptual framework for future research reviewing the literature. A deductive research approach will be employed, utilising a structured online questionnaire to gather data from undergraduate students. The study will employ descriptive statistical analyses, including charts, tables, and summary measures to provide a clear understanding of the sample characteristics. Structural equation modelling (SEM) will be used to test the proposed conceptual framework. The findings of this future study are expected to provide critical insights into the dynamics of examination modes, academic quality, and student satisfaction in higher education.

Keywords: **Academic Quality, Examination Mode, Student Satisfaction**

Trends and Determinants of Undergraduate Programme Popularity: Insights from Entrance Scores

Thanuli Jayawardena [1], Tiloka De Silva [2]

Department of Decision Sciences, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka [1,2]

jayawardenaadtd.20@uom.lk [1], *tilokad@uom.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

This study examines trends in preferences for higher education within Sri Lanka's state university system. Sri Lanka's centralised and rule-based admissions system allows for an analysis of undergraduate programmes across all subject domains. The research problem centres on identifying the current trends in student preferences for programmes in higher education and the key factors that influence such trends in degrees offered by state sector educational institutions in Sri Lanka.

The paper uses data from 2016-2022 across 257 undergraduate programmes offered by state sector universities in Sri Lanka. Programme popularity is measured by the minimum z-score (standardised score based on Advanced Level examination results) of students admitted to the programme, which is known as the z-score cut-off mark. The analysis utilises data such as the subject domain of each programme, programme characteristics such as presence of aptitude test, whether the programme is newly introduced and the intake count of each course and faculty qualifications alongside institutional factors like university location, ranking and age. The impact of programme characteristics and institutional characteristics on demand is examined through visualisations and multiple regression analysis.

The findings indicate a continued strong demand for medical and engineering degrees, increasing competitiveness in IT-related programmes and a decline in demand for traditional science degrees in Sri Lanka. Demand for arts and management-related programmes does not show a significant trend in either direction. University location, ranking, age, and the programme characteristics like staff qualifications and administration of aptitude tests are strongly associated with programme demand. While providing insights on preferences for undergraduate education, these results have implications for educational institutions and policymakers who could better align programme offerings with changing student demand.

There is limited research on undergraduate programme demand that spans multiple universities and academic domains covering an entire country. By using data across all state universities over several years while utilising a system-wide measure of programme popularity, this research provides insights across an entire higher education system over time making it a significant contribution to the current body of literature.

Keywords: **Centralised Admissions, Cut-Off Scores, Programme Popularity, Student Preferences, Undergraduate Education**

'Door Wide Open' or 'Foot in the Door'? Exploring the Glass Ceiling Phenomenon in the School Education Sector in Sri Lanka

Kalutara K. D. S. T. D. [1], Surangi H. A. K. N. S. [2]

University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka [1,2]

kalutaradewmi@gmail.com [1], *surangins@kln.ac.lk* [2]

ABSTRACT

A country's education system is the living blood of any economy, as its quality impacts the productivity of a nation's labour force. However, as long as the glass ceiling problem prevails in the education system, it is questionable if the real potential of education system employees is utilised for its success. The purpose of the study is to explore the glass ceiling and the reasons for its prevalence in the field. This qualitative study gathered information via in-depth interviews with eight respondents involved in the school education system of Sri Lanka. Findings revealed the existence of the glass ceiling in the school education system. Furthermore, reasons for its existence have been presented under three categories; individual, social, and environmental factors. The study provides a clear view of the nature of the glass ceiling in the school education system that has been hidden for a long time.

Keywords: **Glass Ceiling, Qualitative, School Education System, Sri Lanka**

Work-Integrated Learning in Management Education in Sri Lanka: An Investigation of Corporate Perspectives

Perera M. S. S. [1], Perera M. H. D. N. [2], Hettiarachchi A. D. [3], Oshadhie Silva [4], Abeywickrama H. N. [5], Perera G. R. T. [6]

Department of Business Economics [1], Department of Entrepreneurship [2], Department of Business Economics [3], Department of Business Economics [4], Department of Commerce [5], Department of Entrepreneurship [6]

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

sumudu@sjp.ac.lk [1], dhanukaprr@sjp.ac.lk [2], aseldevjith@sjp.ac.lk [3], oshadhiesilva@sjp.ac.lk [4], hiranabeywickrama@sjp.ac.lk [5], ruviniperera@sjp.ac.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

The rapid pace of technological advancements has led to knowledge obsolescence, significantly altering skill requirements and the nature of employment. In this evolving business environment, employers have increasingly raised concerns about the employability skills of business graduates, which are essential for both entry-level positions and long-term career advancement. Work-integrated learning (WIL) has emerged as a widely adopted strategy to enhance graduate employability, allowing for the development of employability traits during the course of academic programmes. WILs effectively bridge the gap between academic knowledge and workplace expectations. Hence, assessing employability traits provides an outcome-based analysis of WIL programs, offering insights into their effectiveness in preparing graduates for workforce demands. This study explores corporate perceptions of WIL programs and evaluates the employability traits of business management undergraduates from Sri Lanka's state universities. Grounded in Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) and Situated Learning Theory (SLT), this pilot study gathered primary data through structured questionnaires distributed to sixteen (16) organisations that offer WIL opportunities to undergraduates of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. A univariate analysis was conducted to evaluate corporate perceptions regarding the strengths and gaps in graduate employability skills. The findings indicate that while graduates demonstrate strong teamwork and technical knowledge, notable deficiencies persist in communication, problem-solving, IT literacy, and emerging competencies such as artificial intelligence, leadership, and sustainability. As a pilot study, these findings serve as preliminary insights into employer perspectives on WIL effectiveness in Sri Lanka. The study intends to provide an initial foundation for further research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of WIL's impact on graduate employability.

Keywords: **Employability, Employability Traits**, **State Universities, Work-Integrated Learning**

Conceptualisation of Effective Teaching Methods on Entrepreneurial Outcomes among Undergraduate Students

Serasinghe S. A. S. M. [1], Perera G. R. T. [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

smalshadi@sjp.ac.lk [1], ruviniperera@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTARCT

The advancement of a country is mostly dependent on entrepreneurship, which is essential for stimulating innovation, economic expansion, and social development. Entrepreneurship was often thought to be an inborn quality that could not be taught, but it is now generally acknowledged that it is a skill that can be learned. However, innovative teaching techniques are required due to the intricacy and real-world difficulties of entrepreneurship education. In order to develop successful active teaching strategies for entrepreneurship education, this study reviews existing research publications. The purpose of this concept paper is to propose a suitable conceptual framework to study the impact of different teaching methods of entrepreneurship on entrepreneurial outcomes under the theme of Thematic Analysis. Team-based learning, problem-based learning, and project-based learning have been found by the authors to be very successful methods for improving the real-world implementation of entrepreneurial principles based on the literature. By bridging the gap between academic understanding and practical application, these approaches give students the tools they need to be successful entrepreneurs. By bringing educational content into line with the needs of the business world, these teaching strategies will enable students to succeed in actual business settings.

Keywords: **Entrepreneurial Teaching, Teaching Methods, Teaching Outcomes, Undergraduate Students**

Primary Causes of Post-Harvest Losses in Marine Fisheries

Balasooriya B. K. T. D. [1], Kalyanaratne A. [2]

Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1]
International Center for Multidisciplinary Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [2]

thushanidb2001@gmail.com [1], ajantha77@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Marine fishery sector contributes significantly to the Sri Lankan economy, but unfortunately, the benefit of this important resource is weakened by the large amount of post-harvest losses that occur after harvesting fish. It is one of the major issues faced by fishery industry in Sri Lanka. Post harvest losses in fisheries happens due to various causes. And they can lead to a reduction in both quantity and quality of fish. The reasons affecting these post-harvest losses haven't addressed properly. In order to find solutions, analysing primary causes of post-harvest losses in the marine fisheries is important. This study analyses the primary causes of post-harvest losses in the marine fisheries, by focusing on five major causes of losses identified through literature. Such as, poor handling of fish, inadequate storage facilities, damage to fish during transportation, poor hygienic practices and pest infestation and contamination. By analysing these causes, this research aims to provide valuable insights that helps to minimise post-harvest losses and improve overall efficiency in the marine fishery sector.

Data were collected using a questionnaire targeting 60 fishermen, 20 wholesalers and 20 retailers. The analysis was done using techniques such as Principal Component Analysis (PCA) and Standard Multiple Regression Analysis. Results revealed that inadequate storage facilities, poor handling of fish and poor hygienic practices are significant causes of post-harvest losses.

To address post-harvest losses in marine fisheries, this study recommends conducting training programs on handling techniques, investments in cold storage facilities and refrigerated transport and introduction of stricter hygienic protocols to reduce spoilage and contamination. Additionally, encouraging collaboration among supply chain agents to make decisions and supporting technological innovations for preserving fish, which helps to enhance efficiency in the marine fishery sector. This research provides a foundation for further improvements in the fisheries industry and provides a basis for future studies to build upon.

Keywords: **Fish Handling, Fishermen, Fish Supply Chain, Marine Fisheries, Post Harvest Losses**

Enhancing Export Performance of SMEs in Sri Lanka: Does Technology Orientation Matter?

Herath H. M. T. S. [1], Surangi H. A. K. N. S. [2], Kannangara S. D. P. P.[3]

Department of Commerce and Financial Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies,
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka[1,2,3]

tish@kln.ac.lk [1], surangins@kln.ac.lk [2], pkann201@kln.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the multidimensional effect of Technology Orientation (TO) in enhancing the export performance of SMEs in the post-pandemic era, focusing on its direct impact. In the post-pandemic era, SMEs in emerging markets continue to grapple with unprecedented challenges, such as resource constraints, global economic volatility, and technological disparities. However, firms with strong TO demonstrated greater resilience, adaptability, and survival rates. By conceptualising TO as a multidimensional construct, this study addresses gaps in existing research, which has predominantly viewed TO as unidimensional. Data drawn from 126 SMEs in Sri Lanka were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that TO significantly enhances firm performance, underscoring its role as a vital tangible resource for achieving competitive advantage in resource-constrained and economically volatile environments. Practical implications highlight the importance of prioritising TO as a strategic driver for sustainable growth, particularly in volatile market conditions. These contributions advance theoretical understanding and offer practical implications for fostering SME resilience and competitiveness.

Keywords: **Export-Oriented SMEs in Sri Lanka, Firm Performance, Multidimensionality Effect of TO, Technology Orientation,**

Applying Reinhart and Rogoff's Framework to the Sri Lankan Economic Crisis: Identifying Parallels and Divergences

Trevor Mendis [1], Arani Rodrigo [2], Pasindu Harshana [3]

Postgraduate Institute of Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1]
NSBM Green University [2,3]

trevor@pim.sjp.ac.lk [1], arani.r@nsbm.ac.lk [2], phkarachchi@students.nsbm.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

The economic quagmire Sri Lanka was engulfed in, due to COVID-19 and the subsequent political instability within the country, led to a severe economic turbulence that trembled the economic foundations of Sri Lanka during the year 2022. This is an exceptional crisis. Hence, the purpose of this article is to ascertain the antecedents for the crisis and to apply the crisis to Reinhart and Rogoff's framework discussing the inflation, currency crises, debt and the "it's different this time" syndrome, to identify the parallels and divergences. The study was conducted based on content analysis, document analysis and document review methodology under the qualitative research approach. The study was underpinned by the Minsky theory and the "it's different this time" syndrome. The study with the given magnitude of the economic crisis, reveals there are more dissimilarities than similarities compared to Reinhart and Rogoff's framework. Findings exposed the haphazard and discretionary monetary policy of the authorities with significant deviations from the macroeconomic fundamentals. The study provides an emerging framework that goes beyond the Reinhart and Rogoff framework. The study, which was purely focused on the Sri Lankan economic crisis, highlights the theoretical and practical implications. Several practical implications are highlighted in multiple dimensions towards policy makers, economists, Central Bank and the importance of evaluating the feasibility and viability of internal and external debt. This is the first analysis of this nature on the Sri Lankan economic crisis.

Keywords: **Economic Crises, Minsky Theory, Reinhart and Rogoff's Framework**

Central Bank Conduct of Monetary Policy in Crisis Contexts: A Bibliographic Analysis

Sewwandi S. P. D. [1], Perera G. A. N. [2]

Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

dileesha@sjp.ac.lk [1], amanda@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

The Central Bank's role in monetary policy implementation during crises is vital for maintaining economic stability. This bibliometric analysis explores the evolution of research on central bank conduct of monetary policy in crisis contexts over the past 25 years, encompassing major global economic disruptions such as the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, the Eurozone Sovereign Debt Crisis, and the COVID-19 Pandemic. This was conducted using Biblioshiny 4.1, an open-source software integrated with RStudio. The methodology was carried out in three stages. First, a systematic search of the Scopus database was conducted using specific keywords. Then, the titles and abstracts of these articles were manually reviewed. Finally, by analysing 286 scholarly articles indexed in Scopus, this study examines performance trends, influential authors, key institutions, and thematic developments in the field. The findings reveal that unconventional monetary policies, particularly quantitative easing, dominate academic discourse, reflecting their pivotal role during crises. Peaks in research activity align with major economic disruptions, such as the 2008 and 2020 crises, underscoring the surge in scholarly attention during periods of economic turmoil. Key themes include monetary policy, central banking, financial crises, financial stability, and interest rates. The analysis also highlights emerging and niche topics such as macroprudential regulation, inflation targeting, and financial innovations, offering opportunities for further exploration. The study further reveals a strong international dimension, with research contributions distributed across the United Kingdom, United States, and Germany. This analysis contributes to the literature by identifying seminal works and emerging research trends, offering insights for policymakers and academics to enhance monetary policy effectiveness during crises. Future research should address the limitations of this study by incorporating a broader range of data sources beyond the Scopus and qualitative analyses to provide a more holistic understanding of Central Bank's behaviour in crisis contexts.

Keywords: **Bibliographic Analysis, Central Banking in Crises, Monetary Policy, Quantitative Easing, Unconventional Monetary Policy**

Unemployment among Women, Challenges, and Coping Strategies: Evidence from the Vavuniya District

Kalathasan Umairani [1], Sathana V. [2]

University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka [1,2]

umaitha915@gmail.com [1], vsathana@univ.jfn.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges unemployed women face in the Vavuniya District, Sri Lanka, focusing on systemic and personal barriers to employment. It aims to provide actionable insights for policymakers to address gendered unemployment disparities and foster inclusive growth. Using a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with fifty purposively selected unemployed women aged 18–30. Thematic analysis identified recurring patterns and insights reflecting participants' socio-economic and cultural contexts. Key barriers faced by unemployed women in the Vavuniya district include several interrelated challenges such as economic challenges, socio-cultural challenges, government and policy challenges, mental health challenges, skill gaps and education, gender discrimination, mobility challenges, and technology challenges. The coping strategies to address the economic challenges are establishing women's business incubators, microfinance initiatives, and financial literacy programmes; for socio-cultural challenges, flexible childcare solutions and community-based support systems; for government and policy challenges: gender-responsive labour market policies and improved maternity benefits; for mental health challenges, counselling programmes and resilience-building workshops; for skill gap and education, tailored skill development programmes, vocational training, and e-commerce workshops; for gender discrimination, affirmative action policies and leadership development programmes; for mobility, promoting remote work and improving rural transportation infrastructure and for technology challenges, subsidised digital literacy training and technology access programmes. Addressing these barriers requires targeted policies to improve access to education and vocational training, promote entrepreneurship through financial support, and implement gender-sensitive strategies. Enhancing mental health services and providing flexible work opportunities, rural transportation, and access to technology are also crucial. This research deepens our understanding of gendered unemployment in post-conflict rural areas. Integrating economic, cultural, and psychological perspectives offers a framework for addressing disparities and promoting sustainable development in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Economic Challenges, Government and Policy Challenges, Mental Health Challenges, Socio-Cultural Challenges, Women Unemployment**

Technical Efficiency of Potato Farmers in Welimada, Sri Lanka

Wasana N. H. P.[1], Dharmadasa R. A. P. I. S. [2]

Department of Export Agriculture, Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture,
Uva Wellassa University [1,2]

piumiwa99@gmail.com [1], sampath@uwu.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study compares the technical efficiency of Project Beneficiaries who received a modern technology package and training sessions to estimate the influence of the Agriculture Sector Modernisation Project (ASMP) on potato farming in Welimada with the Non-Project Beneficiaries who didn't receive the project benefits. This study aims to determine how the ASMP project has affected the technical efficiency of potato farmers in Welimada, Sri Lanka. The sample size of Project Beneficiaries is 112, which was taken from the known population size. The sample size of Non-Project Beneficiaries was 150, chosen by systematic random sampling. Technological efficiency was determined using Stochastic Frontier Analysis. Land size, total fertiliser, total labour, and purchased seed amount were taken as input variables from both groups. Age, farming experience, education level, gender, land ownership, credit received, seed type, and training frequency were used as factors for technical inefficiency. The results showed that Project Beneficiaries used agricultural inputs more effectively than Non-Project Beneficiaries. Quality seed and regular training sessions helped increase the efficiency of Project Beneficiaries by improving productivity through enhanced farming techniques and enabling accurate decision-making, which was facilitated by the ASMP project. Project Beneficiaries generated higher potato production than Non-Project Beneficiaries, as indicated by the mean technical efficiency scores of 0.300 and 0.227, respectively. The results highlight the value of training and high-quality seeds in increasing agricultural productivity, indicating that the ASMP project was improving the knowledge and abilities of the Project Beneficiaries to succeed in potato production.

Keywords: **Non-Project Beneficiaries, Project Beneficiaries, Potato Production, Stochastic Frontier Analysis, Technical Efficiency**

Analysing the Impact of Employee Productivity on Employee Performance in Shared Workspaces in Western Province, Sri Lanka: The Mediating Role of Employee Satisfaction

Basnayaka B. M. R. S. [1], Kaluthanthri P. C. [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka [1,2]

bmranjana@sjp.ac.lk [1], Prathap@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of employee productivity on employee performance in shared workspaces in Western Province, Sri Lanka, focusing on the mediating role of employee satisfaction. In recent years, the global office market has undergone a significant transformation, influenced by shifting business demands, economic uncertainties, and a growing focus on employee health and well-being. Shared workspaces have gained global popularity, growing at a 23% annual rate, with over 35,000 spaces worldwide by 2023. In Sri Lanka, coworking spaces have expanded by 15% annually since 2019, driven by startups, freelancers, and small businesses seeking affordable, flexible environments where the spaces foster collaboration, productivity, and employee satisfaction. This trend motivates exploring their impact on productivity and satisfaction, aiming to uncover insights that drive organisational success. A quantitative research approach was adopted, utilising surveys to collect data from employees working in shared office spaces across various sectors in the Western Province. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed physically and virtually to gather data, and 100 responses resulted in return providing data for analysis. The survey measured key variables, including productivity, satisfaction, and performance, based on established scales. Partial Least Square - Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is used to analyse the relationships between these variables utilising SmartPLS 4.1 software. The findings revealed that employee satisfaction positively mediates the relationships between employee productivity and employee performance while reflecting a significant positive impact on the other three direct relationships established. The results from the Smart PLS SEM analysis confirmed that both employee satisfaction and productivity have a significant impact on individual performance in shared workspaces. The outcomes of this research contribute to the growing body of literature on workplace design and performance in shared environments, specifically within the context of Sri Lanka's evolving corporate culture. By exploring these factors, the study expects to inform policymakers and business leaders on strategies to optimise workspace designs, improve employee engagement, and enhance organisational performance in the region.

Keywords: **Employee Productivity, Employee Satisfaction, Employee Performance, Shared Workspaces, Western Province**

Greywater Recycling in Urban High-Rise Buildings: A Case Study of Clearpoint Residencies in Sri Lanka Using Andrew Campbell's Operating Model Canvas

Amanda Indumini [1], Wickremasinghe H. T. [2], Ranjana Sandamali [3], Saman Mahawatta [4]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka [1,3]
Deakin University, Australia [2]
Maga Engineering (Pvt) Ltd, Colombo 05, Sri Lanka [4]

aindumini@sjp.ac.lk [1], hashinitw@gmail.com [2], bmranjana@sjp.ac.lk [3], saman@maga.lk [4]

ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation, processes, and challenges of the greywater recycling system at Clearpoint Residencies in Sri Lanka, emphasising the application of Andrew Campbell's Operating Model Canvas. With the increasing scarcity of freshwater due to urbanisation, climate change, and population growth, greywater recycling offers a vital solution in line with Sustainable Development Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation. This case study employs both primary data, obtained through interviews with the Project Manager, and secondary data from various scholarly and industry sources. The research systematically analyses the operational aspects of the greywater recycling system, including the collection, treatment, and reuse of greywater for gardening and toilet flushing. This study revealed that the greywater recycling process at Clearpoint Residencies involves multiple stages: pre-treatment to remove debris, advanced filtration, and systematic maintenance by internal staff and external experts. The Operating Model Canvas framework is applied to dissect the processes, organisation, location, information management, supplier relationships, and management systems that underpin the recycling mechanism. Key findings highlight the success in overcoming significant challenges, such as optimal location selection and efficient system operation, underscoring the critical role of technical expertise and strategic planning. High-quality equipment and strong supplier partnerships are recognised as crucial elements for efficient system performance. The research concludes that Clearpoint Residencies establishes a standard for sustainable urban living with its innovative greywater recycling system. Significant insights highlight the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration, well-defined maintenance procedures, and proactive community involvement. The success of this project showcases the practicality and expandability of greywater recycling as an environmentally friendly method for water management in urban settings. Future research should focus on expanding the application of such systems in other high-density urban environments to address global water scarcity challenges comprehensively.

Keywords: **Clear Point Residencies, Greywater Recycling, Operating Model Canvas, Sustainable Development Goals, Urban Sustainability, Water Conservation**

Reimagining Urban Mobility: A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable and Inclusive Public Transportation Systems in Sri Lanka

Madushika W. K. S.

Department of Decision Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

sajinikodithuwakku@sjp.ac.lk

ABSTRACT

Urban mobility is a critical component of Sri Lanka's urban development, significantly influencing economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Effective public transportation systems are essential for reducing congestion, improving accessibility, and minimising environmental impacts in Sri Lankan cities. However, existing systems face numerous challenges, including inefficiencies, inequities, and unsustainable practices. Rapid urbanisation, particularly in Colombo and other major cities, has intensified these issues, with increased demand, limited resources, and heightened environmental concerns. Emissions from fossil-fuel-dependent transportation systems contribute significantly to climate change, exacerbating these challenges. Moreover, access to public transportation remains uneven, disproportionately affecting marginalised groups, such as low-income communities, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Recent studies highlight global best practices in sustainable urban mobility, focusing on integrated transport networks, multimodal connectivity, and smart mobility solutions. Cities that adopt bus rapid transit (BRT), electrified public transport, and transit-oriented development (TOD) have improved efficiency and reduced environmental impact. Research also emphasises the need for inclusive mobility strategies that ensure affordability and accessibility for all. In order to adapt Sri Lanka's urban transportation networks to the needs of its socioeconomic and geographic context, this article offers a conceptual framework. The suggested paradigm combines technical advancements and regulations to improve accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity with sustainability principles to lower carbon footprints and encourage the use of renewable energy. Through alignment with international initiatives like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the framework aims to promote an urban mobility system in Sri Lanka that is more efficient, egalitarian, and environmentally sustainable. In order to promote sustainable and inclusive urban growth, the paper suggests an integrated public transportation model that caters to the many demands of the nation's urban population and provides workable solutions to the current problems. This study aims to provide policy recommendations for sustainable transport, a plan for using renewable energy in public transit, and strategies to improve mobility equity. It will also demonstrate the feasibility of an integrated transport model for Sri Lanka. The findings will help policymakers, urban planners, and transport authorities create effective, inclusive, and eco-friendly mobility solutions.

Keywords: **Mobility, Social Inclusion, Sustainability, Transportation, Urbanisation**

Determinants of Neighbourhood Happiness: Evidence from Kalutara Coastal Zone

Mandira N. V. M. [1], Wickramarachchi N. C. [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

malithimandira@gmail.com [1], nishani@sjp.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Urban liveability has become a critical focus in urban planning, emphasising the importance of understanding the factors that enhance residents' well-being and improve the quality of life in city environments. This study examines neighbourhood happiness and neighbourhood satisfaction as key measures of urban liveability, specifically within the unique context of the Kalutara Coastal Zone, Sri Lanka. Employing a quantitative approach, the research investigates how physical neighbourhood characteristics—such as accessibility and infrastructure quality—and perceived characteristics, including safety, sense of belonging, and relationships with neighbours, influence residents' happiness and satisfaction. Additionally, socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, years of residence, income, employment status, family size, and homeownership are analysed as independent variables to understand their influence on residents' experiences.

Data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to a representative sample of 85 residents from the urban centres of Panadura, Wadduwa, and Kalutara using a convenience sampling technique. The analysis reveals that perceived neighbourhood characteristics, such as safety, a strong sense of belonging, and positive relationships with neighbours, have a stronger and more direct positive impact on neighbourhood happiness. In contrast, neighbourhood satisfaction is found to be primarily influenced by physical factors, including the accessibility of services and the quality of infrastructure. These findings highlight the multidimensional nature of urban liveability and the need for urban planners to address both physical and psychological aspects of neighbourhood environments. The results underscore the necessity of integrating social elements, such as community cohesion and perceived safety, alongside physical infrastructure improvements to create genuinely liveable urban spaces. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners, advocating comprehensive strategies that not only prioritise urban development and infrastructure but also foster social connections and a sense of security among residents. By balancing these dimensions, urban environments can be transformed into thriving, resilient, and emotionally fulfilling places for all inhabitants.

Keywords: **Kalutara Coastal Zone, Neighbourhood Happiness, Neighbourhood Satisfaction, Urban Liveability, Urban Planning**

Community Engagement in Rural Tourism as a Driver of Well-Being: Insights from Kithulgala, Sri Lanka

Priyadarshani D. S. I. [1], Wickramaarachchi N. C. [2], Mendis B. S. N. [3]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

sayuriss2000@gmail.com [1], nishani@sjp.ac.lk [2], bsnmendis@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Tourism has been a pivotal driver of the global economy for many years. Nevertheless, in light of technological advancements, mass tourism has declined, giving rise to alternative types of tourism that address more specific preferences of tourists. Rural tourism is becoming one of the fastest-growing alternative modes which is linked with nature-based activities rather than urbanised tourism activities. Since rural tourism brings economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits to the host communities, local populations are increasingly participating in rural tourism, thereby experiencing both positive and negative consequences on their well-being. Kithulgala, one of the emerging rural tourism destinations in Sri Lanka, has seen its population engage in activities that are connected to rural tourism in various ways. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the impact of community engagement in rural tourism of Kithulgala on the well-being of the host community across economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions. The study applied a quantitative approach with a systematic sample of 100 residents who are actively engaged in the tourism industry of Kithulgala. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS- SEM) was utilised with Smart PLS serving as the analytical tool. The findings of the study reveal that the community engagement in rural tourism of Kithulgala has made moderate positive economic impacts on the community well-being while socio-cultural impacts of community involvement in rural tourism demonstrate a weak positive impact, both showing statistically significant relationships. Most importantly, the environmental impact on community well-being has shown a statistically insignificant relationship, even though it makes a weak positive impact. The findings of the study suggest re-assessing the validity of theoretical explanations which emphasise that economic, socio-cultural, and environmental factors work together to enhance community well-being. Moreover, policy decisions should be more focused towards enhancing the relationship between the natural environment and the tourism sector, encouraging the local community to make use of environmental opportunities to upgrade their livelihoods and promote the engagement of tourists with the environment while preserving the resources.

Keywords: **Community Engagement, Kithulgala, Rural Tourism, Well-Being**

Exploring Technological Solutions in the Property Valuation Process: Implications for Property Valuers in Sri Lanka

Menuka Senevirathne

menuseneviratne@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's real estate market is undergoing a profound digital transformation, with technological advancements reshaping property valuation practices. Traditional valuation methods, often criticised for their subjectivity, inefficiency, and reliance on limited data, are being challenged by innovative solutions. However, while the digital shift in real estate is evident, the specific impacts of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Geographic Information Systems, Blockchain, Cloud Computing, drones, and other digital tools on property valuation remain underexplored. This research bridges this gap by examining how these technologies can enhance valuation accuracy, efficiency, transparency, and accessibility. The study employs a qualitative methodology, integrating insights from semi-structured interviews with seven Chartered Valuation Surveyors who are experts in the field. The collected data were analysed using thematic analysis, which provided a nuanced understanding of the issues. In addition, the research incorporates an extensive review of secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, theses, and industry reports. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive perspective on the topic. The findings reveal that technological adoption in property valuation offers immense potential for optimisation. AI and GIS stand out for their ability to streamline data analysis and enhance spatial accuracy, while drones provide innovative solutions for efficient property inspections and real-time data collection. However, the study also identifies several critical challenges hindering broader implementation. Inadequate infrastructure, gaps in digital literacy among professionals, and the absence of robust data governance frameworks are significant barriers. These challenges highlight the need for targeted efforts to ensure technology adoption is effective and sustainable. This research underscores the transformative potential of technology in property valuation and its implications for sustainable development in the real estate sector. It emphasises the importance of addressing barriers through proactive engagement, policy reforms, and capacity-building initiatives. By analysing adoption rates, challenges, and opportunities, the study provides valuable insights for industry professionals, policymakers, and researchers. It advocates for strategic foresight and collaborative efforts to fully realise the benefits of technology-driven valuation methods, positioning Sri Lanka's real estate market for growth and innovation in the digital era.

Keywords: **Data, Disruptive Innovation, PropTech, Real Estate, Technology, Valuation**

Evaluating the Applicability of Technology Readiness Theories in the Construction Industry of Developing Countries: A Systematic Review and Framework for Adoption

Neesha Silva [1], Anuththara Kudaligama [2], Upendra Rajapaksha [3], Chameera Udawattha [4]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [1,2,4]
University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka [3]

*1951md2023005@fgs.sjp.ac.lk [1], ruvindisilva502@gmail.com [1],
anuththarakavindi02@gmail.com [2], upendra@uom.lk [3], udawatthe@sjp.ac.lk [4]*

ABSTRACT

Technology readiness is a widely recognised approach to evaluate the capacity for adopting new technologies across various industries. In the construction sector, where rapid advancements are reshaping traditional practices, understanding technology readiness has become critical. Numerous theories have been utilised to assess this readiness, each emphasising different dimensions of adoption. However, a significant gap exists in theories that comprehensively address the unique challenges and demands of the construction sector, particularly in developing countries.

This study employs a systematic literature review following the PRISMA methodology to analyse existing literature on technology readiness in construction and related sectors. The findings are analysed using keyword occurrence analysis to identify critical parameters and indicators that influence technology readiness in developing regions. Subsequently, five prominent theories—the Technology Readiness Index (TRI), Technology Readiness and Acceptance Model (TRAM), Technology-Organisation-Environment (TOE) framework, Diffusion of Innovations (DOI), and Organisational Readiness Model (ORM)—are cross-examined against these identified parameters to evaluate their applicability. The study further identifies limitations within these theories and proposes tailored modifications to address the specific requirements of the construction sector in developing countries.

Existing research predominantly focuses on developed economies, raising questions about the applicability of these theories in contexts such as Sri Lanka, where economic and infrastructural constraints necessitate unique considerations. To bridge this gap, this study incorporates insights from selected interviews to validate findings and refine a theoretical framework. By the conclusion of the study, five clusters of considerations— encompassing economic, technical, organisational, cultural, and policy-related factors—are identified to guide the assessment of technology readiness in the construction industry with relation to developing nations constraints. These findings provide a foundation for adapting readiness theories to better suit the needs of developing countries, paving the way for more effective technology adoption strategies in construction.

Keywords: **Adoption Framework, Construction Industry, Developing Countries, Systematic Literature Review, Technology Readiness**

Understanding Key Drivers of Urban Residential Preferences: A Study of Sociodemographic, Cultural, and Economic Influences

Kavindu D. T. [1], Wickramaarachchi N. C. [2]

University of Sri Jayewardenepura [1,2]

99dtkavindu@gmail.com [1], nishani@sjp.ac.lk [2]

Urbanisation is reshaping residential preferences, particularly in Sri Lanka's Gampaha urban area. This study investigates the motivations influencing urban residency preference and the impact of sociodemographic, economic, and cultural factors. A quantitative approach using a structured survey of 150 respondents was employed, with data analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics, including chi-square tests and logistic regression. Key findings indicate that employment proximity, security, and community integration significantly influence urban residency choices. Migration background and employment status emerged as critical predictors, while economic and cultural factors showed minimal statistical significance. These findings underscore the importance of employment-driven urban planning and community-focused initiatives. Additionally, the study highlights the necessity for targeted policies that address the diverse needs of urban migrants, ensuring sustainable urban development. By identifying key motivators and demographic influences, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of urbanisation trends and offers valuable insights for policymakers, developers, and urban planners in emerging economies like Sri Lanka.

Keywords: **Migration, Sociodemographic Factors, Urbanisation, Urban Preference, Urban Residency**

Interpretative Phenomenology Approach for Exploring Investor Behaviour in the Stock Market

Herath H. M. N. P. [1], Abeysekera R. [2]

Department of Finance, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

nethmih@kln.ac.lk [1], ruwanab@kln.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Research methodology strategises the action plan of the researcher in addressing a research problem through a defined approach from the theoretical underpinning to the data collection and analysis. Phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative are commonly used research designs in qualitative exploratory studies. Phenomenology is centred on capturing the essence of the experience of a lived phenomenon. The paper argues the appropriateness of conducting behavioural finance research exploring investor behaviours in financial markets using the Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA). IPA is well-suited for in-depth inquiries into complex, context-specific phenomena, such as individual perceptions and decision-making in the financial landscape, offering fresh insights into investor behaviour's sociocultural, emotional, and cognitive dimensions. Methodologically, this study contributes to behavioural finance by advocating for adopting IPA, addressing the limited use of qualitative strategies in the field. It demonstrates the value of phenomenological inquiry in capturing the complexity of socio-culturally embedded financial decision-making, offering a robust alternative to traditional quantitative approaches. This methodological choice would be important in the deeper understanding of complex relationships and meanings that underpin investor behaviour, and it contributes to increasing methodological pluralism, enriching the understanding of investor behaviour in emerging and frontier markets.

Keywords: **Behavioural Finance, Interpretative Phenomenological Approach, Investor Behaviour, Phenomenology, Qualitative Research, Research Methodology, Stock Market**

Identifying and Measuring the Project Benefits of Public Sector Mega Projects: Stratification Method and Fuzzy Logic Approach

Dhinesha Ruwanthi Perera

Department of Management & Finance, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka

dhinesha_drp@kdu.ac.lk

ABSTRACT

The selection of essential relevant project inputs and tracking project benefits are important aspects of project benefits management. Benefit management is a sequential approach of identifying, measuring and realisation of project benefits. This concept is weakly exercised in the public sector mega projects, which has jeopardised the success rate of large-scale projects that promise many benefits. Only 2% of public sector projects have adopted the Benefit approach, leaving provision for the projects to be more formalised and systemised. Moreover, the public sector projects do not strictly adhere to the project, programme, portfolio (P3M) approach causing gaps in benefit measuring. However, there are non-measurable, rarely calculable and non-observable benefits leading to fuzziness that still seek a scientific approach to benefit quantification. The objectives of the study are to first trace the intangible project benefits at the different levels of P3M of the project. Secondly, we utilise the concept of stratification to ascertain the transition of benefits from the original state to the target end state through incremental enlargement. Also then, we use the fuzzy inference system to quantify the qualitative intangible benefits to give them crisp values for convenient calculation and measurability. Also, to measure the extent to which the benefits are realised by stakeholders at the end state. Hence, the study proposes a systematically reviewed inventive technology solution to quantify benefits and targets. Thirdly, the study suggests a sample approach to align the identified benefits with the project imperatives for effective benefit realisation. Benefits will be computed with words and translated into numerical through the computing with numbers method. A cross-sectional study supported by five experts' opinions was obtained through crowd-sourcing for site triangulation. The fuzzy constraint variables are coupled to ascertain the dualistic fuzzy effect on benefit realisation. The system generated nine fuzzy rules and five linguistic identifier outputs- "always"=5, "at most times"=4, "sometimes"=3, "seldom"=2, and "never"=1. The benefit is a fuzzy variable that expresses the realisation of mega project value and can be evaluated at P3M strata and mixed portfolio-level. The approach can be used by line managers to trace project outcomes and ascertain their strategic alignment to promised benefits. It is a futuristic evaluation of project benefits realisation.

Keywords: **Benefit Realisation, Experts, Fuzzy Benefits, Mega Project, Stratification,**

A Genuine Endeavor or a Perfunctory Deed? Celebration of International Women's Day at Business and Professional Organisations in Sri Lanka

Arosha S. Adikaram

Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

arosha@hrm.cmb.ac.lk

ABSTRACT

This viewpoint paper aims to engage in deep and thoughtful self-reflection to identify, examine, and better understand the practice of International Women's Day events organised by business and professional organisations in Sri Lanka through the lens of critical feminist theory. Using an autoethnographic approach, I revisit, reflect on, and critically analyse my experiences and observations as a panellist, guest speaker, and audience member at six IWD events held by these organisations in March 2023. This analysis explores how and why these events were organised and the messages they conveyed. Specifically, I detail the six events and provide reflections on four key aspects: 1) the purpose of the events, 2) the selection of speakers/panellists, 3) the messages communicated, and 4) the composition of the audience. My reflections reveal that, in many cases, these IWD events are organised for symbolic reasons and often disseminate knowledge, beliefs, and ideas that contradict the ideals of IWD. Celebrations often focus on token gestures (flowers, colour, or speeches) rather than addressing systemic issues like gender-based violence or workplace inequities. These shortcomings frequently stem from the inappropriate selection of speakers/panellists, misaligned messaging, or a lack of alignment between the audience and the intended purpose of the event. Overall, I argue that these events often result in a superficial celebration of IWD, serving to reinforce existing gender roles rather than challenge patriarchal norms. In a scholarly landscape marked by a lack of research on IWD programs organised by business and professional organisations, this study contributes to the field of organisational learning. It encourages organisations to reassess and refine their objectives for hosting these events, particularly regarding the selection of speakers/panellists, the target audience, and the messages they deliver.

Keywords: **Autoethnography, Critical Feminist Theory, International Women's Day, Speakers, Symbolic**

Revenue Adequacy for Meeting Consumption Expenditure of Farming Families in Major Paddy Producing Regions of Sri Lanka

Bandara S. M. S. P. [1], Samaraweera G. C. [2], Gunawardana T. S. L. W. [3]

Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka [1]
Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness, Faculty of Agriculture,
University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka [2]
Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management and Finance,
University of Ruhuna. Sri Lanka [3]

samanpb@yahoo.com [1], gangani@agecon.ruh.ac.lk [2], gunawardana@badm.ruh.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Environmental pollution and biodiversity loss are escalating challenges to global sustainability, particularly in developing countries such as Sri Lanka. This paper investigates the impact of green supply chain management (GSCM) practices—focusing on both soft and hard dimensions—on the environmental performance of the manufacturing sector. Although a substantial body of literature has examined GSCM and its environmental effects, little research has explored how product complexity moderates these relationships. To address this gap, the current study proposes a conceptual model that integrates GSCM soft and hard dimensions, environmental performance, and product complexity, all framed within the resource-based view (RBV). This model not only elucidates the mechanisms through which supply chain practices can drive ecological improvements but also highlights the critical role of product complexity in shaping these outcomes. The paper concludes by discussing the theoretical and managerial implications of the model, offering valuable insights for organisations aiming to enhance environmental performance through targeted GSCM strategies and suggesting avenues for future research.

Keywords: **Employee Involvement, Environmental Performance, Green Purchasing, Green Manufacturing, Product Complexity, Top Management Commitment**

FreshSight: A Colour-Blind-Friendly Solution for Assessing Produce Freshness, Ensuring Food Safety, and Reducing Waste

Poorni Fernando [1], Abarnah Kirupananda [2]

Department of Business, Informatics Institute of Technology, Colombo, Sri Lanka [1,2]

poorni.f@iit.ac.lk [1], abarnah.k@iit.ac.lk [2]

ABSTRACT

Colour-blind individuals encounter daily challenges, particularly in distinguishing colour-based indicators of food spoilage. This limitation significantly impacts their ability to assess the freshness and safety of fruits and vegetables accurately. Concurrently, global concerns regarding food spoilage have intensified, with millions worldwide affected by foodborne illnesses each year. The modern lifestyle, characterised by its rapid pace and time constraints, makes this issue worse, often leading to unnoticed spoilage and substantial waste. The resulting annual waste, estimated at one-third of all edible food, imposes significant societal and environmental burdens, underscoring the urgency for effective solutions. While existing solutions provide advancements in food freshness assessment, they often fail to address inclusivity, particularly for colour-blind users, and lack a focus on sustainability practices. This research addresses the context gap by exploring solutions tailored to the unique needs of colour-blind individuals and contributes to bridging the research gap by introducing FreshSight, a novel application that integrates inclusivity and sustainability into produce freshness assessment. By doing so, it aims to fill a critical void in ensuring equitable access to reliable food freshness tools for all users. This project introduces FreshSight, an innovative application designed to empower users to assess produce freshness and shelf life before consumption. Its methodology blends agile and waterfall approaches to ensure rigorous research and precise requirement elicitation. Extensive literature surveys validated the background, identified requirements, and emphasised the significance of freshness assessment. Feedback from expert and non-expert evaluations via questionnaires and interviews further refined the project's focus. FreshSight's system is tailored to support users with colour vision deficiencies, providing accurate freshness assessments through an intuitive interface and real-time feedback mechanisms. Beyond individual benefits, FreshSight promotes responsible consumption practices and supports sustainable food management. Its positive evaluation by stakeholders marks a significant step towards addressing global food safety concerns and reducing waste. By tackling the pressing challenges of food spoilage and waste reduction, FreshSight contributes meaningfully to fostering healthier and more sustainable food systems.

Keywords: **Colour-Blindness, Food Spoilage, Food Safety, Freshness Assessment, , Real-Time Feedback, Sustainable Food Management, Waste Reduction**

Navigating the Waves: Understanding the Role of Beach Boys in Shaping Blue Tourism Initiatives of Sri Lanka

Warunika Hettiarachchi [1], Sachithra Somasiri [2], Banduge R. H. [3]

Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka [1]
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka [2]

warunika@mgt.sab.ac.lk [1], sachithra@sjp.ac.lk [2], hansajabanduge@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

This concept paper proposes a viable study on blue tourism with a specific focus on travellers' experience with Sri Lankan beach boys. Blue tourism is deemed an important sector of the blue economy that focuses on the sustainable use of natural aquatic resources in tourism activities. This concept paper signifies the role of beach boys in shaping blue tourism initiatives by highlighting the importance of considering human resources together with other physical and natural resources in developing a more inclusive tourism sector. Concerning the significance of blue tourism, beach boys, and host-guest relationships, this paper proposes a study focused on understanding travellers' experiences with beach boys. Given the novelty of this area, the paper introduces an innovative data collection method leveraging TripAdvisor postings. The paper concludes with a discussion of potential theoretical, practical, and methodological implications.

Keywords: **Beach Boys, Blue Economy, Blue Tourism, Host-guest Relationships, Sri Lanka**

Gendered Psychological Influences on Migration Intentions: Insights from Sri Lanka's Undergraduate Generation Zs

Jayakody J. A. K. C. [1], Manathunga M. D. B. H. [2], Gunathilaka K. A. D. H. M. [3], Ranasingha R. A. N. C. [4], Vageesha Rajapakse [5], Gayan Yapa [6]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

bm21535376@my.sliit.lk [1], bm21529054@my.sliit.lk [2], bm21546884@my.sliit.lk [3], bm21553028@my.sliit.lk [4], vageesha.r@sliit.lk [5], gayan.y@sliit.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the gender-specific psychological factors influencing migration intentions among Generation Z in Sri Lanka, addressing a notable gap in migration research. While previous studies have focused primarily on socio-economic and political drivers, this research delves into the nuanced psychological factors shaping migration decisions, particularly examining gendered perspectives. The study explores internal factors such as mental stress resulting from economic instability, aspirations for personal and professional fulfilment, the impact of social media exposure, and the role of family dynamics. Using semi-structured interviews with 17 Generation Z participants from diverse backgrounds across Sri Lanka, the data were analysed through thematic analysis to uncover key psychological factors influencing migration intentions. The findings reveal distinct patterns based on gender. Male participants highlighted financial responsibility, economic stability, and professional advancement as primary motivators, often feeling a duty to provide for their families amid limited local opportunities. Conversely, female participants emphasised the desire for freedom from societal constraints and the pursuit of self-expression and career growth, viewing migration to achieve these aspirations. Both genders expressed significant psychological stress due to economic challenges, highlighting anxiety, insecurity, and feelings of entrapment in the current socio-economic environment. This study contributes to migration literature by emphasising the role of psychological factors and gender-specific factors in migration intentions among youth, a perspective often overlooked in traditional migration studies. By focusing on the experiences of Sri Lanka's Generation Z, this research provides valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders. The findings emphasise the need for gender-sensitive policies, mental health support systems, and proactive media engagement to address the root causes of migration intentions and retain young talent. Recommendations include targeted economic policies to create viable job opportunities, gender-equitable workplace environments, and strategic social media campaigns promoting local success stories. These insights aim to inform policy and practice in Sri Lanka, supporting efforts to mitigate migration intentions among youth by addressing underlying psychological factors and enhancing the socio-economic landscape to make staying in Sri Lanka a more attractive option for young people.

Keywords: **Gender, Generation Z, Migration, Migration Intention, Psychological Factors**

Challenges of Young Entrepreneurship in Agro-Based MSMEs: Evidence from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka During Time of Economic Crisis

Sukanya Kunasekaram [1], Sivagnanam Maheswaran [2]

University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka [1,2]

sukanyagunasekaram@gmail.com [1], mahessiva@gmail.com [2]

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in Agro-based Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sri Lanka during an economic crisis. It aims to answer the research question: "What are the challenges experienced by young entrepreneurs in Agro-based MSMEs?" and to identify the specific challenges they experienced during times of economic crisis. The qualitative research design was employed to explore the lived experiences of twelve young entrepreneurs from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Twelve participants, aged 18 to 34, were employed for data collection through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, translated into English, and systematically analysed using NVivo 12 software to identify recurring themes and patterns. This methodology combined with field observations, enabled the capture of rich, nuanced insights into the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in a constrained environment. The findings reveal that young entrepreneurs in Agro-based MSMEs encounter two types of challenges: those independent of the economic crisis, including inexperience and owner-manager responsibility, adverse environmental impact, challenges of market engagement, and challenges of resources management; and those directly created by the economic crisis, including cost escalation, uncertainties in market dynamics and operational challenges. The economic crisis exacerbates these challenges, limiting entrepreneurial resilience and the ability to adapt to a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. The paper explores the challenges faced by young entrepreneurs in Agro-based MSMEs during the economic crisis in developing countries. It offers a unique contribution by distinguishing between challenges inherent to Agro-based MSMEs and those magnified by the economic crisis. The findings add to the existing body of literature by highlighting the specific difficulties faced by entrepreneurs in developing countries, emphasising the socio-economic and operational hurdles that hinder entrepreneurial growth and sustainability. This study underscores the importance of addressing these challenges to support the resilience and growth of Agro-based MSMEs, offering valuable insights for policymakers and stakeholders in designing targeted interventions.

Keywords: **Agro-Based MSMEs, Challenges and Economic Crisis, Young Entrepreneurship**

Assessing the Effectiveness of Carbon Offsetting Strategies in Achieving Carbon Neutrality within the Apparel Sector of Sri Lanka

Perera M. A. D. S. V. [1], Ravindu Kulawardena [2], Kumarasinghe W. S. L. [3]

Department of Commerce, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

saviperera22@gmail.com [1], ravindudeshan@sjp.ac.lk [2], shanikalakmali@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's apparel sector, a cornerstone of the national economy and a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions is under growing pressure to adopt effective carbon offsetting strategies to achieve carbon neutrality. This study employs a mixed-method approach to identify the strategies implemented by the apparel organisations, evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies, identify key barriers and driving forces, and explore opportunities for enhancement. Quantitative analysis was conducted using Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) techniques, which identified solar energy as the most effective strategy due to its scalability and immediate impact. At the same time, biomass and reforestation projects demonstrated long-term potential despite operational and implementation challenges. Thematic analysis of qualitative data using NVivo software revealed critical barriers, including resource constraints, awareness and skill gaps, financial and regulatory gaps, and fragmented supply chains. Driving forces such as policy incentives, emerging carbon markets, strategic collaborations and partnerships, resource utilisation and efficiency, and advancements in renewable energy technologies were identified as catalysts for adopting and improving carbon offsetting strategies. The findings highlight opportunities to enhance carbon offsetting strategies through capacity building, enhanced planning and flexibility, stakeholder collaboration, improved funding access, circular and regenerative practices, operational optimisation, and the adoption of advanced technologies such as blockchain and AI. These insights provide a strategic roadmap for policymakers and industry stakeholders to refine carbon offsetting practices, align with global sustainability standards, and strengthen the sector's competitiveness in international markets. While the study focuses specifically on Sri Lanka's apparel sector, limiting the generalisability of its findings, it underscores the importance of further research across diverse industries and regions. Such research would provide a broader understanding of effective carbon offsetting strategies and their long-term implications, supporting global efforts toward sustainable development and carbon neutrality.

Keywords: **Apparel Industry, Carbon Offsetting, Carbon Neutrality, Sustainability, MCDM**

Artificial Intelligence Potential and Its Possibility to Enhance Sustainability in Agriculture Sector in Sri Lankan Companies: Perspectives of Employees in AiGrow by CodeGen International (Pvt) Ltd

Perera W. S. T. V. B. [1], Wijesekara G. S. D. [2], Bandara N. A. D. B. S. [3], Niharepola N. B. M. K. G.[4], Senanayake S. M. S. S. [5], Watthuhewa I. D. [6]

Department of Management and Finance, Faculty of Management, Social Sciences and Humanities, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

40-mts-0001@kdu.ac.lk [1], 40-mts-0017@kdu.ac.lk [2], 40-mts-6601@kdu.ac.lk [3], 40-mts-6620@kdu.ac.lk [4], 40-mts-6617@kdu.ac.lk [5], idw@kdu.ac.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

In this research, we are conducting a study about the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption and its contribution to enhancing sustainability in the Sri Lankan agricultural sector. This is a case study with the perspectives of employees based on AiGrow company, which is a sub-company of CodeGen International (Pvt) Ltd is a Sri Lankan sustainable, diversified, tech-driven conglomerate company that innovates AI-related eco-friendly systems to enhance productivity and manages the resources by making sustainable development in the agriculture sector. The research aims to investigate the potential of Sri Lankan companies to adopt AI in order to enhance sustainability through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and evaluate based on the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices in the agricultural sector. By taking the Technology-Organisation- Environment (TOE) model as the theoretical framework and KPI (key potential indicators) standards as the indicators, this study measures the AI feasibility and effectiveness of AI adoption to enhance sustainability respectively in the agriculture industry. Also, the study evaluates the current technologies and future potential to implement AI-driven innovations in the agriculture industry. This research uses a quantitative approach and both primary and secondary data to make the study more reliable. It distributes a survey questionnaire that targets 60 employees (N=60) at different managerial levels (mainly agronomists, mechanical engineers, electronic engineers, and project managers) at AiGrow company with the 52 responses (n=52), and the results will be analysed by using SPSS and ANOVA tests. The findings were evident that AI adoption is more moderately positively related to the Technological factors than Organisational and External Task Environment Factors in order to enhance sustainability in the agriculture sector (r=.454, P=<.001), and results show that there is a positive relationship between AI adoption and the other TOE factors. The regression results indicate that AI potential has a positive impact on sustainability performances in the agriculture sector. Through these findings, it was found that all the TOE factors are increased in the agricultural sector of AiGrow company, which also increases sustainability performance. This research mainly focused on technology adoption in the agricultural industry and may not fully reflect the overall AI adoption in Sri Lankan industries.

Keywords: **Agriculture Sector, Artificial Intelligence, ESG Practices, Sustainability, TOE Framework, UN SDGs**

An MMEA Model-Based Study on the Prevalence and Forms of Emotional Violence among Married Couples in Sri Lanka

Rohana K. H. N. V. [1], Perera K. K. N. [2], Ekanayaka R. M. S. C. [3], Pieris W. R. A. [4], Dunuwila V. R. [5], Nipunee Jayasuriya [6]

SLIIT Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4,5,6]

bm21581052@my.sliit.lk [1], bm21569890@my.sliit.lk [2], bm21558528@my.sliit.lk [3], bm21558764@my.sliit.lk [4], vandhana.d@sliit.lk [5], nipunee.j@sliit.lk [6]

ABSTRACT

Emotional Violence between people is a major issue with numerous short- and long-term consequences, but past literature has mainly focused on physical and sexual violence. Unlike them, the effects of emotional violence are much more difficult to detect, be psychologically distressing and may undermine the self-esteem of the victim. Due to this, the victim may suffer alone for an extended period. The objective of this paper is to discuss the prevalence and forms of emotional violence among married people in Sri Lanka. The philosophy of this research is positivist, the approach is deductive, and the strategy used is a survey. The context of the study is the married population in Sri Lanka, and the unit of analysis consists of married individuals who are citizens of Sri Lanka. The study's sample size was 386, and a non-probability sampling technique called snowball sampling was used to collect the required quantitative data. The primary data was collected through a questionnaire based on the 28-question version of the Multi-Dimensional Measure for Emotional Abuse (MMEA) model. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics. This model measures four forms of emotional violence: Restrictive Engulfment (physical isolation of the victim from society), Denigration (humiliation of the victim in front of others), Hostile Withdrawal (withholding emotional support for the victim in their time of need) and Dominance/ Intimidation (verbal threats and aggressive body language). The findings indicate that most married people in Sri Lanka committed emotional violence to some degree. However, above-average levels of emotional violence were committed by a considerable number of individuals. According to the findings, approximately 6 in 10 married men and 5 in 10 married women committed above-average levels of emotional violence in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the analysis revealed that the most common form of emotional violence committed by male participants was Hostile Withdrawal (avg. score of 19.07) followed by Dominance/Intimidation (avg. score of 17.11). The most common form committed by female participants was Restrictive Engulfment (avg. score of 20.44), followed by Hostile Withdrawal (avg. score of 16.75). The findings suggest that emotional violence is prevalent among married Sri Lankans.

Keywords: **Emotional Abuse, Emotional Violence, Gender-Based Violence, Intimate Partner Violence**

Impact of Triple Bottom Line Dimensions on Sustainable Supply Chain Management: A Case Study Based on ABC Cement Manufacturing Company

Senanayake N. D. M. [1], Silva A. P. [2]

Department of Management, NSBM Green University, Sri Lanka [1,2]

ndmsenanayake@students.nsbm.ac.lk [1]

ABSTRACT

In contemporary business, sustainability has emerged as a crucial factor, compelling companies to adopt strategies that strike a balance between social and environmental responsibility and economic success. This study examines the economic, environmental, and social aspects of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) of ABC Cement Manufacturing Company's Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM). Its primary aim is to examine how ABC Cement's sustainability activities impact its supply chain operations and enhance its overall sustainability performance. The top management and middle management of ABC Cement were interviewed to collect data, emphasising their perspectives on sustainable methods and their experiences. To thoroughly grasp the business's sustainability initiatives, the research examines internal papers such as corporate documentation, annual reports, and sustainability reports. SPSS software is utilised for statistical analysis, and quantitative methodologies are incorporated into the analysis. Regression and correlation analysis are two examples of inferential statistical techniques used to evaluate the connections between TBL outcomes and sustainable supply chain operations. The results show that social and environmental issues are important in determining ABC Cement's sustainable supply chain practices. In particular, efforts to lessen environmental impacts, like waste reduction and energy-efficient procedures, have been demonstrated to improve the long-term viability of the business. In addition to improving the supply chain, social aspects like fair labour standards and community involvement also positively impact society. Despite its importance, economic success increasingly relies on social and environmental sustainability. The study's findings offer insightful information to decision-makers and industry practitioners, highlighting how crucial it is to incorporate TBL concepts into supply chain management to achieve corporate resilience and sustainable growth in the cement sector. It emphasises the need for a comprehensive strategy and suggests that cement businesses may attain sustainable growth by including social, economic, and environmental considerations in their supply chain plans. Industry experts looking to promote long-term value development and improve business sustainability will find the results relevant.

Keywords: **Economic Impact, Environment Impact, Social Impact, Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM), Triple Bottom Line (TBL)**

Spatial Distribution of Dengue Cases in Sri Lanka: A Systematic Review of Existing Studies

Yamuna Wickramasinghe [1], Sumudu Perera [2], Prathap Kaluthanthri [3]

Sri Lanaka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1]
University of Sri Jayewardenepura [2,3]

yamunaruchirani@gmail.com [1], sumudu@sjp.ac.lk [2], prathap@sjp.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

Dengue fever is one of the main public health concerns in tropical and subtropical regions, with Sri Lanka facing severe outbreaks over the past decades. Understanding the spatial distribution of dengue cases is essential for effective prevention and control strategies. This study systematically reviews existing research on dengue's spatial distribution in Sri Lanka to identify key patterns, methodological approaches, and research gap.

A systematic review was conducted to examine studies on the spatial distribution of dengue cases in Sri Lanka. Relevant articles were retrieved from databases such as ScienceDirect and Google Scholar using predefined keyword combinations. The selection process adhered to specific inclusion and exclusion criteria, resulting in the final review of 33 studies. The PRISMA guidelines were followed to ensure a transparent and structured selection process. This systematic review of published studies examines publication trends, journal contributions, and total citations per year. A word cloud was generated from the abstracts of the selected studies to identify key themes. Additionally, the areas of spatial distribution analysis, research methodologies, and the frequency of various variables examined in these studies were visualised to identify dominant patterns and gaps in the literature. Furthermore, this paper critically assesses the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in the existing literature.

The limited number of longitudinal studies and cross-district analyses restricts the generalisability of findings across Sri Lanka. While some studies incorporate socio-economic, climatic, and environmental factors, few examine their combined influence on dengue transmission. Real-time dynamic forecasting models and spatial analyses in rural and less urbanised areas remain underexplored. Future research should focus on nationwide spatial analyses, integrate dynamic forecasting systems, and address seasonal trends to enable region-specific interventions and improve dengue control strategies.

Keywords: **Dengue Fever, Epidemiological Trends, Spatial Distribution, Sri Lanka, Systematic Review**

Inhaling Risk: Exploring Motivations and Factors behind E-Cigarette Addiction among Sri Lankan Youth

Wimalarathna I. S. [1], Nawam Sandumina [2], Dinal Charuka [3], Ayantha Ekanayaka [4]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2,3,4]

bm21584268@my.sliit.lk [1], *bm21575426@my.sliit.lk* [2], *bm21582424@my.sliit.lk* [3], *bm21565380@my.sliit.lk* [4]

ABSTRACT

The health risks associated with youth e-cigarette addiction have become a global phenomenon in recent times. Still, unfortunately, Sri Lanka has not focused on the problem, especially with the increasing global incidence of e-cigarette use among youth. While e-cigarettes have become increasingly prevalent among youth globally, there is limited research on e-cigarette addiction specifically among Sri Lankan youth. This study explores e-cigarette-addicted persons' experiences, perceptions, and motivations and overlooks the unique factors influencing e-cigarette addiction in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, this study qualitatively investigates, collects, and analyses data on the epidemiology, causes, and patterns of youth e-cigarette addiction in Sri Lanka. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, and primary data were collected to offer rich perspectives on individual usage patterns and the culture surrounding the use of e-cigarettes. The study utilised the saturation sampling method targeting respondents aged 15-35 years. Data collected in the method was deemed adequate upon reaching thematic saturation to maintain the quality and depth of data. Thematic drawn from the analysis of the data inflected various themes, such as peer influences for start using e-cigarettes, perceived alternatives to traditional cigarettes, e-cigarette marketing and availability in Sri Lanka, and lack of prevention programmes and strategies.

The studies are of great significance to educators, health practitioners, and policymakers in these cultures as they give useful information to help design interventions geared toward reducing e-cigarette use among the youth. It is also shown how the results bear implications in understanding common e-cigarette use behaviours, which are more localised but relate to global e-cigarette use contagion. In taking the debate outside the boundary of Sri Lanka, the significance of understanding the problem of e-cigarettes is emphasised and the need for public health interventions that are evidence-based is shown. Such include policy recommendations of awareness, tougher restrictions, community education, and health-promoting efforts to specific age groups of the youth to prevent youth addiction. Furthermore, this research has more relevance to Sri Lanka, as it captures the contemporary problems of e-cigarettes and their impacts across many other countries. Health agencies such as the World Health Organisation and various governments have been advocating evidence-based policy interventions to counteract this issue. Such policy recommendations include awareness campaigns, more stringent restrictions, community education programmes, and age-appropriate outreach programmes aimed at reducing the prevalence of addiction in the youth, among others.

Keywords: **Addiction, E-Cigarette, Health, Prevalence, Sri Lankan Youth**

Determinants of Migration: Empirical Data from the Undergraduates of Sri Lanka

Mapa M. M. D. N. B. [1], Hiranya Dissanayaka [2], Mendis M. O. S. [3]

Department Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka [1,2,3]

dinukamapa88@gmail.com [1], hiranya@wyb.ac.lk [2], oshani@wyb.ac.lk [3]

ABSTRACT

This study examines the migration intentions of Sri Lankan undergraduates concerning political instability, economic challenges, career prospects, educational opportunities, and family influence. The rising trend of youth migration in Sri Lanka poses a potential brain drain, threatening socio-economic development. Using a quantitative approach, the research sampled 172 undergraduates from various universities, applying the Push-Pull Theory and Human Capital Theory. The Push-Pull Theory explains migration as a response to negative conditions in the home country, such as political and economic instability, while attractive opportunities abroad, like better education and careers, encourage migration. Human Capital Theory further suggests migration as an investment in education and career growth, expecting higher returns in favourable environments. Political instability emerged as the strongest push factor, with students citing corruption, poor governance, and inflation. Additionally, job scarcity and inadequate salaries contribute to migration aspirations. Pull factors include studying at globally recognised universities, obtaining international degrees (especially from the U.S., U.K., Australia, and Canada), and securing well-paying jobs abroad. Many students seek cultural exposure for personal and professional development. Family influence plays a dual role—some provide financial and emotional support, while others discourage migration to maintain close ties. Social networks, such as alumni and friends, also facilitate relocation by providing essential information and resources. Partial least squares structural equation model analysis tested the relationships between these factors and migration intentions. Findings indicate that political instability, global career prospects, and access to world-class universities are the top three migration determinants, followed by family influence. Some students, however, fear the stress of adapting to new environments. This trend raises concerns about brain drain, as losing educated youth may hinder Sri Lanka's long-term development. The study suggests that improving political stability, enhancing higher education quality, and expanding employment prospects could help retain talent. Strengthening family and social connections may also encourage the return of students who study abroad. These insights are crucial for policymakers, educators, and career counsellors in tracking migration trends and developing strategies to retain skilled youth in a changing global landscape.

Keywords: **Brain Drain, International Careers, Migration Intentions, Political Instability, Sri Lankan Undergraduates, World-Class Universities**

Locally Embedded Survival Strategies of Agriculture-Based MSMEs: Evidence from the Northern Province of Sri Lanka During the Economic Crisis

Sukanya Kunasekaram [1], Sivagnanam Maheswaran [2]

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Sri Lanka [1,2]

sukanyagunasekaram@gmail.com [1], *mahessiva@gmail.com* [2]

ABSTRACT

Bricolage plays a crucial role in young entrepreneurship by fostering survival and innovation. However, it is largely unclear what bricolage behaviours are made of and how they happen in the context of an economic crisis. Further, the importance of bricolage is also a debated matter, whereas the concepts of "network bricolage" and "local embeddedness" have recently come to occupy a middle-ground position. However, it is ambiguous in terms of operationalisation across different contexts. The study investigates how young entrepreneurs in Agro-based Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) navigate challenges during times of economic crisis through local embeddedness strategies. The study uses the various forms of bricolage behaviour in terms of "network bricolage" and "local embeddedness" to understand the survival strategies of young entrepreneurs. In addition, the paper explores how young entrepreneurs foster valuable networks to mitigate challenges. This study adopts a bricolage-based analytical approach to explore how young entrepreneurs in Agro-based MSMEs survive economic crises through local embeddedness strategies. By employing phenomenology as the methodological framework, the study captures the lived experiences of young entrepreneurs in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and field observations with twelve young entrepreneurs, focusing on their network bricolage and resource bricolage practices. The collected data was systematically analysed using NVivo 12 to identify patterns of embedded entrepreneurial strategies, revealing that young entrepreneurs exhibit various bricolage strategies such as collective decision-making and collaboration, embracing locally available resources, resourceful network strategies, utilising existing contacts for marketing and utilising existing contacts for accessing resources. The findings highlight the critical role of local embeddedness in fostering valuable networks and enabling survival during economic crises. Entrepreneurs prioritise locally available resources, engage in collective decision-making, and build long-term relationships with local communities, suppliers, and customers. They also utilise digital platforms and global partnerships to expand their networks and access resources. By exploring the interplay between local embeddedness and bricolage, this research advances the understanding of entrepreneurial resilience and resource mobilisation in developing economies, filling a gap in the literature on young entrepreneurship in crisis contexts.

Keywords: **Agro-Based , Bricolage, Economic Crisis, Local Embeddedness, MSMEs, Young Entrepreneurship**

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce
Univerisity of Sri Jayewardenepura

🌐 icbm.sjp.ac.lk | ✉ icbm@sjp.ac.lk

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