



22nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Inclusive and Responsible Management for a
Circular Economy and Digital Future

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

2026



ORGANIZED BY

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FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES AND COMMERCE
UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA
SRI LANKA

IN COLLABORATION WITH



Postgraduate
Institute of
Management
University of Sri Jayewardenepura

**22nd International Conference on Business Management
(ICBM 2026)**

Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future

Proceedings Book

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Nugegoda

Sri Lanka

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Preface

22nd International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2026)

The International Conference on Business Management (ICBM), organised annually by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, serves as a well-recognised international forum for scholars, researchers, and practitioners in the social sciences to disseminate and discuss their research contributions. In 2026, the conference marks its 22nd consecutive edition, continuing its long-standing commitment to promoting high-quality academic dialogue and knowledge sharing.

ICBM 2026 is centred on the theme, “Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular and Digital Future”, reflecting the conference’s focus on contemporary developments, emerging challenges, and transformative opportunities in business and management. The conference is organised through 10 research tracks, each designed to address important and diverse dimensions of the overall theme. This year’s conference was held physically at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

The keynote address of ICBM 2026 was delivered by Prof. Subhash Abhayawansa from Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. The presence of such a distinguished academic/professional further enriches the conference by offering valuable insights into current developments in the field of business management.

For ICBM 2026, a total of 211 manuscripts were received. Following an initial desk review and a rigorous double-blind peer review process, supported by both local and international reviewers, 86 manuscripts were accepted for presentation at the conference. The abstracts of these accepted papers are compiled in this proceedings volume, representing a broad spectrum of scholarly work and perspectives.

The conference provides an important opportunity for authors to present their work before expert panels and receive constructive observations that may further strengthen their studies. Based on the evaluations of the respective panels across the 10 research tracks, selected outstanding papers will be identified. These papers may subsequently be developed into full-length manuscripts and considered for publication in appropriate journals, subject to the respective journal review requirements and editorial policies.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all authors who submitted their work to ICBM 2026, to the reviewers and panel members for their time and scholarly commitment, and to the organising committee for their dedicated efforts in making this conference a success. We also congratulate the authors whose abstracts are published in this proceedings book and wish them continued success in their future research and academic pursuits.

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Message from the Vice Chancellor, University of Sri Jayewardenepura



It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to all participants of the 22nd International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2026), hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. This year's conference, held under the timely theme "Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future," responds to an important global and national imperative: to reimagine business and public-sector decision-making in ways that are sustainable, ethical, and resilient, while harnessing digital transformation to create value for society.

Since its inception in 1999, the ICBM has grown into a cornerstone event in our academic calendar, serving as a respected platform for meaningful dialogue among scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and industry leaders. Over the years, this conference has strengthened the bridge between research and practice, enabling evidence-based insights to inform real-world challenges across diverse sectors and disciplines.

The 2026 theme highlights the growing responsibility of organisations to design circular systems, reduce waste and emissions, promote equity and inclusion, and ensure that digital progress supports sustainable development rather than deepening existing gaps. The deliberations, research presentations, and related academic engagements of ICBM 2026 will contribute to knowledge that advances innovation, accountability, and long-term value creation aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the conference co-chairs, organising committees, the faculty leadership, and all contributors for their exceptional efforts in making ICBM 2026 a success. I also thank the authors, reviewers, partners, and participants for their valuable contributions, and I trust that this conference will foster collaborations that will lead to impactful ideas and initiatives for a more inclusive and sustainable future.

Senior Professor Pathmalal M. Manage

Vice Chancellor

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Message from the Dean, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce



On behalf of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC), University of Sri Jayewardenepura, I warmly welcome you to the 22nd International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2026). It is a privilege for the faculty to host this flagship conference and to bring together an inspiring community of academics, professionals, and emerging scholars committed to advancing knowledge that matters.

The theme for 2026, “Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future,” reflects the evolving expectations placed upon organisations and leaders today. Circular economy thinking calls for a decisive shift from linear models of production and consumption towards resource efficiency, regeneration, and responsible innovation. In parallel, the rapid acceleration of digital technologies continues to reshape business models, governance, and stakeholder engagement, creating both opportunities and challenges that demand thoughtful, values-driven leadership.

FMSC remains committed to strengthening research excellence, nurturing ethical and future-ready graduates, and promoting engagement with industry and society. ICBM 2026 reflects this commitment through its breadth of academic exchange, the diversity of disciplines represented, and the integration of platforms that encourage participation across different career stages, including opportunities that spotlight student and early-career research and facilitate collaboration beyond institutional boundaries.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the conference co-chairs, department coordinators, organising committees, reviewers, partners, and sponsors whose collective efforts uphold the quality and reputation of ICBM. I also congratulate all authors whose work is featured in these proceedings and thank every participant for contributing to a vibrant learning community. May the discussions and insights generated through ICBM 2026 inspire practical solutions and enduring partnerships that advance inclusive, responsible, and sustainable development.

Professor Dushan Jayawickrama

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

Message from the Co-Chairs, ICBM 2026



We are pleased to present the Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Business Management (ICBM 2026), organised by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The conference theme, “Inclusive and Responsible Management for a Circular Economy and Digital Future,” is both urgent and forward-looking, encouraging research that responds to complex sustainability challenges while recognising the transformative role of technology in shaping institutions, markets, and society.

ICBM 2026 brings together contributions that reflect the richness of contemporary business and management scholarship, spanning multiple disciplines and methodological approaches. The studies included in these proceedings provide insights that can inform theory, policy, and practice supporting responsible leadership, resilient organisations, and sustainable value creation. We believe that this conference serves not only as an academic platform but also as a space to connect ideas with action through constructive dialogue among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

The academic quality of ICBM is strengthened through a rigorous review and editorial process. We extend our sincere appreciation to our reviewers and track chairs for their commitment, professionalism, and timely support, and we thank all authors for their scholarly contributions and responsiveness in improving their work. We also acknowledge the dedication of the organising committees, department coordinators, volunteers, and administrative teams whose efforts ensure a well-managed and impactful conference experience.

We trust that the work presented in these proceedings will stimulate meaningful discussion, inspire future collaborations, and contribute to building inclusive and responsible management thinking for a circular economy and a digital future.

Dr. Isuru Manawadu, Co-Chair, ICBM 2026

Dr. Sepali Bamunusinghe, Co-Chair, ICBM 2026

International Conference on Business Management (ICBM) 2026

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Conference Tracks

ICBM 2026 called for conference manuscripts under 10 research tracks.

- Sustainable Accounting and Assurance for Circular Economy and Digital Futures
- Entrepreneurship and Business Strategy for Circular and Digital Future
- Finance and Sustainable Investment in the Digitally Empowered Era
- Responsible Marketing for a Sustainable and Digitally Connected Future
- Inclusive and Responsible Human Resource Management in the Era of Digital Transformation
- Data-Driven Strategies for Circular and Responsible Operations
- Information Systems, E-Commerce, and Emerging Tech for Circular Business
- Sustainable Real Estate and Urban Infrastructure for a Circular Future
- Economics, Governance, Law, Ethics, and Public Policy for Sustainable and Digital Futures
- Language, Culture, and Multi-disciplinary Research Engaging Management Contexts

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Abstracts

Sustainable Accounting and Assurance for Circular Economy and Digital Futures

Rhetoric and Reality of Artificial Intelligence in Sustainable Accounting Practice: An Institutional Analysis from an Emerging Economy

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a disruptive technology that is transforming the accounting profession. However, there is still a significant distance between the promotional rhetoric and the ground reality of AI in accounting. The current research explores the gap between rhetoric and the reality of AI as an institutional practice in the accounting profession, particularly in Sri Lanka. Grounding on the theoretical notion of rhetorical institutionalism, this study explores the interplay between persuasive discourse and institutional pressures of regulation, professional, and mimetic forces to define the reality of AI adoption in accounting. A qualitative research approach was used, with fifteen in-depth interviews from industry practitioners, auditors, scholarly academics, and representatives of professional bodies. The findings disclosed AI as an unavoidable phenomenon associated with modernisation and competitiveness in the profession. Second, despite the strong rhetorical stance, most organisations are still at the initial phase of AI adoption, not as a predictive or generative tool. Third, AI institutionalisation is stagnant due to governance structure, lack of skills, training, and evolving changes in financial and sustainability reporting. The paper simultaneously investigates the rhetoric, reality, and institutionalisation of AI, highlighting that rhetorical congruence is not enough to bring transformational change. Substantial changes are required in the ethical governance structures, systematic capability formation, and institutional strategic commitment. Without these pillars in place, AI will just be a decorative feature instead of a catalyst for transforming accounting in a meaningful way.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence (AI), Accounting Profession, Digitalisation, Rhetoric, Reality*

Investigating Process Related Factors of Timely Receivable Collection in Sri Lanka's Emerging Food Manufacturing Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the factors that influence the timeliness of accounts receivable collection at a process level in the food manufacturing sector of Sri Lanka. Although revenue generation is a key objective, any inefficiencies in accounts receivable can undermine financial stability. Although there has been considerable literature on the general subject of working capital, there has been little research on the specifics of individual process drivers in the unique environment of Sri Lanka's food manufacturing industry. The impact of efficient invoicing, offering multiple payment methods, automated payment reminders, early payment and streamlined collection process is also examined. The quantitative method has been used for design research. The data has been collected from 121 finance and sales professionals working with ABC PLC, a renowned food and beverage company in Sri Lanka. The analysis has been done with the help of SPSS software by using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, and regression. The results have proved that there is a significant positive relationship between all five factors and timeliness in collecting accounts receivable. Moreover, it has been established that invoicing accuracy and automation of follow-ups are critical factors for improving accounts receivable collection. This research attempts to fill this void by identifying tangible internal work processes that can improve cash flow. The study has shown that organisational liquidity is largely driven by efficiency rather than sales. In practice, this research offers a guide for financial managers to improve sustainability via digitalisation and incentive-based collections.

Keywords: *Automated Payment Reminder, Efficient Invoicing, Offering Multiple Payment, Receivable Collection, Payment Flexibility*

The Impact of Teachers' Digital Engagement on Student Satisfaction: A Study of Accounting Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The integration of digital technologies in higher education has significantly transformed teaching and learning practices. However, limited research has examined how teachers' digital engagement influences student satisfaction, particularly among accounting undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of teachers' digital engagement on student satisfaction in this context. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the study examines four dimensions of teachers' digital engagement: motivation, willingness, adoption of digital tools, and digital competence. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 380 accounting undergraduates using structured questionnaires. The data were analysed using SPSS to assess the relationships between the independent variables and student satisfaction. The findings reveal that teachers' digital competence has a significant positive impact on student satisfaction. Additionally, teachers' motivation and adoption of digital tools meaningfully enhance students' learning experiences. The results also indicate that teachers' willingness to engage with digital technologies is positively associated with student engagement and satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of strengthening digital infrastructure and providing educators with professional development opportunities. By enhancing teachers' digital engagement, universities can improve student satisfaction and better align digital education strategies with student needs. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital pedagogy in accounting education within the Sri Lankan higher education context.

Keywords: *Digital Engagement, Student Satisfaction, Accounting Education, Teacher Digital Literacy, Professional Development*

Impact of Corporate Governance on Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting: A Study of Bank, Finance and Insurance Companies in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of corporate governance practices on corporate social responsibility reporting practices in Sri Lanka's banking, financial, and insurance sectors. It provides a comparison of high-cap and low-cap firms. It utilises a six-year panel (2018–2023) of 30 companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. The research employed a quantitative approach using the Corporate Social Responsibility Index that used the Global Reporting Initiative framework and regression models. The results demonstrate that board independence ($\beta = 0.125$, $p = 0.005$) and audit committee size ($\beta = 0.025$, $p = 0.019$) significantly and positively influence Corporate social Responsibility reporting. While board size showed a marginally significant positive relationship ($\beta = 0.008$, $p = 0.072$), and women directors was insignificant. Comparative analysis indicates that these governance mechanisms were more effective for high-market-cap firms and demonstrate a strong model fit ($R^2 = 0.295$). Low-cap firms, board independence became insignificant and return on assets was significantly and negatively associated with Corporate Social Responsibility reporting ($\beta = -0.493$, $p = 0.042$), indicating that profits may take priority over sustainability investments in resource-constrained environments. This indicates a trade-off between profit and sustainability. Limited studies address the comparison between high- and low-cap firms in banking, finance, and insurance. This study provides empirical evidence that corporate governance affects corporate social responsibility reporting in resource-limited and high-capitalised contexts. This study suggests a more situational framework that enables policymakers and practitioners to match governance strategies with firm capacity.

Keywords: *Audit Committee, Board Independence, CSR Reporting, Corporate Governance, Sri Lanka*

Artificial Intelligence in Accounting: Perceptions and Adoption Intentions of Undergraduate Accounting Students as Future Accountants in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming accounting practice globally, but there is still a wide disparity in its adoption between developed and developing countries like Sri Lanka. Despite these advancements, there remains a considerable disparity in the level of AI adoption between developed and developing countries, including Sri Lanka. With this technological revolution, it is important to observe how future accountants feel about it, as they are at the forefront of ensuring the inclusion of AI in the field. Accordingly, this study investigates the perception and use of AI in accounting among undergraduate students enrolled in state universities in Sri Lanka. The study employed a quantitative research approach and utilised a convenience sampling technique to collect data from 150 undergraduate accounting students enrolled in state universities. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Technology Readiness Index (TRI 2.0) are employed as the theoretical frameworks to examine the influence of technology readiness on perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and intention to adopt AI in accounting practices. The findings reveal that technology readiness has a positive and statistically significant effect on both perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of AI applications in accounting. Furthermore, perceived usefulness emerges as the most influential determinant of students' intention to adopt AI technologies. The results also indicate that perceived usefulness fully mediates the relationship between technology readiness and intention to use AI, highlighting the importance of demonstrating the practical value of AI in accounting contexts. Based on these findings, the study offers several practical implications for educators, policymakers, and professional accounting bodies. It emphasises the need to integrate AI-related content into accounting curricula, enhance digital literacy, and provide hands-on exposure to AI-based tools and applications. By focusing on the tangible benefits and real-world applications of AI, stakeholders can better prepare accounting graduates with the skills and competencies required to thrive in a technology-driven professional environment.

Keywords: *AI Adoption, Artificial Intelligence, Perceived Usefulness, Technology Acceptance Model, Technology Readiness Index*

**Entrepreneurship and Business Strategy
for Circular and Digital Future**

Management Undergraduates' Intention to Apply for Jobs in the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Sector: A Case Study of NSBM Green University

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ABSTRACT

The determinants of management undergraduates in Sri Lanka to work in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are analysed by this study, which is a significant gap in the understanding of youth employment decisions in the framework of a developing economy. Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the study devised three hypotheses relating to the effects of attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control on the intention of students to seek SME work. A quantitative approach was used, using structured questionnaires to collect data from a random sample of management undergraduates. Multiple regression analysis indicated that the three independent variables, attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, have significant and positive influences on the intention to seek SME jobs. The findings indicate that favourable attitudes toward SME employment, favourable social pressures, and stronger self-efficacy in application choices lead to students having a higher likelihood of considering SME careers. The study's findings hold important theoretical implications in that they empirically validate the Theory of Planned Behaviour in SME employment intention. Practically, the study suggests targeted interventions in career guidance, curriculum planning, and industry partnerships to improve the attitudes and competencies of students to fit the demands of the SME sector. Further, by enabling more graduates to become employed in SMEs, the study advances national youth employment and economic growth policies and contributes directly to industrial innovation and decent work towards Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords: *Attitude, Subjective Norms, Management Undergraduates, NSBM Green University, Perceived Behavioural Control, Small and Medium Enterprises, SME Employment Intention, Sri Lanka, Theory of Planned Behaviour*

The Impact of Digital Business Transformation on Sustainable Entrepreneurial Performance in SMEs in Sri Lanka: The Mediating Role of Business Model Innovation and the Moderating Role of Entrepreneurial Bricolage

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lankan Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly adopting digital business transformation (DBT) as a strategic route to improve competitiveness and move toward environmentally responsible, socially aligned, and economically sustainable growth. Despite rapid digital growth, sustainable entrepreneurial performance varies among firms, showing that technology adoption alone does not ensure long-term sustainability. This study investigates how Sri Lankan SMEs transform Digital Business Transformation (DBT) into Sustainable Entrepreneurial Performance (SEP) in an emerging economy with limited resources and limited digital adoption. Based on the Resource-Based View, Dynamic Capabilities View, and Circular Economy Theory, the study proposes a novel and rational model in which DBT affects SEP both directly and through Business Model Innovation (BMI), while Entrepreneurial Bricolage (EB) strengthens the link between DBT and BMI. Grounded on stratified convenience sampling, using a survey data method for collecting data from 360 SMEs and analysing relationships through PLS SEM. The findings of the study show that DBT significantly enhances SEP and that BMI partially mediates this relationship. The results further reveal that EB plays a significant moderating role, enabling SMEs with stronger bricolage support to convert digital initiatives into more innovative business models. The moderation and mediation analysis confirms that the indirect effect of DBT on SEP through BMI is strongest when EB is high. These findings deepen understanding of how technological, strategic, and behavioural factors collectively shape sustainable performance in resource-constrained SME contexts. The study underscores the importance of fostering digital readiness, encouraging innovative business model development, and promoting resourceful entrepreneurial behaviour to strengthen sustainability outcomes. It also highlights the need for longitudinal and comparative research to explore how circular and platform-based models evolve and contribute to long-term resilience within emerging markets. Overall, the findings demonstrate that digital business transformation contributes to sustainable entrepreneurial performance most effectively when it is supported by business model innovation and strong entrepreneurial bricolage, underscoring the need for SMEs in emerging economies to align digital initiatives with innovative and resourceful strategic practices.

Keywords: *Digital Business Transformation (DBT), Sustainable Entrepreneurial Performance (SEP), Business Model Innovation (BMI), Entrepreneurial Bricolage (EB), Innovation Strategy*

Exploring Barriers Confronting the Social Entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka's Creative Industry

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ABSTRACT

Social entrepreneurship is a popular entrepreneurial domain which combines both economic and social value by addressing societal problems in society and is crucial for sustainable global development. Although the literature on social entrepreneurship has expanded in recent years in Western contexts, studies in developing countries remain relatively scarce. Meanwhile, the creative industry is gaining significant momentum in the twenty-first century. Although this sector presents ample opportunities for both cultural innovation and economic development, it also faces several unique challenges to develop successfully. This qualitative research study explores the barriers experienced by social entrepreneurs operating within the creative industry in Sri Lanka. By utilizing purposive sampling method along with the snowball sampling, we conducted in-depth interviews with nine social entrepreneurs, diverse in the creative industry, located in the Western and Central Provinces of Sri Lanka. This employed a narrative research approach, grounded in a social constructionist philosophical framework, to explore the lived experiences of creative social entrepreneurs. Concurrently, thematic analysis was employed to identify core findings of this study. This revealed six key barriers, including lack of awareness in consumers, workforce challenges, lack of support from close ties, entrepreneurial burnout, socio-cultural resistance, and legal and institutional barriers. Finally, the study implemented a model that links the consciousness of the lived experience of social entrepreneurs. This model enriches the understanding of how external systemic factors interact with individual resilience and agency in social entrepreneurial endeavours. Similarly, this provides significant implications for policymakers and stakeholders in developing targeted support systems, including conducting awareness campaigns, implementing workforce development programs, and creating supportive policy frameworks that match the specific needs of innovative social entrepreneurs. This research imposes constraints on generalisation. Finally, by providing new empirical insights into the barriers faced by social entrepreneurs in the creative industry, the study bridges a gap in the extant literature of social entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka and highlights new avenues of research in other industries as well.

Keywords: *Barriers, Creative Industry, Narrative Inquiry, Social Constructionism, Social Entrepreneurship*

Barriers to Social Identity and Entrepreneurial Success among Women Entrepreneurs in SMEs: A Qualitative Study in Northern and Eastern Provinces, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka, female entrepreneurship has emerged as a catalyst for economic development, job creation and social development. Nevertheless, female entrepreneurs, especially those in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, are still experiencing various structural, socio-cultural, and institutional constraints that inhibit their entrepreneurial performance and development of high social status. Despite the rise in the contribution of women in the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector, the women-run enterprises are still underrated and performing poorly as compared to those run by men. Although the country has a high literacy rate, approximately 25% of the women are in entrepreneurial activities, and this shows that the potential of women has not been well exploited. This is an exploratory research paper that analyses the key challenges affecting the sustainable business growth and social appreciation of women entrepreneurs in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka in the SME industry. The study follows a qualitative research design and is informed by the existing past literature in entrepreneurship and social identity. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used as the methods of primary data collection of 15 women entrepreneurs, and the secondary data were acquired with the help of reports and scholarly publications. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the collected data. The results show that the greatest constraint on business development, innovation and sustainability is the lack of access to financial services. Moreover, the strict time and mobility limitations of women entrepreneurs are strict because of the socio-cultural norms, household duties, cognitive burdens, stereotypes and dislocation of gender roles. All this is compounded by a lack of family support, business networks, lack of training opportunities and appropriate working places. Weak institutional support systems and gender discrimination also adversely affect the level of confidence, visibility and status of women in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. The research paper indicates that there should be family support, mentoring, and favourable government policies to promote the entrepreneurial achievements and social identity of women. It highlights that the policy interventions necessary involve specific policy interventions such as better access to finance, gender sensitive training, networking, and inclusive social policies. The barriers to women can be resolved to enhance the empowerment of women, bring on board a diverse entrepreneurial culture and realise the full economic potential of women entrepreneurs in post-conflict and underserved areas.

Keywords: *Empowerment, Entrepreneurial Success, Northern and Eastern Provinces, SME Sector, Social Identity, Women Entrepreneurs*

Integrating Sustainability and Digital Technologies in Supply Chains: A Systematic Literature Review with Insights for the Apparel Industry

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ABSTRACT

This systematic Literature review comprehensively reviewed the integration of sustainability and digital adoption in the apparel industry in the supply chain between 2020 and 2025. Following the PRISMA 2020 framework, this study reviewed twenty-six articles to identify the digital adoptions and challenges when implementing digital technologies, and sustainability initiatives used in the apparel sector companies. Geographically, the research is concentrated in major apparel-exporting countries, reflecting localised industry objectives. Most of the researchers have found sustainability initiatives in the apparel sector, but not align with the triple bottom line and the relationship with digital adoption technologies. The analysis highlights the widespread use of digital technologies such as data analytics and artificial intelligence to enhance operational efficiency, along with new advanced technologies such as blockchain, 3D-virtual technologies, the Internet of Things, AI, robotics, and cloud computing. Significant financial constraints, a lack of skilled labour for modern technologies, and organisational resistance to change are among the major challenges mentioned in the articles. Sustainability initiatives encompass environmental initiatives like energy efficiency and waste reduction, social components focusing on worker well-being and skill development, and economic drives such as cost reduction and better competitiveness. There is an increasing focus on human capital and ethical practices in the areas of social sustainability, employee well-being, training and skills development, transparency to stakeholders, and the promotion of gender equality. From an economic sustainability perspective, cost reduction, typically achieved through waste reuse, digital sampling, and better energy efficiency, is a primary focus. The analysis results show that the apparel sector has reached a critical juncture, where resilience and growth depend on integrating digital technology and sustainability. Addressing financial constraints, engaging in human capital development, and cultivating a culture of innovation are key elements to overcoming current challenges. The systematic literature review concludes by emphasising the need to overcome financial barriers, invest in human capital, and stimulate innovation to meet the growing needs of a sustainable and digitally driven future.

Keywords: *Apparel Sector, Digital Technology, Supply Chain, Sustainability, Systematic Literature Review*

Impact of Entrepreneurial Intentions and Motivations on Entrepreneurial Success: Moderated by Family Support in Point Pedro, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurs play a vital role in driving economic growth and social development, particularly in rural Sri Lanka, where small-scale enterprises support livelihoods and employment. However, many ventures discontinue due to financial constraints, weak family support, and changing socio-economic conditions. Guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour and Self-Determination Theory, this study examines how entrepreneurial intentions and motivations influence entrepreneurial success, and whether family support moderates these relationships among registered entrepreneurs in the Point Pedro Divisional Secretariat Division. Using proportional stratified random sampling, 248 entrepreneurs were selected across 29 business categories, and 197 valid responses were analysed using SPSS. Correlation results showed a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial success ($r = 0.235$, $p < 0.01$), while risk-taking propensity was not significantly associated with success ($r = 0.054$, $p > 0.05$). Personal fulfilment and autonomy ($r = 0.161$, $p < 0.05$) and opportunity recognition ($r = 0.272$, $p < 0.01$) also showed positive relationships with success. Regression analysis further revealed that entrepreneurial self-efficacy and opportunity recognition significantly predicted entrepreneurial success, whereas risk-taking and personal fulfilment and autonomy did not. Moderation analysis indicated that family support significantly strengthened the relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial success, demonstrating the importance of emotional and practical support systems in enhancing business outcomes. However, family support did not moderate the relationship between risk-taking propensity and success. Overall, entrepreneurial success in rural Sri Lanka is driven mainly by self-efficacy, opportunity recognition, and supportive family structures rather than risk-taking traits. The study integrates intention and motivation-based perspectives in a post-conflict rural context and offers implications for entrepreneurship development policy and practice.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, Entrepreneurial Motivation, Opportunity Recognition, Family Support, Entrepreneurial Success*

From Gig Work to Entrepreneurship: The Influence of Experience and Social Capital on Entrepreneurial Intention in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The gig economy, driven by ride-hailing platforms such as Pick me and Uber, has changed labour markets in emerging economies in Sri Lanka. It also exposes workers to customers, digital tools and market conditions that may support their entrepreneurial goals. This research examines how experience in the gig economy and social connections influence entrepreneurial intention among ride-hailing workers in Sri Lanka. It suggests that perceived self-efficacy is a key psychological factor connecting these experiences to the intention to start a business. Further, this study demonstrates direct links from the gig economy to perceived self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention. It also highlights a direct effect of social connections on entrepreneurial intention, viewing perceived self - efficacy to turn experience and social ties into stronger entrepreneurial determination. Using a quantitative survey using a structured five- point Likert scale questionnaire within an interpretivist framework and a deductive approach, purposive and snowball sampling were administered to ride-hailing drivers linked to major platforms in Sri Lanka to test these relationships. The results show that gig economy experience greatly improves perceived self-efficacy and strengthens entrepreneurial intention, both directly and indirectly. At the same time, social connections emerge as an important factor in fostering entrepreneurial intention in providing access to advice, role models and information about opportunities. Perceived self-efficacy acts as a mediator between gig economy experience, social connections and entrepreneurial intention. This underscores the importance of confidence in converting platform-based work and network into tangible entrepreneurial plans. These findings point to the potential for ride-hailing platforms to serve as an informal incubator that encourages entrepreneurial growth, especially in emerging economies. Also offer practical insights for platform operators and policymakers who want to support gig workers in moving toward self-employment.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurs, Gig Economy, Platform, Ride Hailing, Sri Lanka*

Finance and Sustainable Investment in the Digitally Empowered Era

Determinants of Financial Well-Being among Young Professionals: Evidence from Selected Listed Licensed Commercial Banks in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Financial Literacy on Financial Well-Being among young professionals employed in five selected licensed commercial banks in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka. This was prompted by the growing importance of financial literacy in improving personal financial outcomes, particularly among early-career professionals in developing economies. While international studies have explored various dimensions of financial literacy in the Sri Lankan context, especially within the banking sector, it remains under-researched. This study aimed to address that gap by examining whether financial knowledge, financial behaviour, financial socialisation, and financial strain significantly influence financial well-being. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data was collected from 257 banking professionals aged between 20 and 34 years using a structured questionnaire. Participants were selected from Bank of Ceylon, DFCC Bank PLC, Hatton National Bank PLC, Nations Trust Bank PLC and Sampath Bank PLC. The instrument included five constructs measured using a five-point Likert scale, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, reliability testing (using Cronbach's Alpha) and multiple regression analysis were applied to evaluate the impact of financial literacy on financial well-being. The results revealed that financial knowledge, behaviour, and socialisation have a statistically significant impact on financial well-being, while financial strain has a significant negative impact on. Financial knowledge, behaviour, and socialisation all had a moderate positive influence. The model was found to be statistically significant, with all independent variables collectively explaining a considerable portion of the variance in financial well-being. These findings support the initial hypotheses and provide empirical evidence for the role of financial literacy components in shaping financial outcomes. This study contributes actionable insights for banks, educators and policymakers to design integrated financial education and workplace policies that enhance financial resilience and long-term economic Well-Being. Future studies could expand this research across different industries and adopt longitudinal approaches to capture changes over time.

Keywords: *Financial Behaviour, Financial Knowledge, Financial Socialisation, Financial Strain, Financial Well-being*

Impact of Cybersecurity-Related Fears on Customer Intention to Use Digital Banking Services in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The rapid adoption of digital banking has significantly changed how financial services are delivered, providing enhanced convenience and accessibility. However, widespread acceptance is hindered by cybersecurity threats and related fears. This study examines the influence of fear of financial loss, perceived online identity theft, fear of reputational damage, and security and privacy concerns on customers' intentions to use digital banking services, specifically focusing on users who actively use digital banking platforms in the Colombo District. Employing a quantitative research design, data were gathered through a structured survey distributed to 271 digital banking users, chosen via convenience sampling. The survey included validated items measuring the key independent variables (fear of financial loss, perceived online identity theft, fear of reputational damage, and security and privacy concerns) and the dependent variable (intention to use digital banking services). The analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation assessments, and multiple regression techniques to evaluate relationships and test hypotheses. The findings revealed that out of the four identified predictors, only perceived online identity theft had a statistically significant relationship with the intention to use digital banking services, indicating that fears related to identity theft are the primary cybersecurity concern affecting users' decisions, whereas fears regarding financial loss, reputational damage, and general security and privacy concerns showed no significant impact. This study contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in the field by underscoring the importance of identity protection in the adoption of digital banking. It suggests that financial institutions should prioritise investments in robust authentication measures, awareness initiatives, and identity protection strategies to enhance customer confidence. Theoretically, it adds to existing literature by delineating the specific fears that affect user intentions. Future inquiry is encouraged to broaden the scope by incorporating diverse demographic groups, qualitative methodologies, and longitudinal studies to further dissect evolving user attitudes towards digital banking.

Keywords: *Digital Banking, Fear of Financial Loss, Fear of Reputational Damage, Perceived Online Identity Theft, Security and Privacy Concerns*

Moderating Role of Demographic Factors on the Relationship Between Behavioural Biases and Investment Decisions: Evidence from Generation Y in Colombo

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ABSTRACT

This study scrutinises the impact of behavioural biases, specifically subjective norm, originating from the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and loss aversion, originating from Prospect Theory, on investment decisions among Generation Y investors (born between 1981 and 1999) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The study further examines the moderating impact of key demographic factors, including gender, marital status, and income allocation for investment. The study's research approach is quantitative, utilising responses from 335 respondents via a survey questionnaire. The collected data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The study findings suggest that subjective norms significantly and positively influence individual investment decisions among Generation Y investors in Colombo, indicating that peers, family members, and colleagues shape their choices. Conversely, loss aversion has a negative but statistically insignificant effect on investment decisions. This may be due to Generation Y characteristics, such as being technologically proficient and relying on digital platforms and peer networks for information, which enhance their risk tolerance and reduce their sensitivity to potential losses. Additionally, marital status moderates the relationship between subjective norm and loss aversion with long-term stock market investment decisions. The study tests the validity of the Theory of Planned Behaviour by examining the impact of subjective norms and evaluates Prospect Theory by analysing the effect of loss aversion on individual investment decisions, contributing to behavioural finance literature in the Sri Lankan context. The findings offer important implications for retail investors, financial institutions, and policymakers. By recognising behavioural biases, retail investors can enhance emotional discipline and reduce irrational judgments, thereby improving investment outcomes. Policymakers should incorporate behavioural factors when formulating and revising investment-related regulations. Furthermore, broker firms, the Colombo Stock Exchange, and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka can increase market participation by targeting family members and peers of existing Generation Y investors, as social influence significantly shapes their decisions. A brokerage firm can tailor its advisory strategies based on the Generation Y investor's marital status, as marital status influences the impact of social pressure and loss aversion on investment decisions.

Keywords: *Behavioural Bias, Generation Y, Investment Decision, Loss Aversion, Subjective Norms*

The Mediating Role of Financial Behaviour Between Microeconomic Factors and Money Management: Evidence from Non-State University Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the interplay between microeconomic factors, financial behaviour, and money management among undergraduates of non-state universities in Sri Lanka, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of financial behaviour. In private higher education, where students rely on personal income, family support, part-time work, and education-related financial knowledge, effective money management is essential to financial well-being. A cross-sectional survey was employed, and data were collected from 368 undergraduates using self-administered questionnaires. Analyses included descriptive statistics and mediation testing using Hayes' PROCESS macro. The findings indicate that microeconomic factors significantly influence money management, both directly and indirectly through financial behaviour. The total effect was 0.456 ($p < .001$), while the direct effect decreased to 0.116 ($p = .01$) after introducing the mediator, confirming partial mediation. The indirect effect was significant (0.339), with a 95% Confidence Interval ranging from 0.266 to 0.414. These findings highlight that undergraduates' microeconomic circumstances primarily shape money management through behavioural mechanisms, including budgeting, expenditure monitoring, and savings practices. Practically, the results highlight the importance of integrating targeted financial literacy and behaviour training into university curricula, developing student-focused financial products, and implementing structured support mechanisms to enhance financial competence. Theoretically, this study extends the Family Resource Management framework to the higher education context of an emerging economy and provides empirical support for financial behaviour as a key mediating mechanism. In conclusion, by demonstrating how microeconomic factors translate into financial outcomes via behaviour, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of student money management and offers guidance for educators, policymakers, and financial institutions seeking to strengthen financial capability among undergraduates.

Keywords: *Financial Behaviour, Money Management, Microeconomic Factors, Non-State Universities, Undergraduates, Sri Lanka*

A Comparative Analysis of E-GARCH and MIDAS Models for Stock Price Prediction in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Stock market price fluctuations, driven by internal and external uncertainties, can undermine investor confidence and complicate investment decision-making. This study compares the forecasting accuracy of the Exponential Generalised Autoregressive Conditional Heteroskedasticity (E-GARCH) and Mixed Data Sampling (MIDAS) models in predicting the All Share Price Index (ASPI) in Sri Lanka. The analysis was conducted using EViews and Python software. Monthly ASPI data and quarterly Standing Lending Facility Rate (SLFR) data, covering January 2018 to December 2024, were obtained from the Colombo Stock Exchange and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka. Stationarity was assessed using the ADF and KPSS tests, and all variables were found to be integrated of order one (I(1)). The E-GARCH model produced a forecasted return of only 0.39%, whereas the MIDAS model predicted an average return of 4.65% for the ASPI from January to December 2025. Notably, the MIDAS forecast aligned with the actual return range of 3% to 5% recorded from January to May 2025, highlighting its practical relevance. Forecast evaluation further confirms this result, as the MIDAS model achieved a low MAPE of 2.30%, with MAE and RMSE below 1%, indicating high predictive accuracy. In contrast, the E-GARCH model generated comparatively higher forecast errors, reflecting weaker performance. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the MIDAS model outperforms the E-GARCH model in forecasting ASPI values. These results provide valuable implications for investors, financial analysts, and policymakers by emphasising the advantages of mixed-frequency forecasting in enhancing investor confidence, supporting informed policy decisions, and promoting sustainable economic growth in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *ASPI, E-GARCH, MIDAS, Stock Price Prediction, Sri Lanka*

An Empirical Study of Digital Financial Capability, Digital Trust, and FinTech Adoption among SMEs in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The rapid digitalisation of financial services has created new opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); however, the effective use of FinTech services depends on users' digital financial capability and level of digital trust. This study examines the relationships between digital financial capability, digital trust, and FinTech adoption among SMEs in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Drawing on a multi-theoretical framework incorporating UTAUT2, the Transtheoretical Model (TTM), and the Digital Financial Capability framework, the study adopts a positivist philosophy and a quantitative research design. Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire administered to registered SMEs using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. A total of 250 valid responses were analysed using SmartPLS to assess the measurement and structural models, including mediation effects. The findings reveal that digital financial capability is positively and significantly associated with FinTech adoption, both directly and indirectly through digital trust. Digital trust plays a significant mediating role, accounting for a substantial proportion of the relationship between capability and adoption. The model demonstrates strong explanatory power, with satisfactory levels of reliability, validity, and predictive relevance. The study contributes to theory by enhancing understanding of the behavioural mechanisms underlying FinTech adoption in emerging economies and offers practical implications for SME owners, policymakers, financial literacy initiatives, and FinTech service providers. Strengthening digital financial capability and fostering digital trust may support financial inclusion, SME competitiveness, and national digital transformation efforts.

Keywords: *Digital Financial Capability, Financial Technology, Digital Trust, SMEs, Sri Lanka, PLS-SEM, Digital Technology*

Financial Leverage and Financial Performance of Licensed Finance Companies in Sri Lanka: The Moderating Role of Total Capital Adequacy Ratio

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of financial leverage on the financial performance of Licensed Finance Companies (LFCs) in Sri Lanka and how the Total Capital Adequacy Ratio (TCAR) moderates this relationship. The effect of leverage on performance is complex and can depend on tax benefits, interest costs, firm strategies, economic conditions, etc. Further, under the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's (CBSL) capital regulations, TCAR is a key indicator of financial stability and compliance, and the efforts of LFCs to maintain TCAR should ultimately enhance their financial performance. This study provides insights into how financial leverage impacts the financial performance of LFCs and how regulatory capital requirements moderate this relationship to influence overall performance. A quantitative approach grounded in positivist philosophy was used, drawing data from 30 LFCs. Covering FY 2019/2020–FY 2023/2024, the analysis employed descriptive, correlation, and regression techniques to examine the relationships between leverage ratios (Total Debt to Total Asset -TDTA, Total Debt to Total Equity - TDEQ), performance indicators (Return on Assets -ROA), Return on Equity -ROE), Earnings per Share (EPS) and TCAR as a moderator. Results reveal that TDEQ negatively affects ROA and ROE, indicating that excessive debt reduces firm performance, while TDTA shows no significant impact. However, TCAR demonstrates both a direct positive effect and a strong moderating influence. Higher TCAR reverses the positive insignificant effect of TDTA on ROA, as well as the negative significant effects of TDEQ on ROA and ROE, into positive and significant. Similarly, the positive impact of TDTA on ROE intensifies when TCAR is high. EPS remains largely unaffected by leverage or TCAR, implying that other firm-specific or market-related determinants play a greater role. The study concludes that debt is a double-edged sword, harmful when excessive but beneficial with adequate capital. It shows that TCAR shapes leverage–performance dynamics, supporting CBSL's need to strengthen TCAR regulations and LFCs to properly balance leverage & capital.

Keywords: *Financial Leverage, Licensed Finance Companies, Performance, Sri Lanka, Total Capital Adequacy Ratio*

Sustainable Portfolio Construction Using a Machine Learning-Based Framework: K-Means Clustering and PCA Insights from the Colombo Stock Exchange S&P SL20 Companies

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ABSTRACT

The economic performance of a nation strongly shapes the well-being of its citizens, and stock market behaviour is widely regarded as a reliable indicator of overall economic health. Within Sri Lanka, the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) plays an important role in capital formation and financial stability. However, the industry-based classification of S&P SL20 companies often overlooks deeper market relationships. Investors seek systematic methods to identify patterns and manage uncertainty, but volatility and complex financial data make accurate market interpretation difficult. This study investigates the clustering of S&P SL20 companies to derive optimal investment and policy strategies through a data-driven portfolio construction framework. Daily trading data from August 2024 to July 2025 were compiled and processed to generate key financial indicators, including daily returns, volatility measures, momentum, and high-low price ranges. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was employed to reduce dimensionality and to categorise these indicators into three principal components of risk, return, and price, which allows for a clearer understanding of the underlying market structure. K-means clustering was then applied to these components to classify companies based on shared trading characteristics. Using the resulting clusters, four portfolio strategies, such as Income, Growth, Balanced, and Aggressive, were developed to align with different investor objectives. Portfolio performance was evaluated using Monte Carlo simulations and Sharpe Ratio assessments. The findings show that each strategy offers a distinct risk, return, and price profile, with the Growth portfolio yielding the highest expected return and the Balanced portfolio demonstrating the lowest volatility. By uncovering hidden interrelationships among companies, this study provides a fresh perspective on Sri Lankan stock market behaviour and enhances existing research that predominantly emphasises volatility or firm-level fundamentals. The results offer practical insights for investors seeking more efficient portfolio diversification and for policymakers aiming to improve market oversight. The study further suggests that clustering firms by trading patterns, rather than relying solely on industry classifications, can support more effective investment decisions. Future research may expand this approach by integrating dynamic clustering methods and adaptive portfolio optimisation across a wider segment of the CSE.

Keywords: *Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE), K-means Clustering, Portfolio Optimisation, Principal Component Analysis (PCA), S&P SL20 Index*

Digital Literacy as a Mediator Between Financial Literacy and Investment Scam Awareness

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of digital financial services in developing economies has increased young adults' exposure to online investment scams, while financial and digital capabilities have not progressed at the same pace. Although financial literacy is widely recognised as a protective factor against fraud, limited research examines whether digital literacy enables individuals to translate financial knowledge into effective scam awareness, particularly in frontier market contexts. Guided by Protection Motivation Theory, this study investigates the mediating role of digital literacy in the relationship between financial literacy and investment scam awareness among undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Using a stratified random sample method, data is collected from three hundred and ninety-six undergraduates. Partial least squares structural equation modelling is employed to examine the roles of budgeting skills, financial attitudes, product knowledge and risk awareness, conceptualised as dimensions of financial literacy, in predicting investment scam awareness, with digital literacy as a mediating variable. Findings indicate that budgeting skills, financial product literacy and risk awareness positively influence digital literacy, whereas financial attitude shows no significant effect. Digital literacy exerts a strong positive influence on scam awareness. Mediation analysis further reveals that digital literacy significantly mediates the effects of budgeting skills, product literacy and risk awareness on scam awareness, but does not mediate the influence of financial attitude. The evidence suggests that digital competence plays an important role in translating financial literacy into practical vigilance against investment fraud. The study highlights the need for integrated financial and digital literacy interventions to prevent scams. Also, the results imply that financial education programs in developing countries should integrate digital competence training to strengthen consumer resilience to online financial deception.

Keywords: *Financial Literacy, Digital Literacy, Investment Scams, Behavioural Finance, Developing Economies*

Exploring the Barriers to Green Bond Issuance Among Corporate Bond Issuers in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the key barriers preventing corporate bond issuers in Sri Lanka from adopting green bond financing. Despite the availability of regulatory frameworks and the country's commitment to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, green bond issuance remains limited. The research aims to explore issuer-level constraints, including awareness gaps, financial challenges, institutional readiness, and market-related barriers within the Sri Lankan context. An interpretivist philosophy and an inductive qualitative research approach were used. Semistructured interviews were conducted with ten senior professionals from the Sri Lankan banking, finance, insurance, and sustainability sectors. Participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework to identify recurring patterns and core themes. Major barriers identified to green bond adoption include the high cost of compliance, absence of financial incentives, perceived lower yield advantages (greenium concerns), limited awareness, and weak investor demand. Although the regulatory authorities, including CBSL, provide adequate support, gaps in communication, attitudes towards the green concept, and institutional readiness hinder the market growth. Investor scepticism and lack of trust embedded by the concerns such as "greenwashing" continue to barrier to the adoption of green bonds. Regardless, the research found strong recognition of the environmental and reputational benefits of green bond adoption, as well as growing optimism for the future if adequate awareness programs and financial incentives are introduced. The study highlights that the developing green bond market of Sri Lanka requires a multipronged strategy that combines investor education, regulatory support, institutional capacity building, and financial incentives. Strengthening the green finance ecosystem could position Sri Lanka to leverage green bonds as a powerful tool for sustainable finance development and achieve the long-term climate goals. This research is limited to Western Province, and only the issuer perspectives have been investigated. The small qualitative sample restricts generalizability. Future research could include investors' perspectives, other regions, and also quantitative or mixed-method approaches for broader generalisation.

Keywords: *Corporate Bond Issuers, Institutional Readiness, Sri Lanka, Sustainable Finance, Green Bonds*

**Responsible Marketing for a Sustainable and Digitally Connected
Future**

Consumer Ethnocentrism and Purchase Intention in the Sri Lankan Milk Powder Industry: The Mediating Role of Consumer Attitude

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation has increased the presence of international products in Sri Lanka, intensifying competition between local and foreign brands. Although global market integration creates diverse choices for consumers, it also poses challenges for domestic firms. Consumer ethnocentrism has emerged as a strategic approach for local firms to attract customers to domestic products, especially in competitive sectors like the milk powder industry. This study aims to examine the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on the purchase intention of domestic milk powder products in Sri Lanka, with a focus on the mediating role of consumer attitude. A quantitative research design was adopted, targeting milk powder consumers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. A sample of 384 respondents was selected using convenience sampling based on the Krejcie-Morgan table. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire comprising 30 Likert-scale items. Reliability was ensured through Cronbach's alpha test. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses, and the mediation effect was tested using the PROCESS macro analysis. All variables demonstrated acceptable reliability (Cronbach's alpha > 0.7). Descriptive statistics showed mean scores above 3.8 for all dimensions. Correlation analysis indicated strong positive relationships between consumer ethnocentrism, its dimensions, and purchase intention ($p < 0.001$). Regression results revealed cognition ($p = 0.000$), pro-sociality ($p = 0.028$), insecurity ($p = 0.003$), reflexiveness ($p = 0.000$) and habituation ($p = 0.001$) significantly influenced purchase intention. Among the independent variable dimensions, consumer ethnocentrism cognition stands out with the strongest influence ($B = 0.444$), and consumer ethnocentrism reflectiveness ($B = 0.162$), consumer ethnocentrism insecurity ($B = 0.134$), consumer ethnocentrism habituation ($B = 0.103$), and consumer ethnocentrism pro-sociality ($B = 0.067$). Limited empirical evidence exists on how ethnocentrism multidimensional attributes influences purchase intention through consumer attitude in developing economies. Theory of Planned Behaviour and Social Identity Theory, this study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of consumer attitude using the CEESCALE framework.

Keywords: *Consumer Attitude, Consumer Ethnocentrism, Purchase Intention, Consumer Insecurity, Consumer Reflexiveness*

An Analysis of Psychological Factors Influencing Circular Purchasing Behaviour in Sri Lanka's FMCG Industry: A Focus on Personal Care Products

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ABSTRACT

Consumer behaviour has undergone a significant transformation due to the global shift toward sustainable consumption, particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. The theory of the circular economy, where materials and goods are recycled, reused, or refurbished to reduce waste, has gained popularity recently as an alternative to the traditional linear consumption model of "take-make-dispose." In this framework, circular purchasing behaviour prioritises consumer choices for recyclable, reusable, or environmentally friendly products. The personal care sector in the FMCG industry is a significant contributor to environmental damage, primarily due to its substantial output of packaging waste and the rapid turnover of products. Although sustainability awareness is increasing in a developing country like Sri Lanka, circular purchasing practices in this industry are still not widely adopted. This study combines two grounded theoretical perspectives, the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN), to examine the extent to which circular purchasing intention and behaviour are influenced by key psychological constructs derived from these frameworks. The impact of psychological factors, such as attitude towards sustainability, social influence, perceived consumer behaviour, and environmental concern, on circular purchasing decisions has been thoroughly investigated. These psychological factors help us enhance our understanding of why customers support or avoid circular initiatives, such as purchasing refillable personal care products, selecting products with eco-friendly packaging, or supporting companies with clear sustainability goals. However, economic and environmental aspects still receive the most attention. Moreover, understanding what motivates consumers and the barriers they face when taking action is needed to promote more sustainable purchasing behaviour. This was a quantitative research study. Data were gathered through an online questionnaire, and the analysis was conducted using SPSS and SmartPLS. The study was conducted with 385 consumers. This study aims to bridge the gap by identifying the psychological factors that influence circular purchasing behaviour regarding personal care products and determining the main demographics and psychological factors that influence consumers' purchases of circular personal care products. The hypotheses investigated theoretically perceived behavioural control, social influence, attitude towards sustainability, and environmental concerns. Based on the results received, except for environmental concerns, all the other variables were accepted.

Keywords: *Circular Purchasing Behaviour, Demographic Factors, Personal Care Products, Psychological Factors, Sri Lankan FMCG Industry*

Unravelling Consumer Experiences and Motivation: A Qualitative Exploration of Sustainable Fashion Consumption

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ABSTRACT

Even though fashion is one of the biggest industries in the world, it has unsustainable production and consumption processes, which damage the environment, lead to unhealthy impacts, and have more detrimental social consequences. Consequently, sustainable fashion is the new solution, but the level of acceptance is still poor despite the high level of awareness and availability because of convenience, fashion, and low prices mostly taking precedence over sustainability. Thus, the primary objective of the research is to bridge the gaps in the existing literature and investigate the experiences and motives of customers that contribute to their involvement in sustainable fashion. In this study, the exploratory, qualitative approach is implemented, and it is an inductive reasoning. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 Sri Lankan customers who are aware of sustainability and sustainable fashion. Thematic analysis was undertaken on them. The scholar singled out fourteen consumer motivational drivers to sustainable fashion and divided them into four groupings: intrinsic, extrinsic, economic, and ethical/environmental. Also, fifteen consumer experience factors were categorised into four, including digital, social, cognitive, and product experiences. This analysis will further deepen the knowledge on sustainable fashion consumption in Sri Lanka by shedding light on context-specific consumer motives and experiences. This has significant implications for the companies, legislators, and advertisers who would like to encourage sustainable consumerism. Additionally, the research provides important academic contributions and presents new knowledge to the emerging debate on sustainable fashion consumption, as it can fill important gaps in the previous empirical research.

Keywords: *Consumption Behaviour, Experience, Motivation, Sustainable Fashion*

Phygital Experience and Loyalty Formation Among Gen Z: A Study of Sri Lanka's Consumer Electronics Market

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effect of phygital experiences on customer loyalty within Sri Lanka's consumer electronics industry, specifically examining the behaviours and preferences of Gen Z consumers. It emphasises how blended physical-digital interactions shape loyalty outcomes in an emerging market context and highlights the growing relevance of hybrid retail strategies. This study adopts a quantitative design supported by a structured survey instrument featuring a 5-point Likert scale. Data were gathered from Gen Z customers who shop at consumer electronics retailers in Sri Lanka. To analyse the influence of phygital experience elements on loyalty, the study applies Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), enabling the assessment of key relationships among the identified variables. The analysis shows that phygital experiences exert a strong and positive influence on customer loyalty. Gen Z shoppers respond favourably to immersive environments where technology enhances convenience, engagement, and satisfaction. The results underscore the importance of integrating both physical and digital touchpoints to effectively strengthen loyalty within the consumer electronics sector. The addressed gaps, which are highlighted in this study, are examining the phygital experience in the consumer retail sector and assessing Gen Z's behaviour towards Phygitality. The study offers valuable insights for retailers aiming to adopt effective phygital strategies to engage Gen Z consumers and guide market growth. Nevertheless, the focus on a single industry and demographic group may restrict the generalizability of findings to broader populations or different sectors. This study adds meaningful contributions by situating the increasingly global phygital trend within the Sri Lankan context. It provides practical implications for retailers intending to improve loyalty through hybrid consumer experiences, demonstrating how emerging markets can benefit from strategically aligned phygital initiatives.

Keywords: *Customer Engagement, Customer Innovation, Customer Loyalty, Gen Z, Phygital Experience*

A Study on the Impact of Consumer Minimalism on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being: Evidence from Professionals in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

In today's fast-paced, consumption-driven culture, individuals are increasingly questioning the value of material possessions and the impact of overconsumption on their well-being. Consumer minimalism is a lifestyle that encourages reducing unnecessary consumption, prioritising quality and durability, and engaging in mindful, intentional consumption. It has emerged as a response to these concerns. Despite growing interest in minimalist lifestyles, research on the effects of consumer minimalism on well-being remains limited, particularly in the Sri Lankan context. Moreover, existing studies often treat well-being as a single construct, overlooking the distinction between hedonic well-being, which focuses on pleasure and happiness, and eudaimonic well-being, which relates to purpose, meaning, and self-realisation. This study addresses these gaps by examining the impact of consumer minimalism on both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being among professionals in Sri Lanka. A quantitative research design was adopted, utilising a structured questionnaire completed by 400 professionals through convenience and judgmental sampling techniques. Consumer minimalism was measured across three dimensions: number of possessions, sparse aesthetics, and mindfully curated consumption. Regression analysis was employed to investigate the relationships between consumer minimalism and the two forms of well-being. The findings indicate that consumer minimalism positively predicts both hedonic ($R^2 = 0.510$, $\beta = 0.714$, $p < 0.001$) and eudaimonic well-being ($R^2 = 0.451$, $\beta = 0.671$, $p < 0.001$), with a slightly stronger effect on hedonic well-being. This suggests that adopting minimalist consumption behaviours enhances immediate pleasure and happiness while also fostering a sense of purpose and self-realisation. By distinguishing between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, this study contributes to consumer research by providing nuanced empirical evidence on the psychological benefits of minimalism. The findings also offer practical implications for marketers, who can engage with minimalist consumers by emphasising simplicity, durability, and meaningful consumption in their branding and communication strategies. Overall, the study highlights the growing relevance of minimalist lifestyles in promoting both individual well-being and intentional, sustainable consumption patterns.

Keywords: *Consumer Minimalism, Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-being, Number of Possessions, Sparse Aesthetics, Mindful Consumption*

Consumer Ethnocentrism and Purchase Intention: A Multidimensional Analysis of Domestic Product Preference in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation has intensified competition between domestic and foreign products in emerging markets, making consumer ethnocentrism a critical factor influencing purchase decisions. This study examines the impact of five dimensions of ethnocentrism on Sri Lankan consumers' intention to purchase locally manufactured products: pro-sociality, cognition, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation. Utilising the Consumer Ethnocentrism Extended Scale, a quantitative survey was conducted with 320 respondents across urban and semi-urban regions of Sri Lanka. Data was analysed using multiple regression analysis to test the hypothesised relationships between ethnocentric dimensions and purchase intention. The findings reveal that ethnocentric pro-sociality, insecurity, reflexiveness, and habituation significantly and positively influence purchase intention toward domestic products, with habituation emerging as the strongest predictor. However, ethnocentric cognition did not demonstrate a significant effect, suggesting that emotional, behavioural, and socially driven motivations outweigh purely rational evaluations in the Sri Lankan context. These results validate the multidimensional nature of consumer ethnocentrism and highlight that moral duty, economic protection concerns, reflective decision-making, and habitual loyalty are key psychological mechanisms driving domestic product preference. The study offers theoretical contributions by extending scale validation to an emerging market and provides practical implications for marketers and policymakers seeking to leverage ethnocentric tendencies through patriotic appeals, cultural messaging, and campaigns emphasising national economic development and social responsibility.

Keywords: *CEESCALE, Consumer Ethnocentrism, Domestic Products, Purchase Intention, Sri Lanka*

Psychological Drivers of Branded Apparel Consumption in Emerging Markets: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of this paper is to investigate the psychological factors that impact apparel consumption in the emerging markets. Emerging markets represent a new trend of branded apparel consumption, but an integrated understanding of the psychological drivers behind this growth remains underdeveloped, limiting the effectiveness of branded strategies. This paper presents a systematic literature review of 28 articles published between 2014 and 2025, sourced from Science Direct, Wiley Online Library, and Emerald Insight. The branded apparel is primarily being used as a social currency. The study categorises these factors into four main psychological areas: Self and identity related drivers, sociocultural & relational drivers, motivational and value drivers- examining achievement needs, the pursuit of high personal values and self-esteem and cognitive, affective, & brand specific drivers. Firstly, according to the self-identity-related drivers, branded clothing is strategically used. Second, sociocultural and relational drivers examine the external impact of peer influence, family expectations, and social acceptance gained within modern society. Third, motivational and value drivers and cognitive investigators study achievement needs, higher personal values and the pursuit of self-esteem. Finally, affective & brand-specific drivers investigate the mental expectations of value judgement and perceived quality of specific brands, with the emotional expectations of brand love and experience with specific brands for the consumers. In this paper, based on the theoretical foundation is the self-congruity theory. The multiple dimensions of actual self-congruity and ideal self-congruity form the foundation for understanding the psychological drivers behind branded apparel consumption in emerging markets. Because of this theoretical foundation, highly aligned with psychological drivers. By summarising this complex interplay between these factors, we can articulate how branded apparel is involved in managing consumers' psychological expectations and achieving their self-congruity within their own personality. The findings are expected to provide more information about consumer decision-making in a psychologically unique setting regarding branded apparel in emerging markets.

Keywords: *Branded Apparel, Consumer Behaviour, Emerging Markets, Psychological Drivers*

Purchasing Intention of Organic Rice in Sri Lanka: Extending the Theory of Planned Behaviour with Awareness among Consumers

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ABSTRACT

Based on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study investigates the key factors influencing consumers' purchase intention for organic rice. This examines the influence of consumer attitudes, subjective norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, and awareness towards organic rice in the context of a developing market. Primary data collection was conducted through a quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire with 403 individuals. The data were analysed using SPSS software to evaluate the relationships between variables and validate the proposed research framework. The results of the study indicate that perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, and awareness significantly affect purchase intention, while attitudes do not have a significant effect. The price of organic rice and practical barriers to purchase dilute the effect of attitudes. The need to activate purchasing behaviour through structural improvement is demonstrated. This study highlights the importance of studying the barriers to access and affordability of organic rice. It also raises awareness about the personal and societal benefits of promoting organic rice. The findings provide actionable insights for policymakers, marketers and producers to expand the organic rice market in Sri Lanka and encourage sustainable food practices. Future research will explore the impact of demographic changes, the role of digital marketing, and the role of additional factors. A more comprehensive data exploration for the study could provide insight into changes in organic food purchasing behaviour.

Keywords: *Organic Rice, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Purchase Intention, Awareness, Perceived Behavioural Control*

Understanding Post-Consumer Fashion Disposal Behaviour Among Youth: A Systematic Review of Global Trends, Motivations, and Theoretical Approaches

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ABSTRACT

The linear “take–make–dispose” approach of the global fashion industry translates into an increasingly high amount of post-consumer textile waste that is characterised by substantial environmental, social, and economic challenges. Although sustainable production practices and circular economy approaches gain more emphasis in the literature, consumer behaviour related to the end-of-life phase of consumer goods, such as worn-out garments, is still an area that is inadequately investigated, especially with regard to young generations of consumers. This study introduces a systematic literature review including global literature related to post-consumer fashion waste disposal behaviour, with special emphasis on Generation Z, who are a digital generation cohort with distinctive consumption patterns that are significantly influenced by social media platforms, identity creation, and online platforms of reselling. Based on the PRISMA 2020 statement, a total of 82 science-mature scholarly studies of post-consumer fashion waste disposal practices that were either published between 2010 and 2025 in peer-reviewed literature or accessed through Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insights, or Google Scholar were evaluated by using thematic analysis techniques. Analysis reveals that there is a distinct pattern of donating or reselling practices with the Global North dominating the practices of waste disposal for consumer goods, in contrast to the structural shortcomings, cultural scepticisms about secondhand clothes, or the policy shortcomings of developing nations like Sri Lanka. Furthermore, despite rising public environmentalism among Gen Z consumers, these consumers face distinct attitude-behaviour gaps, anchored by convenience-limited factors, the dynamic tendencies of fast-fashion consumption practices, or digitally driven consumption patterns. Moreover, it is discernible from the literature review that considerable emphasis still rests with the Theory of Planned Behaviour or Technology Acceptance Model approaches, warranting the development of more inclusive approaches that more comprehensively cover identity models or digital platforms of material waste practices. While pointing out substantial geographical, methodological, or theoretical shortcomings in the current literature, this literature review proposes an inclusive research plan that focuses more on developing more context-appropriate solutions for the Circular Economy for more balanced scholarship of unfrequented areas.

Keywords: *Circular Economy, Digital Resale Platforms, Fashion Disposal Behaviour, Generation Z, Post-consumer Textile Waste, Sri Lanka, Sustainable Fashion, Systematic Literature Review*

Creating Loyal Fashion Consumers through Omni-Channel Integration: The Mediating Role of Customer Experience; Evidence from the Fashion Retail Industry in Colombo District, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The retail industry has undergone a fundamental transformation over the past two decades, evolving from single-channel operations to omni-channel systems that integrate physical stores, e-commerce platforms, mobile applications, and social media touchpoints. This study examines how omni-channel integration influences customer loyalty through the mediating role of customer experience in Colombo's fashion retail industry. Drawing on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, the research investigates six dimensions of omni-channel integration: integrated promotion, product and price, transaction information, information access, order fulfilment, and customer service. A quantitative research design was employed with 384 fashion retail customers in Colombo who engage in omni-channel shopping. Data were collected through structured electronic questionnaires and analysed using correlation analysis, multiple regression, and Hayes' Process macro for mediation testing. Results demonstrate that omni-channel integration significantly influences both customer experience ($\beta=0.749$, $p<0.001$) and customer loyalty ($\beta=0.679$, $p<0.001$). Customer experience strongly predicts loyalty ($\beta=0.799$, $p<0.001$), with mediation analysis revealing that 73.17% of integration's total effect on loyalty operates through enhanced customer experience. Among integration dimensions, operational elements - customer service ($\beta=0.418$), order fulfilment ($\beta=0.387$), and product-price integration ($\beta=0.324$) emerged as the strongest predictors, while information-oriented dimensions showed non-significant effects. These findings provide actionable insights for fashion retailers in emerging markets seeking to build customer loyalty through strategic omni-channel integration, particularly emphasising the primacy of experiential quality over operational features alone.

Keywords: *Customer Experience, Customer Loyalty, Fashion Retail, Omni-channel Integration, Retail Technology*

Wearing Worth: How Luxury Consumption Tendency Shapes Self-Esteem through Attitude Functions, Evidence from Fashion Retailing Industry in Western Province, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The rapid rise in luxury fashion consumption in Sri Lanka's Western Province has highlighted the need to understand the psychological effects of luxury consumption on consumers. While luxury goods are often associated with status and exclusivity, the mechanisms linking luxury consumption and self-esteem, particularly the mediating role of attitude functions remains underexplored in the Sri Lankan context. This study aimed to investigate the impact of luxury consumption tendency on self-esteem and to examine the mediating role of attitude functions (social-adjustive, value-expressive, hedonic, utilitarian) among fashion consumers in the Western Province. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted among fashion retail consumers aged 18-50 in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Using simple random sampling, 384 participants were selected. Data were collected with a structured, validated questionnaire. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS, including correlation, regression, and mediation analyses. Findings revealed a significant positive effect of luxury consumption tendency on self-esteem ($r = 0.40$, $\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$). Luxury consumption tendency also significantly predicted attitude functions ($p < 0.001$). However, attitude functions did not significantly predict self-esteem, and the mediation effect was not supported. These findings indicate that luxury consumption influences self-esteem primarily through a direct effect rather than through attitudinal mechanisms. The sample was balanced in terms of gender distribution (50% male, 50% female), with a majority of respondents aged between 22 and 39 years (60%). These results offer valuable theoretical and practical insights for fashion retailers and marketers seeking to develop psychologically informed marketing strategies that resonate with consumers' social aspirations and value expressions in emerging markets like Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Attitude Functions, Fashion, Luxury Consumption, Self-Esteem, Sri Lanka*

Impact of Demographic Factors on Consumers' Purchase Intention for Organic Foods in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Interest in organic food has significantly increased during the past ten years. Consuming organic food is a recent development in many developing nations, and there is also a rising level of consumer awareness of organic food worldwide because it promotes health wellbeing. It can be considered a new lifestyle trend, and changes in consumer understanding have become important enough to influence choices about buying organic food. Therefore, the main objective of the research is to identify whether there is an influence from demographic factors on consumers' purchase intention towards organic food products in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the study examines whether there are any significant differences in consumers' purchase intention for organic foods across gender, age, level of education and level of income. A sample of 385 individuals who are residents in Colombo, Galle, Rathnapura, Kurunegala and Kandy was selected using stratified random sampling, which were cities that have potential for the presence of organic markets and organic food consumers based on the past literature. Data were overseeing structured questionnaire based on the theory of consumer behaviour. Age, gender, level of education and level of income have been taken as independent variables, and purchase intention has been taken as the dependent variable. Data were analysed using t-test statistics that have been used to determine the statistically significant difference between the demographic characteristics of respondents and intention to purchase organic foods. The Mann-Whitney test has been used to identify the significant difference in purchase intention across genders, and the result of the test revealed that there is a significant difference in purchase intention between genders in buying organic foods in Sri Lanka. Kruskal-Wallis test has been used to identify the significant difference in purchase intention across the age, level of education and level of income towards organic foods purchasing. The result of the Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there is a significant difference in purchase intention among different age groups, level of education and level of income.

Keywords: *Purchase Intention, Age, Gender, Level of Education, Level of Income*

Factors Influencing Consumers' Behavioural Intentions on Purchase Solar Panel Systems as a Renewable Energy Source in the Sri Lankan Residential Sector

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ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka, with favourable solar conditions and policy support, low household adoption of rooftop solar systems indicates an insufficient understanding of the behavioural factors shaping residential solar adoption decisions. This study aims to analyse the factors influencing consumers' behavioural intention to purchase solar panel systems as a renewable energy source in the Sri Lankan residential sector. The Extended Theory of Planned Behaviour was used as the theoretical approach by incorporating willingness to pay as an additional variable. This research was carried out making use of data from an online survey of 384 households in Sri Lanka, including solar panel users and non-users. The study's findings show that attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and willingness to pay positively influence the behavioural purchase intention of the Sri Lankan residential sector to purchase a solar panel as renewable energy. Subjective norms, attitude, and willingness to pay were the strongest predictors. This study suggests promoting consumer adoption of solar panels in the residential sector by addressing major influencing factors. Attitudes, subjective norms, and willingness to pay are key factors. Solar panel system providers should focus on long-term financial savings, environmental benefits, and energy independence. Social influences, such as community involvement and peer groups, can also influence consumer decisions. Government incentives, financial assistance, and global trade agreements can help lower costs and increase solar panel adoption. Overall, the study concludes that strengthening positive consumer perceptions, leveraging social influence, and improving affordability mechanisms are essential to accelerating residential solar adoption in Sri Lanka's transition toward sustainable energy.

Keywords: *Behaviour Intention, Renewable Energy, Solar Panel, Theory of Planned Behaviour*

Factors Affecting Purchase Intention towards Purchase Behaviour of Green Food Tea: Evidence from Domestic Consumers in Western Province, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This research study aimed to address the problem of explaining the determinants influencing the intention and actual purchase of Western province green food tea consumers to purchase green food tea. Even though it is a known consumer behaviour theory called the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, its extension to this specific product and geographic market was poorly established. Using this model, the research process involved data collection and analysis to examine the way that environmental stimuli (attributed knowledge and green knowledge) influence a consumer's internal state (perceived product quality and trust), which in turn determines their ultimate purchase intention and purchase behaviour. A quantitative cross-sectional design was employed. Data was collected through structured questionnaires from 385 consumers by employing snowball sampling in the Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara districts. The sample included heterogeneous demographic segments with respect to age, educational attainment, and income. The measures used were attributed knowledge, green knowledge, perceived product quality, trust, purchase intention, and purchase behaviour, and the measurement scales were adopted from Zheng et al., (2023). Data were analysed through partial least squares structural equation modelling, selected because of its suitability for confirming complex behaviour models with predictive capability. The examination established that all hypothesised relationships were statistically significant, and the most powerful finding was the extremely strong relationship between a consumer's intention to buy and actual purchase behaviour. This confirmed the earlier expectation that a formed intention is the best predictor of action. From these results, additional questions arose about the "intention-behaviour gap" itself, namely, what outside forces could be used to get consumers to act on their positive intentions. Furthermore, future studies need to expand the scope of this research to other geographic markets and product categories and investigate further the specific factors that can translate intent into action, to carry this work to its next phase to deliver further practical implications for companies.

Keywords: *Green Food Tea, Purchase Intention, Purchase Behaviour, SOR Model, Sustainable Consumption*

The Role of Virtual Influencer Attributes on Customer Engagement in the Sri Lankan Fashion Industry: The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity

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ABSTRACT

The growing adoption of virtual influencers has transformed digital marketing strategies within the fashion industry, yet empirical evidence on their effectiveness in emerging markets remains limited. Addressing this gap, this study investigates the influence of virtual influencer attributes, anthropomorphism, aesthetic value, and entertainment value on consumer engagement in the Sri Lankan fashion industry, while examining the mediating role of perceived authenticity. Grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, the study adopts a positivist philosophy and employs a deductive, quantitative research approach. Primary data were collected using purposive sampling techniques through a structured online questionnaire administered to 250 urban Sri Lankan consumers aged 18–35 who had prior exposure to virtual fashion influencers. Data were analysed using multiple regression and mediation analysis with bootstrapping techniques. Moreover, perceived authenticity partially mediates the relationships between each virtual influencer attribute and consumer engagement, highlighting authenticity as a critical psychological mechanism through which virtual influencer characteristics translate into cognitive, affective, and behavioural engagement outcomes. The study contributes to the influencer marketing literature by extending the S-O-R framework to virtual influencers in an emerging market context and engaging virtual influencer strategies in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Anthropomorphism, Aesthetic Value, Consumer Engagement, Perceived Authenticity, Virtual Influencers*

Inclusive and Responsible Human Resource Management in the Era of Digital Transformation

Impact of Age-Incongruence on Job Satisfaction: The Mediating Effect of LMX Quality Among Government Bank Employees in The Northern Province

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of age incongruence between supervisors and subordinates on employees' job satisfaction, with a particular focus on the mediating role of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) quality. The research was conducted among employees of government banks, specifically the Bank of Ceylon (BOC) and People's Bank, located in the Northern Province. The study aimed to determine how differences in age between supervisors and employees influence the quality of workplace relationships and, consequently, overall job satisfaction. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire distributed to 278 employees selected through a simple random sampling method. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Reliability analysis confirmed high internal consistency across all measurement scales. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationships among variables, while mediation analysis was used to assess the indirect effects of LMX quality. LMX quality was introduced into the model, and the direct effect of age incongruence on job satisfaction became statistically insignificant, confirming the full mediating role of LMX quality in this relationship. The overall model explained 93.8% of the variance in job satisfaction, demonstrating that strong leader-member relationships can mitigate the adverse effects of age incongruence in the workplace. The study contributes to the understanding of intergenerational dynamics in public sector banking organisations, highlighting the importance of LMX quality in maintaining employee satisfaction despite demographic differences. Practically, the findings suggest that management should focus on developing leadership practices that foster trust, communication, and mutual respect across age groups. Training programs aimed at enhancing supervisors' relational and communication skills may help bridge generational gaps and strengthen employee engagement.

Keywords: *Age Incongruence, Job Satisfaction, Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Quality, Government Bank*

Perceived Employability and Job Search Behaviour of Generation Z Management Undergraduates in State Universities of The Western Province: A Systematic Review of The Mediating Role of Psychological Capital

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ABSTRACT

This paper will test the interplay between perceived employability (PE) and job search behaviour (JSB) and also explore how psychological capital (PsyCap) mediates the nexus between perceived employability and job search behaviour among the Gen Z management undergraduates in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review by using Zotero and the Meta-Analyses approach (PRISMA). In total, 51 articles from accepted databases between 2020 and 2025 are included. A bibliometric analysis is performed using VOSviewer. The review identified three most central themes, including perceived employability, psychological capital and job search behaviour, which jointly determine career readiness and job-seeking performance of emerging graduates. The analysis provides a demonstration of the role of psychological capital as a key psychological factor that strengthens the relationship between the perceptions of employability and the proactive job search activities, and thus provides more insight into graduate employability processes and points to new directions for further research within the Gen Z undergraduate environment. The study is based on peer-reviewed articles on reputable academic databases with a target group of 2020 to 2025, with publications in the English language. Other articles that were not in this period, grey literature, and sources that had not been indexed were omitted. The research approach also combines the perceived employability, psychological capital, and job search behaviour into a single framework that describes the actions of Gen Z undergraduates in their careers. Provides policymakers, career advisors and university administrators with key information to proactively promote the psychological capital of undergraduates, hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, so they can become more career-ready and more effective job seekers, develop more focused interventions, and to develop employability skills that translate into successful career performance. The research presents a composite model connecting the perceptions of employability, the psychological capital, and the job search behaviour, and provides new data on the role of the psychological resources in the job search performance among Gen Z undergraduates.

Keywords: *Gen Z Undergraduate, Job Search Behaviour, Perceived Employability, Psychological Capital*

Perceived Social Support and Academic Performance Among Self-Initiated Student Expatriates in Sri Lanka: Mediating Role of General Adjustment

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of perceived social support on the academic performance of Self-Initiated Student Expatriates (SISEs) in Sri Lanka, with general adjustment analysed as a mediating factor. As Sri Lanka positions itself as a regional education hub, this research emphasises the significant positive influence of social and psychological factors on self-initiated international students' academic performance. It further investigates the significant positive influence of perceived social support derived from family, peers, and significant others on students' adjustment and, consequently, their academic performance. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed under a positivist philosophy and deductive approach. Using stratified random sampling, data were collected from 108 valid SISE respondents. Data were analysed using SPSS (Version 26) through correlation, regression, and mediation analyses. Results revealed a strong positive relationship between perceived social support and academic performance, with general adjustment significantly mediating this relationship. These findings suggest that greater perceived support fosters better adaptation, leading to higher academic achievement. Practically, the study underscores the need for universities to implement structured peer mentoring, counselling, and orientation programs that strengthen social support networks and facilitate smoother adjustment for international students in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, General Adjustment, Perceived Social Support, Self-Initiated Student Expatriates*

The Impact of Green Attitude on Green Work Behaviour Among Top-Level Managers of the Apparel Industry in the Northwestern Province in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Environmental sustainability has become a critical strategic concern within the global apparel industry due to rising pressure from international buyers, regulators, and eco-conscious consumers. As Sri Lanka remains a major apparel exporter, sustainability has become a leadership priority. Top-level managers play a decisive role in shaping green practices through policies, resource allocation, and cultural influence. This study investigates the impact of green attitude on green work behaviour among top-level managers in medium-scale apparel firms in the Northwestern Province of Sri Lanka. Green attitude was examined through three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and intention to green behaviour, while green work behaviour represented environmentally responsible managerial actions. Adopting a quantitative research design, primary data were gathered from 201 managers via a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression techniques. Results indicate that cognitive green attitude and intention to green behaviour significantly influence green work behaviour, suggesting that knowledge-based understanding and intentional commitment are key drivers of sustainable managerial actions. Although affective green attitude shows a positive relationship, its predictive power is comparatively weaker, implying that emotional concern alone is insufficient to prompt consistent behaviour. The findings support theories emphasising rational evaluation and deliberate decision-making in shaping environmental behaviour. The study contributes to sustainability management literature by highlighting the importance of enhancing managerial awareness and motivation to promote lasting green performance. Practical implications include conducting structured sustainability training, integrating environmental metrics into leadership evaluations, and fostering organisational cultures that embed environmental responsibility as a core managerial value.

Keywords: *Affective Green Attitude, Apparel Industry, Cognitive Green Attitude, Green Work Behaviour, Intention to Green Behaviour*

Overcoming Resistance: Analysis of Drivers of Employee Reluctance to Adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Sri Lanka's Technology-Driven Industries

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence has impacted various industries worldwide over the past two decades. The rapid advancement and adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools have transformed modern industries, altering work processes, decision-making, and competitive strategies. While companies are investing in AI systems, most face internal opposition because employees are either hesitant or against using these tools. This tendency is a major barrier to digital transformation and can restrict the strategic advantages of AI adoption. While current AI adoption literature predominantly reflects Western contexts and technical metrics, this study addresses a significant regional gap. By applying and extending established frameworks like TAM and UTAUT, this research quantifies the psychological and organisational barriers to AI within Sri Lanka's unique socio-cultural landscape. In this context, Sri Lanka currently faces significant economic challenges: a volatile currency, rising debt, and persistently high unemployment, especially among young people. Fully leveraging artificial intelligence isn't just a technological upgrade; it could become a crucial driver for productivity gains and economic diversification. Hence, this study aims to fill the existing knowledge and evidence gap. It systematically analyses the factors driving employee reluctance to adopt AI tools in Sri Lanka's ICT and telecommunications sectors, using a quantitative survey of 406 employees and multiple linear regression. The goal was to understand why significant AI investments are not yielding the expected benefits. The findings confirm that the primary barriers are human and organisational, localising global technology acceptance theories. Resistance to Change ($\beta = 0.292$, $p < 0.001$) and Training Deficiencies ($\beta = 0.290$, $p < 0.001$) emerged as the strongest and most significant predictors of reluctance. Additionally, Comfort with Conventional Thought Processes and Fear of Job Displacement were also significant factors. Notably, Lack of Understanding and Lack of Management Support were found to be statistically non-significant barriers in this context. The research offers empirical guidance for policymakers and managers, highlighting the importance of adopting strong change management strategies and thorough training programs to effectively support AI integration and advance Sri Lanka's digital economy objectives.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Reluctance to Adopt, Resistance to Change, Technology-Driven Industries, Training Deficiencies*

Green Recruitment and Green Training and Development in the Financial Sector: Effects on Organisational Environmental Performance through Pro-Environmental Behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Organisations are under increasing pressure to pursue environmental sustainability along with financial goals. Employees play a central role in actualising organisational policies and initiatives into concrete environmental results. Despite the interest in this relationship, very few studies have been conducted that examine exactly how specific green human resource management practices affect environmental performance through employee behaviours, especially in emerging contexts such as the financial sector of the Batticaloa District in Sri Lanka. The research is built upon the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory and the social exchange theory. The research examined the influence of green recruitment and green training and development on environmental performance through the mediating effect of pro-environmental behaviour. Using a cross-sectional survey design, the study collected data from employees at nine of the top-ranked financial institutions in the Batticaloa District. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 212 employees in person, and a pilot study confirmed the reliability of all measures. Hypotheses were tested using PROCESS Macro Model 4 in IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to examine direct and indirect effects. The results show that green recruitment ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.01$) and green training and development ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.001$) have significant positive effects on environmental performance. Furthermore, Pro-environmental behaviour partially mediates these relationships. The indirect effects of green recruitment ($\beta = 0.32, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.27, 0.42]$) and green training and development ($\beta = 0.34, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.22, 0.45]$) on environmental performance through pro-environmental behaviour were statistically significant. At the same time, the direct effects also remained significant, confirming partial mediation in both cases. These findings have important implications for theory and practice. Theoretically, this study contributes to the application of Ability-Motivation-Opportunity and social exchange theories in understanding how green human resource management practices drive environmental performance. Practically, it demonstrates that organisations can enhance environmental outcomes by implementing targeted green recruitment and training initiatives that actively promote pro-environmental behaviour among employees.

Keywords: *Environmental Performance, Financial Institutions, Green Recruitment, Green Training and Development, Pro-Environmental Behaviour, Sri Lanka*

Hashtags to Headlines: Role of Social Media in exposing Industrial Relations Issues through Social Media Amplification - Visibility Mobilization Accountability on selective cases

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a powerful tool in the hands of many individuals. This research paper explores the transformative role of social media in exposing industrial relations issues, focusing on how platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram have become tools for workers, unions, and activists to highlight workplace injustices, mobilise support, and hold employers accountable. Through selective case studies, the paper examines the mechanisms by which social media amplifies labour disputes, the challenges it poses, and its implications for industrial relations. The social media amplification model – visibility, mobilisation, and accountability (VMA) is used to expand the audience engagement and visibility beyond a brand's existing followers. The study employs a qualitative research methodology, analysing secondary data from academic journals, news articles, and social media campaigns. The findings suggest that social media has democratised the discourse on labour rights, enabling workers to bypass traditional media and directly engage with the public. However, issues such as misinformation, employer surveillance, and digital divides remain significant challenges.

Keywords: *Hashtag, Industrial Relations, Labour Disputes, Labour Laws, Social Media Amplification*

Investigating The Impact of Work Values on the Intention to Stay Among the Young Employees (Aged 18-29) in the Business Process Outsourcing Sector in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

In Sri Lanka, the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector employs a substantial proportion of young employees aged between 18 and 29; however, retaining these employees has become increasingly challenging. It is crucial to understand the factors that impact their intention to stay to increase workforce stability. This paper investigates the impact of extrinsic, intrinsic, and leisure work values on young employees' intention to stay in the BPO sector in Sri Lanka. A structured questionnaire was administered to 280 young employees working in the BPO sector in Sri Lanka using a convenience sampling technique. This study aims to investigate the impact of extrinsic, intrinsic, and leisure work values on employees' intention to stay. The study used descriptive, correlation, and multiple regression analysis to analyse the data. The findings indicate that intention to stay is positively impacted by all three types of work values examined in this study. Leisure work values exerted the strongest impact among them, followed by intrinsic and extrinsic work values. The findings provide policymakers and HR managers in Sri Lanka's BPO industry with practical guidance on retaining young employees. Organisations are encouraged to foster leisure and intrinsic work values while offering competitive pay. By implementing flexible work schedules, career development plans, and well-being programs, the organisation can improve the engagement of its employees while decreasing turnover and improving organisational performance. This research is focused on three aspects of work values and was exclusive to Sri Lanka's BPO industry. Further research may extend this study by comparing it with other industries or generations and seeking moderating factors like organisational commitment, job contentment, and employee engagement.

Keywords: *Business Process Outsourcing, Extrinsic Work Values, Intention to Stay, Intrinsic Work Values, Leisure Work Values*

The Impact of Job Burnout on Work Engagement: A Study on the Moderating Role of Emotional Intelligence among IT Professionals in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The Information Technology (IT) sector in Sri Lanka is one of the fastest-growing industries, contributing significantly to national economic development. However, it also exposes professionals to increasing levels of occupational stress and emotional strain, leading to job burnout. Burnout, characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment, has been identified as a critical factor that diminishes work engagement. This study investigates the impact of job burnout on work engagement and examines the moderating role of emotional intelligence (EI) among IT professionals in Sri Lanka. Grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) theoretical framework, this study adopts a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire distributed among 250 IT professionals. Standardised instruments, including the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey (MBI–GS), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES–9), and Goleman’s Emotional Competence Inventory, were used to measure constructs. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and Hayes’ PROCESS macro to assess correlations, regressions, and moderation effects. Results revealed a significant negative relationship between job burnout and work engagement, with depersonalization identified as the most influential dimension, followed by reduced personal Accomplishment and Emotional Exhaustion. Moreover, emotional intelligence was found to moderate this relationship, buffering the negative impact of burnout on engagement. The findings highlight the importance of emotional competencies in managing occupational stress and enhancing engagement levels in high-demand environments. The study contributes to extending the JD–R model by integrating EI as a personal resource and provides practical recommendations for IT organisations to develop emotional intelligence training initiatives aimed at reducing burnout and improving work engagement among employees.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, IT Professionals, Job Burnout, Sri Lanka, Work Engagement*

The Impact of Perceived Organisational Support on Employee Engagement: The Moderating Role of Designation in Public Universities in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is critical for the effectiveness and productivity of public universities in Sri Lanka. Drawing from Social Exchange Theory and Social Identity Theory, this study examines the impact of perceived organisational support on employee engagement, with a particular focus on the moderating role of employee designation. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed to faculty members from selected public universities, yielding 228 usable responses. Data were collected using convenience sampling and analysed using SPSS. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship and the impact of perceived organisational support on employee engagement and the moderating role of designation. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between perceived organisational support and employee engagement ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher perceived organisational support is associated with higher engagement. Regression analysis confirmed that perceived organisational support significantly predicts Employee engagement ($\beta = 0.57$, $p < 0.001$). However, the moderating effect of designation was not statistically significant (interaction term coefficient = 0.07 , $p > 0.05$), suggesting that employee designation does not meaningfully alter the impact of perceived organisational support on employee engagement. This study contributes to the Social Exchange Theory literature by emphasising the impact of perceived organisational support in promoting reciprocal engagement among employees in the higher education sector. The findings suggest that creating supportive work environments, promoting recognition, and ensuring fair treatment can enhance employee engagement, thereby benefiting both faculty development and organisational effectiveness. Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its focus on selected public universities in Sri Lanka, the use of convenience sampling, and the exclusion of factors such as leadership style, organisational culture, and other demographics beyond designation. Moreover, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences, limiting the generalizability of the findings.

Keywords: *Academics, Designation, Engagement, Perceived Organisational Support (POS), Social Exchange Theory (SET), Social Identity Theory*

Workplace Ostracism and Ethical Voice: The Mediating Role of Moral Identity and the Moderating Role of Ethical Leadership in Sri Lanka's Apparel Industry

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ABSTRACT

The apparel sector in Sri Lanka is key to economic development and women's employment in the country. However, work environments that are subject to hierarchy and pressure impel workplace ostracism, which negatively affects employees' ethical behaviour. Based on working self-concept theory, this research examines the impact of workplace ostracism on employees' ethical voice via moral identity at work, and the moderating role of ethical leadership. The data were gathered from 205 machine operators applying the two-wave time-lagged design at four garment factories in the northern province of Sri Lanka. Participants reported on their exposure to workplace ostracism in the first phase, and one month later, they rated their moral identity at work, ethical voice and perceptions of ethical leadership. Correlation and PROCESS analyses revealed that workplace ostracism negatively predicted moral identity at work ($\beta = -.38, p < .001$) and that moral identity positively predicted ethical voice ($\beta = .34, p < .001$), with a significant indirect effect ($\beta = -.13, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.22, -.06]$). Moreover, ethical leadership significantly moderated the relationship between ostracism and moral identity (interaction $\beta = .18, p < .01$), weakening the negative association. The conditional indirect effect of ostracism on ethical voice through moral identity was significant under low and moderate but not high ethical leadership, supporting a moderated mediation model. These findings show that while ethical leaders safeguard moral cognition and ethical voice, ostracism weakens employees' moral identities and decreases their readiness to speak out against unethical behaviour. However, the results' generalizability is constrained by the dependence on a specific occupational category. To properly capture the changing dynamics of moral identity and ethical behaviour, future research should use cross-industry and multi-source designs.

Keywords: *Apparel Industry, Ethical Leadership, Ethical Voice, Moral Identity, Workplace Ostracism, Working Self-Concept Theory*

The Impact of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) on Employee Satisfaction: A Study of Private Banks in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of the Human Resource Information System on employee satisfaction in private sector banks in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. As HRIS adoption continues to expand in the banking sector, understanding how system characteristics shape employee perception has become increasingly important. Thus, the study is grounded in a positivist philosophy and employs a deductive, quantitative research design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 384 employees using a convenience sampling technique. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 2025, including reliability testing, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. The findings proved that both Strategic HRIS Efficiency and HRIS User Friendliness significantly enhance employee satisfaction. Strategic HRIS Efficiency demonstrated a strong positive relationship with satisfaction and accounted for 60% of the variance, indicating that employees place a high value on systems that support strategic HR functions such as performance management, forecasting, and decision making. HRIS User Friendliness also showed a significant positive impact, explaining 34% of the variance, emphasising the role of system accessibility, clarity, and ease of navigation in shaping favourable user experiences. The findings indicate that private banks in Sri Lanka demonstrate a high degree of reliance on HRIS for core HR functions, confirming that HRIS is well-established within the sector. Future research may adopt a longitudinal design to capture changes in employee perceptions over time.

Keywords: *Employee Satisfaction, Human Resource Information System, HRIS User Friendliness, Strategic HRIS Efficiency, Sri Lanka*

Impact of Green Servant Leadership on Green Innovation with the Mediating Role of Green Organisational Culture

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ABSTRACT

In today's sustainability-driven world, the power of leadership to spark environmental innovation has never been more vital. This study explores how Green Servant Leadership influences Green Innovation, with Green Organisational Culture acting as a mediating force, within the apparel sector of the Balangoda Zone, Sri Lanka. Primary data were gathered from 302 employees using stratified random sampling, and the analysis was conducted through SPSS 26.0 using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression techniques. The results reveal strong and statistically significant relationships among the variables. Green Servant Leadership shows a substantial positive correlation with Green Innovation, reflected by a Pearson coefficient of 0.635 ($p < 0.05$). Likewise, Green Servant Leadership is strongly associated with Green Organisational Culture, with a correlation of 0.715 ($p < 0.05$). Green Organisational Culture also demonstrates a strong positive relationship with Green Innovation, with a correlation of 0.766 ($p < 0.05$). Further regression analysis confirms that Green Organisational Culture partially mediates the relationship between Green Servant Leadership and Green Innovation, supported by significant total, direct, and indirect effects. These findings underscore the powerful role of leadership and organisational culture in driving environmentally responsible practices. When leaders adopt a servant leadership approach grounded in environmental values, they cultivate a Green Organisational Culture that encourages employees to engage in eco-friendly behaviours and innovative sustainable solutions. This culture fosters environmental awareness, collective responsibility, and continuous improvement. Overall, the study contributes to the growing theoretical understanding of how leadership shapes sustainability-oriented innovation in organisations. Practically, it highlights the need for apparel sector organisations to strengthen green leadership and cultural practices to enhance environmental performance and advance sustainable innovation.

Keywords: *Green Innovation, Green Organisational Culture, Green Servant Leadership*

Social Support and Cross-Cultural Adjustment of Self-Initiated Academic Expatriates of Sri Lanka: Gender Based Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to address gaps in understanding the extent to which social support differentiates the cross-cultural adjustment of male and female self-initiated academic expatriates (SIAEs), fostering their integration into diverse cultural settings. The research question, "To what extent does social support impact the cross-cultural adjustment of male and female self-initiated academic expatriates?" guided this study. Data were collected from current expatriate academics at two selected national universities in Sri Lanka. Family support, work-related friends' support, and non-work-related friends' support were examined in the study, which concluded with findings from a survey of 32 self-initiated academic expatriates of the respective two management faculties. The study utilised a quantitative research methodology to investigate the hypotheses and achieve the research objectives, followed by univariate and bivariate analyses using SPSS version 23 to conclude. The findings reveal that family and work-related support significantly enhance adjustment, while non-work-related support has a limited influence. The study underscores the importance of tailored support systems to facilitate expatriates' adjustment and well-being.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural Adjustment, Self-initiated Expatriates, Academic Expatriates, Social Support*

Data-Driven Strategies for Circular and Responsible Operations

A Systematic Literature Review and Socio-Technical Framework for Green Business Process Management

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ABSTRACT

Green Business Process Management (Green BPM) has emerged as a critical domain at the intersection of Business Process Management and environmental sustainability. Despite increasing scholarly attention, the literature remains fragmented across conceptual, technical, and organisational perspectives, limiting a coherent understanding of how sustainability can be systematically embedded into business processes. This study addresses this fragmentation by conducting a systematic literature review of fifty-three core peer-reviewed articles, following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, and adopting a concept-centric approach. The review examines how Green BPM is defined and conceptualised, identifies its key principles and components, analyses proposed frameworks and operational tools, and explores industry-specific applications and research gaps. The findings indicate that Green BPM is commonly defined as the integration of environmental sustainability considerations into all stages of the BPM lifecycle, including design, implementation, monitoring, and optimisation. The literature demonstrates a strong emphasis on technical mechanisms such as Green Activity Based Management, Energy Monitoring Systems, Key Ecological Indicators, extended BPMN modelling techniques, and data-driven optimisation tools. However, comparatively less attention is given to organisational culture, governance structures, and leadership capabilities necessary to institutionalise sustainability. This imbalance is synthesised as a “Techno-Cultural Paradox”, where measurement and analytical tools are mature, yet socio-organisational readiness remains underdeveloped. Sectoral analysis shows that manufacturing industries primarily apply Green BPM to improve resource efficiency, reduce water and energy consumption, and manage hazardous waste, while service and public sectors focus on digital dematerialisation, energy-aware IT infrastructures, and Green Service Level Agreements. Building on these insights, the study proposes a Socio-Technical Green BPM Hierarchy that positions Green Culture and Strategic Governance as foundational layers enabling effective technological deployment and lifecycle optimisation. By consolidating dispersed knowledge and clarifying structural dependencies within Green BPM adoption, this study contributes an integrative synthesis and identifies key avenues for future empirical and interdisciplinary research.

Keywords: *Business Process Management, Environmental Sustainability, Green BPM, Green IT, Socio-Technical Systems, Systematic Literature Review*

Assessing the Impact of Digital Transformation on Supply Chain Resilience in Sri Lanka's FMCG Industry: The Mediating Role of Supply Chain Capability

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of digital transformation on supply chain resilience within the FMCG sector of Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on the mediating role of supply chain capabilities. As firms in FMCG increasingly make use of these different digital technologies for better operational visibility and responsiveness, it has become vitally important to understand their contribution towards resilience, especially in an environment often characterised by frequent disruptions and volatility. The unit of analysis consists of supply chain-related executives, managers, and senior managers employed in Sri Lankan FMCG firms, as these individuals are directly responsible for digital initiatives and supply chain decision-making. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for analysing the data to delve into direct and indirect relationships among digital transformation, supply chain capabilities, and supply chain resilience. The findings clearly reveal that digital transformation significantly enhances supply chain resilience by improving the ability of firms to predict, adapt to, and recover from disruptions. In addition, the results support the mediating effect of supply chain capability, this suggests that factors such as technological know-how are necessary to react to disruptions. Also, technology knows effective process management and rapid response techniques that enable organisations to derive full advantage from digital tools, and consequently, enhance their capabilities in managing uncertainty, making better decisions, and ensuring continuity under disruptions. This paper contributes significantly to FMCG managers, policymakers, and supply chain professionals by underlining the need to develop technological infrastructure and complementary competencies within the organisation for making supply chains more agile and integrated, along with building resilience. The novelty of this study is in the empirical validation of a capability-driven pathway that links digital transformation to supply chain resilience within an emerging economy context. Though most prior research has focused on developed economies and often assumes a direct digital-resilience relationship, this study provides context-specific evidence from Sri Lanka's FMCG sector, indicating that complementary organisational and supply chain capabilities are critical in realising the resilience benefits of digital investments.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Digital Innovation, FMCG industry, Organisational Agility, Process integration, Supply Chain Capabilities, Supply Chain Resilience, Supply Chain visibility, Technology Adoption*

Towards Sustainable Food Systems: A Systematic Review of the Logistics, Food Waste Nexus and Emerging Technological Solutions

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a methodical literature review of food loss and waste (FLW) as a problem related to logistics and supply chain management to tackle the issue of one of the most important sustainability challenges of the 21st century. Using the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 of halving the world's food losses by 2030, the review highlights that FLW is not a production problem and is a problem of distribution and logistics, which need integrated solutions. Based on the PRISMA protocol, the Scopus database was thoroughly searched, covering publications published from 2015 to 2025. Out of 648 records, 88 records were eliminated as duplicates and 560 articles were sifted. Following the use of inclusion and exclusion criteria, 112 full-text articles were evaluated, and 65 articles were eventually included in the analysis. The bibliometric mapping and thematic coding were utilised in the methodology to find clusters, which included cold chain management, demand forecasting, packaging, machine learning, Industry 4.0 applications, and greenhouse gas mitigation. The results have indicated that there are geographical differences, as developed economies are at the forefront of technological use and the growing economies have structural flaws in their infrastructures, especially cold storage and network architecture. Another emphasis made in the review is the dual nature of logistics in terms of waste prevention and valorisation, such as innovative production of biogas through anaerobic digestion. In addition, the communication disparities on packaging innovations at the consumer level and the role of social media in promoting the Zero Waste lifestyles are also investigated. The paper is a valuable addition to the literature that includes operational, technological, and social aspects and provides practical conclusions to policymakers, managers, and researchers. It defines research gaps in the digital transformation, coordination among stakeholders and resiliency of the supply chain, and offers guidance to future research with an intent to create sustainable and efficient food systems globally.

Keywords: *Cold Chain Management, Food Loss and Waste, Industry 4.0, Machine Learning, Sustainable Supply Chain Management*

Predictive Model for the Delivery Possibility of Sales Orders in the Apparel Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the use of predictive analytics to improve timely order delivery in the apparel industry, where meeting delivery deadlines is essential for customer satisfaction and organisational performance. Using operational data from an apparel manufacturing company, the research applies the Cross-Industry Standard Process for Data Mining (CRISP-DM) framework to develop a predictive model that forecasts delivery possibilities at an early stage of the production process. The dataset includes customer information, sewing plants, and planned and actual dates for cutting, embellishment, sewing, production ending, and delivery, etc. These attributes were analysed to identify factors influencing delivery outcomes. Several machine learning algorithms were tested, and the best-performing model was selected based on evaluation metrics aligned with the study's objectives. Results indicate that predictive modelling provides valuable insights for production planners, enabling prioritisation of critical orders and more effective resource allocation. The study concludes by presenting a practical implementation approach and emphasising how predictive analytics can support data-driven decision-making, enhance planning accuracy, and improve overall efficiency and customer satisfaction within the apparel industry.

Keywords: *Apparel Industry, CRISP-DM, Customer Satisfaction, Delivery Possibility, Machine Learning, Planning, Predictive Modelling*

Practices, Barriers, and Readiness Dimensions for Green Supply Chain Management Implementation: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) has emerged as a critical strategy for mitigating environmental impacts while enhancing operational efficiency and long-term sustainability across supply chains. Although a growing body of literature examines GSCM practices, existing studies remain fragmented, sector-specific, and predominantly focused on individual drivers or barriers, offering limited integrative insight into implementation readiness across industries. Moreover, there is a notable lack of structured synthesis that simultaneously links GSCM practices, implementation barriers, and organisational readiness dimensions, particularly within developing-economy contexts. This systematic literature review (SLR) synthesises findings from 48 peer-reviewed studies, aiming to: provide a descriptive overview of research trends; identify common GSCM practices; examine barriers for implementation, and to consolidate readiness assessment criteria reported in prior studies. A combination of descriptive analysis is employed to organise findings across geographical regions, industry sectors, and methodological approaches. The thematic analysis groups barriers into five categories as organizational/managerial, technological, financial/economic, regulatory/institutional, and market/stakeholder. The findings reveal that green procurement, reverse logistics, and waste management are the most frequently implemented practices, while downstream and externally oriented practices such as green packaging and environmental stakeholder engagement remain underexplored. Implementation barriers are predominantly internal and organisational, including limited leadership commitment, insufficient technical expertise, and financial constraints, outweighing external regulatory pressures. Importantly, this review identifies five overarching readiness dimensions: strategic, resource-based, operational, cultural, and external readiness, yet highlights that most existing readiness frameworks lack empirical validation and sector-specific adaptation. The novelty of this study lies in its integrated synthesis of GSCM practices, barriers, and readiness dimensions within a single analytical framework, offering a structured foundation for future empirical research and practical implementation. By explicitly linking readiness assessment with implementation challenges, the review provides actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, particularly in underrepresented sectors such as healthcare and the public sector. The study concludes by outlining critical research gaps and proposing directions for developing context-sensitive and empirically grounded GSCM readiness frameworks.

Keywords: *Barriers, Green Practices, Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM), Readiness Assessment*

Understanding Barriers to Sustainable Practices Adoption in the Maritime Logistics Sector: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The maritime logistics sector is a cornerstone of global trade, but faces mounting pressure to reduce its environmental footprint through sustainable practices. Despite growing global initiatives for eco-friendly shipping and green ports, adoption remains inconsistent. This systematic literature review investigates the key barriers to implementing sustainable practices in maritime logistics and identifies indicators for measuring adoption. Guided by a conceptual framework, the study synthesises findings from 33 peer-reviewed articles published between 2015 and 2025, following the PRISMA 2020 methodology. Thematic analysis categorises barriers into four dimensions: operational, organisational and management, resource-related, and industry-related. Results highlight that resource-related barriers, including high capital costs and lack of skilled personnel, are particularly significant, while organisational and management barriers, such as short-term profit focus and resistance to change, further hinder adoption. Industry-level barriers, including regulatory uncertainty and a lack of standardisation, create systemic challenges that slow the transition to renewable energy and sustainable waste management. The review also identifies key adoption indicators, such as carbon emission reductions, energy efficiency improvements, fleet modernisation, and regulatory compliance, which provide a robust basis for assessing sustainability performance. Findings underscore that technological solutions alone are insufficient; successful adoption depends on overcoming management, financial, and systemic hurdles. This study offers a conceptual framework-based roadmap for policymakers and industry stakeholders to identify bottlenecks, track environmental performance, and integrate sustainability into maritime logistics operations, supporting the transition from regulatory compliance to genuine environmental resilience.

Keywords: *Adoption, Barriers, Assessment Indicators, Maritime Logistics, Sustainable Practices*

Supply Chain Analysis using PLS-SEM and Mapping the Supply Chain for Traditional Ayurvedic Products in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The increasing demand for traditional Ayurvedic products in Sri Lanka has highlighted the need for a more efficient, transparent, and performance-oriented supply chain. Despite the sector's growing economic and healthcare significance, existing supply chains remain fragmented, characterised by coordination gaps, limited visibility, and operational inefficiencies. This study aims to analyse and map the traditional Ayurvedic product supply chain in Sri Lanka by identifying key supply chain factors and examining their impact on overall performance. A mixed-methods research approach was adopted. The qualitative component involved in-depth interviews with key industry stakeholders to develop an end-to-end supply chain map capturing material, information, and financial flows. The quantitative component employed a structured questionnaire survey administered to 147 stakeholders representing different stages of the Ayurvedic supply chain. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling was used to examine the relationships between four core supply chain dimensions: Transportation and Distribution, Purchasing and Supplier Management, Inventory and Warehousing, and Market-related Factors, and four performance outcomes: Financial, Operational, Customer-Satisfaction, and Environmental Performance. The findings indicate that all examined supply chain factors exert a significant positive influence on overall supply chain performance. Among them, Purchasing and Supplier Management and Market-related Factors demonstrate the strongest effects, highlighting the importance of supplier reliability, procurement efficiency, and market responsiveness. Transportation and Distribution, as well as Inventory and Warehousing, also play a critical role, supporting timely delivery, efficient resource utilisation, and consistent product quality. The supply chain mapping exercise further reveals critical inefficiencies, including fragmented coordination, redundant intermediaries, and limited traceability across supply chain actors. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive analytical and visual framework for understanding the structure and performance of the Sri Lankan Ayurvedic product supply chain. The findings offer practical insights for policymakers and industry practitioners to enhance transparency, coordination, and sustainability, thereby strengthening the competitiveness and long-term resilience of the traditional Ayurvedic healthcare sector in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Supply Chain Analysis, Supply Chain Analysis Factors, Supply Chain Mapping, Supply Chain Performance, Supply Chain Performance Measures*

Application of Green Procurement in Apparel Manufacturing Organisations in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

In response to intensifying global environmental concerns, Green Procurement (GP) has emerged as a pivotal strategy for aligning commercial operations with ecological sustainability. GP integrates environmental considerations into purchasing decisions, extending beyond traditional cost, quality, and delivery criteria to encompass waste reduction, resource efficiency, and carbon footprint minimisation. The apparel manufacturing sector is responsible for nearly 10% of global carbon emissions, and therefore, the GP has a crucial role that needs to play in mitigating the industry's environmental footprint. The Sri Lankan apparel sector, recognised for pioneering eco-friendly factories and carbon-neutral facilities, presents a distinctive context for examining GP adoption in a developing economy. Despite global interest, there is limited empirical evidence on the effective application of GP within South Asia, particularly in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. This study aims to identify challenges and develop strategies to enhance GP implementation in Sri Lankan apparel manufacturing organisations. A qualitative approach was adopted, and the case study method was employed, encompassing three large-scale apparel firms representing varied levels of GP adoption. Altogether, seventeen semi-structured interviews were conducted with key personnel across procurement, production, sustainability, and design functions. Cross-case and content analyses were used to identify patterns, drivers, challenges, and strategic insights. Findings reveal that procurement functions are evolving from cost-centric operations to strategic enablers of sustainability. However, GP implementation faces three major categories of challenges: internal organisational barriers (financial constraints, limited expertise, and resistance to change), external environmental barriers (weak regulatory enforcement and inadequate infrastructure), and strategic alignment barriers (balancing cost, performance, and sustainability goals). The study identifies four strategic pathways to strengthen GP: organisational transformation and capacity building, collaborative industry partnerships, supportive policy and financial frameworks, and innovation-driven transparency and knowledge development. By examining these multidimensional barriers, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of green procurement in developing economies and offers exploratory insights into potential strategies for strengthening sustainable procurement practices within Sri Lanka's apparel manufacturing sector.

Keywords: *Green Procurement (GP), Green Procurement Practices (GPP), Sustainable Procurement Practices (SPP)*

Information Systems, E-Commerce, and Emerging Tech for Circular Business

The Impact of Digital Adaption of an Organisation Towards the Organisational Performance: with Special Reference to the Grocery Retail Industry in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

In today's environment, how businesses generate, exploit, and deliver value is highly shaped by technology, and anytime, anywhere availability of digital technologies and the drastic rise of digitalisation certify that any industry will not be able to avoid the effect of digital transformation, if they want to maximise their success in digital transformation settings. The grocery retail concept has become a very popular concept globally. Digitalisation has brought transformative changes to the business landscape, and it has a significant influence on how customers behave in the retail sector. The study consumed quantitative research approach and a descriptive research design with cross-sectional surveys. The target population involved people who are working in the grocery retail industry in Sri Lanka, and were collected through the Snowball sampling method. The study was conducted to explore the impact of digital adaptation of an organisation on the overall organisational performance and the moderating effect of digital leadership on this relationship. The study demonstrates that there is a significant impact of digital adaptation of an organisation on the overall organisational performance, but no moderating effect of digital adaptation on this relationship exists significantly.

Key words: *Digital Adaption (DA), Digital Intensity (DI), Digital Leadership (DL), Digital Maturity (DM), Digital Orientation (DO), Overall Organisational Performance (OOP)*

Assessing the Impact of Digitalisation on Educational Outcomes in Sri Lanka: A Comparative Analysis Before and After COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformation across education systems worldwide, highlighting both opportunities and disparities in technology-enabled learning. In Sri Lanka, the sudden shift to online and hybrid learning created a natural breakpoint, offering a unique context to examine how digitalisation affected educational outcomes before and after the pandemic. This study specifically investigates the comparative impact of digital readiness on secondary educational performance, measured by the Advanced Level Pass Rate (ALPR), over the period 2015–2024. Digitalisation is operationalised through three key dimensions: Digital Connectivity (DC), Digital Infrastructure (DI), and Affordability of ICT Services (AIS), which are combined into a Standardised Digital Readiness Index (SDRI) to capture overall digital capacity. An Interrupted Time Series (ITS) analysis was employed to detect structural changes in ALPR across the pre-pandemic (2015–2019) and post-pandemic (2020–2024) phases. Findings indicate a statistically meaningful structural shift in ALPR after 2020, reflecting the accelerated adoption of digital technologies in response to the pandemic. Among the three digitalisation dimensions, DI exhibited the most substantial and consistent influence on educational performance, underscoring the critical role of infrastructure readiness in sustaining online and hybrid learning. In contrast, DC and AIS showed limited and statistically insignificant effects, suggesting that connectivity expansion and affordability alone were insufficient to drive measurable improvements in learning outcomes. These results highlight the importance of integrating infrastructural capacity with digital access and cost considerations to ensure inclusive and effective educational transformation. Overall, the study provides empirical evidence that digitalisation has positively shaped secondary educational outcomes in Sri Lanka, but its impact is uneven across different dimensions. The findings underscore the need for balanced policy interventions focusing on infrastructure development, equitable access, and affordability to maximise the benefits of digital education. By offering a pre- and post-pandemic comparative perspective, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the Digital Readiness–Learning Outcomes nexus in developing country contexts. The research has shown that digital transformation in education has transitional adaptation impacts, and that infrastructure readiness has stronger impacts on enhancing the results of learning in developing countries compared to access expansion.

Keywords: *Advanced Level Pass Rate, COVID-19, Digitalisation, Educational Outcomes, Sri Lanka*

Modelling Public Wi-Fi Usage Intentions: Literature Review on User Awareness, Digital Literacy, Perceived Risk

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's digital transformation is experiencing a rapid paradigm shift, with the proliferation of free public Wi-Fi hotspots outpacing the development of localised cybersecurity protocols. Despite their widespread adoption, public Wi-Fi environments are inherently vulnerable to cybersecurity threats, privacy violations, and data interception risks, which pose significant challenges to users with varying levels of technological competence. This systematic literature review critically examines the role of user awareness, perceived risk, and digital literacy in influencing public Wi-Fi usage behaviour grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). The review aims to synthesise existing scholarly evidence, identify dominant research themes, and expose unresolved gaps related to public awareness of Wi-Fi-related risks. To ensure methodological rigour, transparency, and replicability, the review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA framework with literature published between 2018 and 2025 using Scopus, Emerald, and Science Direct. It is identified that limited cybersecurity awareness and inadequate digital literacy lead to violations when accessing public Wi-Fi networks. From a TAM perspective, perceived usefulness often drives adoption of Wi-Fi despite security concerns, while perceived ease of use may discourage protective behaviours. From a TPB perspective, perceived risk influences user attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, thereby shaping usage intentions and risk mitigation practices. This study addresses a critical research gap concerning how users become aware of public Wi-Fi risks and how such awareness is formed, communicated, and localised, particularly within the Sri Lankan sociocultural context. Existing studies predominantly focus on technical vulnerabilities or general cybersecurity knowledge, offering limited insight into user-centred awareness mechanisms. This study contributes to the theoretical advancement of technology adoption and cybersecurity behaviour research. Also provides insight to inform policymakers by emphasising the importance of theory-informed digital literacy programs, cybersecurity awareness campaigns, and effective risk communication interventions to facilitate safe public Wi-Fi use, while also outlining future research directions that support informed technology adoption, strengthened cybersecurity, and sustainable technology use in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Perceived Risk, Public Wi-Fi, User Awareness, Theory of Plan Behavior (TPB)*

Artificial Intelligence-Driven Digital Nudges for Mindfulness and Sustainable Behaviour: A Framework for Circular Digital Workplaces

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ABSTRACT

The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence (AI), remote collaboration technologies, and automation has reconfigured contemporary digital workplaces, reshaping employee behaviour and organisational well-being. Digital nudges embedded within technological systems offer subtle, non-intrusive mechanisms to promote mindful awareness and sustainability; however, empirical research that integrates these constructs within AI-mediated environments remains scarce. This study addresses this gap by examining how employees perceive, interpret, and respond to AI-driven nudges that encourage mindful and eco-conscious actions in technologically intensive work settings. Guided by an interpretivist qualitative design, fifteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees who regularly interact with mindfulness, productivity and sustainability applications, wearables, and digital platforms. Thematic analysis generated five dominant themes: mindfulness-oriented nudges, sustainability nudges, personalisation and autonomy, platform and timing sensitivity, and behavioural impact. Drawing on these findings, an empirically grounded framework is proposed, illustrating how psychological, technological, and contextual nudges intersect with user cognition, workplace environments and behavioural outcomes. The study contributes to theory by integrating nudging theory, cognitive load theory and circular digital workplace concepts. It also offers practical insights for organisations seeking to design responsible AI-driven nudging strategies that enhance employee well-being while advancing environmental sustainability.

Keywords: *AI-driven Digital Nudges, Mindfulness, Sustainable Behaviour, Circular Digital Workplaces*

Explaining Disparities in Heat-Related Hospital Admissions Using Explainable AI: A Comparative Analysis Across Global Income Levels

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ABSTRACT

Rising global temperatures and increasingly frequent extreme heat events caused by climate change have increased the risk of heat-related illness, representing a growing global public health issue. The association between heat exposure and morbidity (cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, and metabolic) has been solidly documented, but little is known about the reasons for existing cross-national disparities in heat-related hospitalisations. The purpose of this research is to identify important global predictors of heat-related hospitalisations, to compare vulnerability patterns for high and low/middle-income countries, and to evaluate how Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) can improve interpretability in climate-health modelling frameworks. The analysis utilises the Global Climate-Health Impact Tracker dataset, which covers the years 2015 through 2025 and contains 14,100 observations from 141 countries and multiple climate, environmental, demographic and socioeconomic variables. This analysis involved training an XGBoost gradient-boosted regression model using 23 predictors; the resulting model had a predictive power of 0.70 R-squared and 0.18 RMSE (log-transformed dependent variable). Permutation importance analysis was used to assess individual global predictor contributions, while Shapley Additive Explanations (SHAP) values were used to interpret nonlinear relationships between global predictors and heat-related hospitalisations, and to compare predictors across income strata. Globally, temperature was shown to be the single biggest factor influencing health outcomes (permutation importance = 0.986), followed by the intensity of heat waves. Analysis of income level showed very different patterns of vulnerability. Low- and middle-income countries are more sensitive to direct exposure to heat and to environmental stressors, including the risk of vector-borne diseases and limited health care. Conversely, high-income countries showed a greater degree of complexity with respect to other factors affecting health outcomes, including geographic location (latitude), seasonality, level of pollution, and prevalence of chronic disease. SHAP analysis also confirms that heat health-related hospital admissions are not simply caused by increasing temperature, but rather are the result of complex interactions between climatic exposures, environmental conditions, socioeconomic resources, and baseline health status. By using machine learning with interpretability methods, this research provides clear and relevant information to inform decision-making for early warning systems, healthcare readiness, and income-sensitive climate adaptation strategies in the context of greater global heat exposure.

Keywords: *Climate Change, Explainable AI, Global Health, Heat-related Illness, XGBoost*

Unveiling Digitalisation Dynamics: Is Digitalisation Measurable Through a Data-Driven Composite Index?

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ABSTRACT

Digitalisation has become a transformative force at present. The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed economies, industries, and societies, with digitalisation being a critical factor in achieving global competitiveness among nations. The primary objective of this study is to develop a composite index for digitalisation to measure the level of digitalisation and transition among 71 nations from 2010 to 2022. The robust index was constructed utilising Principal components based on factor analysis, incorporating ten chronological steps, and later hierarchical clustering was implemented to classify the nations into digital pioneers, adapters, and followers. The computed index could be utilised as a measure to assess nations' digitalisation levels and formulate strategies and policies for pioneers, adapters, and followers to uplift or advance their digital infrastructure and interaction, and foster innovations that stimulate the economic growth of nations.

Keywords: *Composite Index, Digitalisation, Digital Transformation, Principal Component Analysis*

Social Media Marketing Activities on Consumer Brand Engagement in Instagram: A Perspective of the Sri Lankan Fashion Industry

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of social media has transformed traditional marketing practices by enabling interactive and visually rich platforms for consumer engagement. Among these platforms, Instagram has emerged as a leading channel for brand-consumer interaction, particularly within the fashion industry, due to its high engagement potential and strong visual orientation. Despite its prominence, limited empirical research has examined how specific social media marketing strategies influence customer brand engagement on Instagram, especially from the perspective of the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT). Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the impact of interaction, trendiness, entertainment, customisation, and word of mouth on customer brand engagement within the Instagram-driven fashion context. Grounded in UGT, the study emphasises how Instagram's visual and interactive features fulfil users' motivational needs and gratifications, thereby fostering stronger brand engagement. A positivistic research philosophy and deductive approach were adopted, employing a survey-based research strategy. Data was collected from 449 valid respondents who actively follow and interact with fashion brands on Instagram. Given the ordinal nature of the dependent variable of Customer Engagement, an ordered probit regression model was applied to analyse the relationships between social media marketing strategies and levels of customer brand engagement, ensuring robust and reliable empirical insights. The findings indicate that Instagram-based marketing strategies significantly influence consumer engagement with fashion brands, highlighting the importance of strategically designed content and interaction mechanisms. This study contributes to the social media marketing literature by extending the application of UGT within a contemporary digital platform and offers practical implications for marketers. The insights guide fashion brand managers seeking to enhance engagement, strengthen consumer-brand relationships, and optimise Instagram marketing strategies in a highly competitive social media environment.

Keywords: *Interaction, Trendiness, Entertainment, Customisation, Word of Mouth, Social-media Marketing, Instagram, Customer Engagement*

Exploring How Smart Technologies Enhance Guest Experiences in the Sri Lankan Hospitality Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how smart technologies enhance guest experiences in the Sri Lankan hospitality industry. It focuses on understanding guest awareness, perceptions and their impact on satisfaction and loyalty in order to address the current gap in technology in Sri Lankan hotels, compared to global advancements. The study interviewed 15 hotel guests who had experienced smart hotel technologies, employing semi-structured interviews as a part of an exploratory qualitative research design. The thematic analysis, which was framed within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), was guided by an interpretivist philosophy and an inductive approach to identify important themes from guest narratives. Guests define smart hotels as hotels that integrate modern digital technologies to enhance comfort, convenience and efficiency. The findings show that guests view technology's ease of use and usefulness as essential for enhancing service quality, ultimately leading to a positive attitude towards technology adoption, while highlighting a balanced approach that combines technology with authentic human interaction, reflecting the cultural expectations in the hospitality industry. Although ethical concerns such as privacy and data security were acknowledged, they did not significantly impact the guests' technology acceptance, where guests expressed positive opinions regarding how technology can improve operational efficiency, personalisation, and enhance overall guest satisfaction. The results of this study contribute interpretive insights for developing countries where technology adoption is at its initial stages, extending TAM by showing the cultural dimensions of technology acceptance. By improving service quality and customer satisfaction, it is implied that integrating smart technology can enhance competitiveness and attract high-end tourists. However, concerning the cultural warmth inherent to Sri Lankan hospitality, the findings suggest that it is crucial to have a hybrid model blending technology and human touch to preserve the warm hospitality. Future research could expand to other types of accommodations, employ a quantitative approach, examine experts' and staff views, investigate sustainability impacts, or cross-country comparisons to enhance generalizability and operational insights, reducing potential recall bias.

Keywords: *Smart Hospitality, Internet of Things (IoT), Service Personalisation, Technology Acceptance Model, Artificial Intelligence*

Structural Inefficiencies in the Supply Chain: An Assessment of Digital Readiness of Up-country Famers

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ABSTRACT

The agricultural sector in Sri Lanka, while central to the national economy, is plagued by structural inefficiencies characterised by excessive intermediary dominance and severe information asymmetry. This research explores intermediary-driven trading structures in the Upcountry fruit and vegetable farming and assesses reported market access constraints, pricing mechanisms, and readiness for digital adoption. Using Transaction Cost Economics and Information Asymmetry, the study investigates how search costs, coordination difficulties, and asymmetric information spread determine current supply chain outcomes. It investigates the operational challenges within the Agricultural Supply Chain (ASC), specifically analysing the Broker-Mediated and Buyer-Broker models prevalent in the Upcountry region. Grounded in Transaction Cost Economics (TCE), the research aims to evaluate the feasibility of a digital marketplace to disintermediate the supply chain, reduce transaction costs, and enhance value distribution among primary stakeholders. This study adopts a quantitative research design using a survey of 96 key stakeholders comprising farmers, wholesale buyers, and logistics providers. The data analysis involves descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent samples t-tests, and exploratory factor analysis. The findings reveal a critical, systemic dependency on traditional networks, 80% of producers rely entirely on intermediaries for market access, while 73% report possessing no influence over price determination. Consequently, the analysis confirms that current structures perpetuate diminished profit margins for farmers and high post-harvest losses due to fragmented logistics. However, the study identifies a strong latent demand for modernisation, with 86% of respondents expressing a willingness to adopt a digital trading platform if it offers transparency and security. The digital disintermediation is not merely a technological upgrade but a potential structural intervention to mitigate market failures. These findings provide actionable evidence for policymakers and developers seeking to foster a sustainable, technology-driven agricultural economy in emerging markets. We propose an Integrated Digital Agricultural Ecosystem (IDAE) that moves beyond simple matchmaking to offer a holistic solution integrating real-time price discovery, direct buyer and seller connectivity, and synchronised third-party logistics. Further studies may assess its impact on behaviour and long-term effects on value distribution.

Keywords: *Agriculture, Supply Chain, Inefficiency, Digital Marketplace, Sri Lanka*

Sustainable Real Estate and Urban Infrastructure for a Circular Future

A GIS-Based Spatial Analysis of Environmental and Socio-Economic Vulnerabilities for Urban Planning in Chilaw, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Rapid urbanisation in Sri Lanka's coastal cities presents a complex nexus of environmental degradation, socioeconomic disparities, and infrastructural vulnerabilities. This study investigates the Chilaw Urban Council (UC) area, a strategic intermediate city in the North Western Province, to analyse the spatial dynamics driving these risks. Employing a comprehensive multi-temporal geospatial framework, the research integrates remote sensing, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and multi-criteria risk evaluation to inform sustainable urban planning strategies. Land use transformation was assessed using Landsat 8 satellite imagery from 2013 and 2023 via supervised classification and spectral indices, specifically the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), Normalised Difference Built-up Index (NDBI), and Normalised Difference Water Index (NDWI). Additionally, the study evaluated transport network efficiency using graph theory indices (Alpha, Beta, and Gamma) and modelled flood susceptibility through a weighted overlay technique integrating elevation, slope, rainfall, Topographic Wetness Index (TWI), and proximity to hydrologic features. Results reveal a concerning ecological trajectory, while the built-up area remained relatively stable, barren lands doubled from 6% to 12%, and dense forest cover declined by 3%, indicating significant ecosystem stress and the loss of natural coastal buffers. Spatial network analysis uncovered a distinct core-periphery disparity; while central nodes like the Clock Tower exhibit high integration, peripheral coastal divisions suffer from low connectivity, severely limiting emergency mobility. The flood risk assessment identifies 54 hectares within the "very high-risk" category, primarily in low-lying lagoon zones. Crucially, the study highlights a socio-spatial injustice where high-density, unauthorised settlements are disproportionately located in these flood-prone areas with the poorest transport connectivity. These findings underscore the imperative for evidence-based policy interventions, advocating for green infrastructure restoration and equitable transport planning to enhance climate resilience in Chilaw.

Keywords: Flood Risk, GIS, Network Connectivity, Remote Sensing, Urban Resilience

Visual Pollution in Urban Corridors: Evidence from Colombo Fort, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Urban visual pollution has emerged as a significant environmental and aesthetic challenge in rapidly commercialising cityscapes, particularly within historic urban cores where competing land uses intensify visual disorder. Colombo Fort, located at the heart of Colombo and serving as the city's central business district, is an area of significant colonial heritage and contemporary commercial activity. In recent decades, however, it has experienced a marked increase in visually intrusive elements. Despite this trend, systematic academic assessments of the issue in Sri Lanka remain limited. This study examines the current condition and spatial distribution of visual pollution within a defined territory of Colombo Fort, covering the stretch from the Staff Entrance of the Sri Lanka Customs Headquarters to the Pettah Bo Tree, along with First Cross Street, Prince Street, and Second Cross Street. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the extent of visual clutter and identify the types of elements that most significantly degrade urban visual quality. Employing a quantitative research approach, the study adopts photographic documentation supported by structured visual audits. All photographs were systematically coded using predefined indicators, including signage type, clutter density, façade obstruction, degree of visual intrusion, and dominance of commercial communication. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the patterns captured through this coding process. The findings indicate that shop signage constitutes the most dominant contributor to visual pollution (36.11%), followed by overhead utility cables, deteriorated building façades and shop signage, with Olcott Mawatha exhibiting the highest concentration of visual clutter. The study highlights the need for coordinated urban design controls, signage regulation, and heritage-sensitive management strategies to mitigate visual pollution in historic urban environments.

Keywords: *Visual Pollution, Colombo Fort, Signage Clutter, Urban Aesthetics, Photographic Documentation, Sri Lanka*

A Study on Natural Hazard Resilience in High-Rise Buildings in the Colombo Municipal Council Area, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

High-rise buildings play a pivotal role in urban development, offering solutions to land scarcity while fostering economic and social activities. The vulnerability to natural hazards poses significant challenges to urban resilience. The Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) area in Sri Lanka, despite its rapid urbanisation and high-rise developments, faces threats from earthquakes, tsunamis, and cyclones, which can lead to structural damage and compromise occupant safety. The research aims to identify gaps in current practices and propose strategies to enhance disaster preparedness. Using a qualitative methodology, the study integrates data from expert interviews, case studies, and field observation, focusing on seismic design standards, risk assessments, and emergency systems for earthquakes and tsunamis. The study sample size is six buildings, and the key findings reveal that there was an emergent need felt regarding the comprehensive design of buildings. Despite the progress made in disaster preparedness, older buildings are still very vulnerable to natural hazards, which puts the lives of occupants and the urban environment at risk. The research provides critical insights into sustainable urban planning and disaster risk reduction, aligning with national and global agendas on urban resilience. The findings underscore the need for policy reforms, capacity building, and investment in resilient infrastructure. Recommendations include adopting and enhancing emergency preparedness and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to ensure the safety and functionality of high-rise buildings during natural disasters. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on disaster-resilient architecture, offering a framework that can be adapted to similar urban contexts. By addressing both structural and non-structural aspects, this research advances sustainable and resilient high-rise development, fostering safer urban environments in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Keywords: *Natural Hazard Resilience; Disaster Risk Reduction; Urban Resilience; High-rise Buildings; Sustainable Architecture*

Exploring the Factors Influencing Post-Harvest Losses in the Sri Lankan Agri-Food Supply Chain

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ABSTRACT

Post-Harvest Losses (PHL) in the Sri Lankan Agri-Food Supply Chain are a crucial factor for food security, farmers' income, and the country's economic growth. Even though the country is good for farming and grows many kinds of crops, it is thought that 20-40% of fruits and vegetables are wasted between the farmland and the wholesale market. Lack of infrastructure, poor transportation, traditional packing methods, and lack of awareness in intermediary parties are the main reasons for these losses, according to the existing literature. Further, the existing literature creates the path for qualitative research since no proper study has been conducted to identify the main causes of PHLs within the upstream of the Sri Lankan Agri-food supply chain. As a result, this study explains the methodological gap and theoretical gap which exist as the problem statement. The factors causing the PHL and the problem statement included are identified through a literature review with the assistance of the 'PRISMA' model. Further, the study focuses on identifying the losses within the upstream of the agri-food supply chain across multiple stakeholders of farmers, middlemen and the wholesale traders.

Keywords: *Agri Food Supply Chain, Food Security, Post-harvest Losses*

**Economics, Governance, Law, Ethics, and Public Policy for Sustainable
and Digital Futures**

The Dynamic Relationship between General, Food and Non-food Price Volatility in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Price volatility has become a critical macroeconomic challenge in Sri Lanka, as persistent fluctuations in food and non-food prices and exchange rates continue to intensify inflationary pressures and erode household welfare. This study examines the dynamic relationship between food price volatility and general price volatility in Sri Lanka, while explicitly evaluating Walsh's (2011) three key assumptions, namely that food inflation is sustained, persistent, and has second-round effects. Assessing these assumptions enables the study to determine whether excluding food price from core inflation is appropriate in the Sri Lankan context. The analysis begins with the Pairwise Granger causality test to identify the direction of predictive relationships among the variables. Based on this, the ARDL bounds testing approach and error correction models are employed to capture both long-run and short-run dynamics, using monthly data from January 2014 to May 2025 obtained from the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS) and the Central Bank of Sri Lanka (CBSL). In addition, Impulse Response Functions (IRF) and Variance Decomposition analyses are used to trace the transmission of shocks and to quantify the relative importance of food, non-food, and exchange rate volatility to general price instability over time. The Bai-Perron multiple breakpoint tests identify several structural shifts and confirm a mix of $I(0)$ and $I(1)$ processes, validating the use of the ARDL framework. Empirical results reveal a strong long-run cointegrating relationship between food price volatility and general price volatility, indicating that food price shocks exert a persistent and significant influence on general price volatility. The Impulse Response Function (IRF) and Variance Decomposition analyses further show that food price volatility is the most influential driver of general price fluctuations, accounting for nearly 19% of the variation in the final forecast horizon. Overall, the findings identify food price volatility as the central determinant of price instability in Sri Lanka and provide empirical support for Walsh's (2011) argument that excluding food from core inflation is inappropriate in economies where food prices are structurally persistent. These findings highlight the need for policies aimed at stabilising food markets, safeguarding vulnerable households, and restructuring core inflation measures to capture true inflationary pressures more accurately.

Keywords: *ARDL Bound Test, Food Price Volatility, General Price Volatility, Impulse Response Function, Variance Decomposition*

Dynamic Relationship Between Energy Consumption and Economic Growth Incorporating a Structural Break: An Empirical Study of Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

The interplay of several severe internal and external shocks has posed substantial challenges to the stability of the Sri Lankan economy. Therefore, this study investigates the presence of structural breaks in the relationship between energy consumption and economic growth in Sri Lanka, using annual data from 1990 to 2023. In addition to energy consumption and economic growth, gross fixed capital formation and labour force participation are incorporated as key explanatory variables. The Chow test is applied to identify structural breaks, and the VAR Granger causality test is used to examine the direction of causality between the variables. Also, the ARDL bound test is used to identify the cointegration relationship between energy consumption and economic growth, incorporating structural breaks. The Chow test results indicate the presence of structural breaks in 2004, 2008, 2020, and 2022 periods. These breakpoints align with major economic and environmental shocks, including the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2008 global financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recent economic crisis in Sri Lanka. The results of the Zivod-Andrews test indicate that economic growth, energy consumption, and labour force participation are stationary variables in first difference $I(1)$. On the other hand, Gross fixed capital formation is found to be stationary at level $I(0)$. The VAR Granger causality test shows no short-term causal relationship between energy consumption and economic growth in the absence of structural breaks. However, a short-run unidirectional causal relationship exists when considering structural breaks. The empirical findings show that the variables in the study are cointegrated, indicating the existence of a long-run relationship among them. The ARDL bounds test shows a positive long-run impact of energy consumption on economic growth; this relationship does not hold in the short run. Notably, when structural breaks are considered, energy consumption negatively impacts economic growth in the short run, while its long-term impact becomes statistically insignificant. These findings suggest that external and internal shocks have disrupted the energy growth nexus in Sri Lanka. This study offers new insights for policymakers to account for structural breaks in policy formulation to address the short-run adverse impact of energy consumption on economic growth.

Keywords: *Chow Test, Economic Growth, Energy Consumption, Sri Lanka, Structural Break*

The Impact of Government Education Expenditure on Economic Growth in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Education is an important part of individual empowerment and societal progress, and it plays a significant role in improving the growth of the economy in the country. This study has focused on examining the impact of government education expenditure on economic growth in Sri Lanka. Time series data covering the period from 1981 to 2023 have been employed for the analysis. GDP growth rate, as a proxy for economic growth, is used as a dependent variable. Variables such as government education expenditure, capital fixed formation, labour force participation, export and inflation rate have been employed as independent variables in this study. The augmented Dickey-Fuller unit root test has been employed to test the stationarity of variables. The autoregressive distributed lag model (ARDL) bound test is used to test the long-run relationship between the variables, and the error correction model is used to test the short-run relationship between the variables. This study revealed that government education expenditure has a positive and statistically significant impact on GDP in the long run. 1 % increase in government education expenditure leads to 1.99% increase in GDP, while capital fixed formation and inflation have a negative significant impact on GDP performance in the long run. Also, it confirmed that export has a positive and significant impact on GDP, while Labor force participation has no significant impact on GDP in the long run. Further, it is found that there is no significant impact of government expenditure on education on economic growth in the short run. This study recommended that Sri Lanka should increase their government education spending to stimulate sustainable economic growth through human capital investment. The government should enhance their investment in research and development within the educational sector.

Keywords: *Capital Fixed Formation, Economic Growth, Export, Government Education Expenditure, Labour Force Participation*

Food Price Forecasting for Food Security in Developing Economies: Evidence from a Systematic Review and Hybrid Modelling Approaches

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ABSTRACT

Unpredictable and unexpected food price dynamics have become one of the most pressing challenges, threatening food security and household livelihoods in developing nations. Scholars have sought to understand price volatility and improve forecasting accuracy using a wide range of approaches by considering variables across diverse markets. However, existing studies of traditional time-series models and advanced data-driven techniques have become fragmented due to their isolated applications. It has limited their ability to capture the complex, nonlinear, and shock-driven nature of food prices, especially in heavily imported food items. This study addresses the main techniques introduced by previous researchers to predict the future pricing and identify the drawbacks in existing methods to suggest an advanced, suitable pricing framework. SCOPUS was used as the key data source and the initial screening options. This systematic review followed the PRISMA framework, VOS Viewer keyword analysis, and a thematic analysis to achieve objectives. The initial search gave a total of 469 articles, and 120 articles were followed in the initial screening. 40 articles were selected for the thematic analysis. VOS keyword visualisation elaborated how price dynamics are strongly linked to food markets, food security, volatility modelling, and emerging machine learning approaches. ARIMA, VAR/VECM, and GARCH are the dominant econometric models. A sharp rise in modern machine learning and deep learning applications, particularly in short-term forecasting and nonlinear pattern detection. Mixed frequencies and missing data points are the persistent gaps in forecasting. As a result, this study suggests an integrated framework that combines traditional econometric modelling (mixed frequency VAR) with machine learning techniques (Python). Novel approaches will direct food security, livelihood resilience, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Finally, findings offer clear guidance for future research and provide a practical pathway for improving policy formulations in volatile markets such as developing nations like Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Econometric Models, Food Price Volatility, Hybrid Forecasting, Machine Learning, Price Forecasting, Systematic Review*

**Language, Culture, and Multi-disciplinary Research Engaging
Management Contexts**

Assessing the Socio-Economic Contributions and Climate Change Impacts on Coral Reef Tourism: Special Reference to Hikkaduwa and Pigeon Island, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the socioeconomic dimensions of coral reef-based tourism and the influence of climate change in the Southern and Eastern coastal belts of Sri Lanka, with a specific focus on Hikkaduwa and Pigeon Island. Coral reefs serve as critical natural assets supporting marine biodiversity, coastal protection, and tourism-driven economic activities, yet face unprecedented threats from climate change, including ocean warming, acidification, and extreme weather events. The research aims to assess the demographic profile of tourists visiting reef areas, quantify the economic contribution of reef-related tourism to local communities and understand stakeholder perceptions toward sustainable tourism development. Using a mixed-method approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through structured surveys with tourists and local stakeholders, in-depth interviews with business owners and community leaders, and field observations of reef conditions and tourism activities. Findings reveal that coral reef tourism significantly contributes to local livelihoods, generating income and employment in sectors such as accommodation, diving, snorkelling, boat services, and food services. Tourism revenue represents a substantial portion of household income for coastal communities, particularly in established destinations like Hikkaduwa. The study uncovers high levels of environmental dependency and vulnerability among stakeholders due to accelerating climate impacts, including coral bleaching events, rising sea temperatures, and increasing coastal erosion. These stressors have led to visible reef degradation, reduced marine biodiversity, and declining tourist satisfaction. While local communities and business owners recognise the economic benefits of reef-based tourism, there is limited awareness and coordinated action regarding long-term sustainability measures and climate adaptation strategies. The study concludes that enhancing stakeholder awareness through education programs, implementing adaptive management strategies, strengthening regulatory frameworks, and fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration are essential to protect coral ecosystems and sustain tourism-related livelihoods under climate change pressures.

Keywords: *Climate Change, Coral Reef Tourism, Socio-Economic Contribution, Marine Tourism, SDG 13, SDG 14*

From Silence to Selfhood: Female Agency in Traditional and Modern Drama through Desdemona and Nora

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the construction, limitation, and shifting paradigms of female agency woven through the dramatic form in the cross-analysis of William Shakespeare's *Othello* (1603) and Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879). While Desdemona and Nora have both been regarded in the literature of feminist criticism, the two characters have not been studied in the context of a comparison in a relational sense as agents of a structure whose agency is determined by the genre. In response to impressions left by Elaine Showalter's feminist historiography, Judith Butler's theory of gender as performance, and Toril Moi's existential feminism, this paper posits that the condition of female agency extends beyond mere possession, but rather, is a condition of the dramatic form. In terms of methodology, this paper applies comparative qualitative textual analysis along with close reading, thematic coding concerning the speech acts of obedience, resistance and self-definition, and structural analysis of genre. Selected scenes are studied to examine how acts of submission and negotiation, and rupture function in the tragic drama of the Renaissance period and the realist drama of the nineteenth century. The analysis of Desdemona and Nora demonstrates that Desdemona's agency is performative and is situated in patriarchal structures, such that tragic form closes off the horizon of her agency's transformative potential. In contrast, Nora's agency reaches an existential self-definition, but this is made possible by realist dramaturgy. The movement from Desdemona's confinement to Nora's self-assertion mirrors a wider ideological transformation in drama from legitimising social hierarchies to questioning and subverting them. This study is a contribution to feminist literary criticism by demonstrating the ways in which genre structures the scope of female subjectivity in different historical moments.

Keywords: *Traditional Drama, Modern Drama, Female Agency, Gender Performativity*

A Qualitative Analysis of Grammarly-App-Identified Revisions in the Academic Language of Business and Management Research Communication in Sri Lanka: a Language Editor's Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Language is the honest communicator of academic work. Business and management research in Sri Lanka is increasingly expected to meet international standards. It looks for clear, concise, and grammatically consistent writing. However, the writing style in many local journals continues to reflect the training by Sinhala- and Tamil-medium education. Academic English has not always been a priority in Sri Lankan education. This qualitative study examines the revisions made by the Grammarly App, now widely used as a writing assistant. It flags and revises language issues in five research articles published in a Sri Lankan business and management journal. Each article was reviewed in three stages: the original submission, the Grammarly-revised version, and the final language-edited draft. The researcher, acting as the language editor, utilised Grammarly as a support tool to identify patterns in grammar, clarity, and tone. The analysis reveals several recurring issues, including wordiness, tense inconsistencies, article and preposition errors and an overuse of passive constructions. Grammarly effectively corrects many of these problems. However, it sometimes oversimplifies complex academic expressions. It recommends alternatives that do not fit the context or cultural style. The paper compares these findings with existing literature on academic English and error analysis. It highlights the balance between automated assistance and human judgment. Overall, the study emphasises that tools like Grammarly can enhance the quality of research writing in Sri Lanka. However, they cannot replace the expertise of an experienced editor, subject-specific knowledge, or the ongoing development of academic writing skills.

Keywords: *Academic English Proficiency, Automated vs. Human Editing, Grammarly-Assisted Editing, Linguistic Error Analysis, Sri Lankan Research Communication*

Road from Elephant Pass is Set Against the Backdrop of Sri Lanka's Civil War and Engages with History Through Personal and Political Narratives

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ABSTRACT

This article offers a critical examination of Nihal de Silva's *The Road from the Elephant Pass* through the intersecting lenses of postcolonial, trauma, and historiographic metafiction theories. Situated within the socio-political landscape of Sri Lanka's civil war, the study employs thematic analysis to interrogate how the novel negotiates the interface between historical actuality and imaginative reconstruction. By humanising both Sinhalese and Tamil subjectivities, de Silva resists homogenising representations of the conflict and challenges hegemonic constructions of national history. The novel's fragmented temporalities and self-reflexive narrative structure foreground the instability of memory and the contingent nature of truth, emblematic of broader postcolonial preoccupations with remembrance and identity. This article argues that *The Road from the Elephant Pass* transcends a conventional war narrative by repositioning literature as a critical medium for reimagining collective memory, amplifying marginalised voices, and engaging with reconciliation discourses in post-conflict Sri Lanka

Keywords: *Historical Representation, Reconciliation Discourse, Narrative Fragmentation, Sri Lankan Civil War*

Review the Impact of Social Media on the Academic and Non-Academic Activities of University Students: A Case Study at a Sri Lankan State University

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ABSTRACT

Social media is a powerful communication medium in the present era, and it has particularly attracted the younger generation. The study has three primary objectives. The study aims to identify the influence of social media networks on students' academic activities, to examine their engagement in non-academic activities through social media usage, and to explore the key actors influencing students' social media use. This research was conducted among 346 students selected from three faculties, Arts, Law, and Education at the government University, using a stratified random sampling method. Also, the study primarily employed quantitative analysis methods alongside qualitative approaches. The findings suggest that social media contributes to enhancing academic outcomes, and social media usage positively correlates with students' academic performance. Also, an analysis of factors related to social media usage identified six main factors: social factors, information-based factors, educational factors, financial factors, research-oriented factors, and entertainment factors. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, while qualitative responses were examined via thematic analysis to support and interpret quantitative findings. Social factors (0.888), information-based factors (0.841), entertainment factors (0.792), educational factors (0.662), and financial factors (0.645), and, in addition to academic activities, students use platforms such as YouTube for non-academic purposes, including income generation and showcasing aesthetic or creative content. Also, the study concludes with a recommendation for universities to incorporate social media as a technological approach within teaching and learning environments. In suggestion, educational institutions can cultivate positive and effective social media habits among students and academic faculty members through conferences, workshops, or orientation programs.

Keywords: *Academic and Non-academic Activities, Internet, Learning Environments, Social Media*

Feasibility and Curriculum Relevance of a Proposed Practical Agro-Tourism Certificate Course: Perceptions of Agriculture Undergraduates

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's agricultural sector faces persistent challenges, including low profitability and limited diversification. Agro-tourism is identified as a promising strategy to enhance agricultural livelihoods and promote sustainable rural development. However, the local agro-tourism industry is currently constrained by a critical lack of structured training and professional capacity building opportunities, leading to skill deficiencies in areas beyond basic agriculture, particularly business management, communication and hospitality. Recognising this gap, and grounded in the conceptual framework of human capital development and vocational training efficacy, we designed an Agro-Tourism Certificate Course. This study employed a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the awareness, attitudes and recommendations of 100 agriculture undergraduates from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna regarding this course. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and a one-sample Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied to measure student perception. The findings provide strong validation for the necessity of formal training, as 96% of respondents perceived the certificate course as a valuable initiative. Undergraduates affirmed the relevance of the proposed modules but critically recommended integrating essential soft competencies such as communication, leadership, customer service and hospitality training. Logistical feasibility highlighted preferences for a hybrid delivery mode to ensure hands-on, field-based exposure. Affordability is paramount, with 88 respondents preferring a course fee under LKR 15,000. A fundamental conclusion is the imperative for a robust institutional-industry collaborative framework. An overwhelming majority recommended integrating university lecturers with industry experts as facilitators. The strong consensus that the course will enhance employability validates its potential to contribute meaningfully to professional capacity building and rural economic diversification in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Agro-tourism, Awareness, Certificate Course, Perception, Undergraduates*

Reimagining Relic-Centric Spiritual Tourism in Anuradhapura: A Global Comparative Analysis and a Prototype Experience Model

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's ancient city of Anuradhapura is one of the most important relic-based sacred landscapes in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, housing the Ruwanweliseya, believed to enshrine a significant quantity of the corporeal relics of Gautama Buddha: the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi, Jethawanaramaya, Thuparamaya, and the Samadhi Buddha statue, and representing over two millennia of continuous Buddhist devotion, philosophy, and civilisation. Despite this outstanding heritage value, Sri Lanka remains relatively marginal within global spiritual tourism flows, as visitor experiences in Anuradhapura are fragmented, weakly interpreted, and lack clear sequencing, coherent narrative presentation, and structured meditation integration, especially when compared with leading pilgrimage destinations such as Bodh Gaya, the Shikoku Henro, Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, the Camino de Santiago, Jerusalem, and Mecca–Medina, which apply well-developed experience frameworks including ritual sequencing, credentialing systems, curated storytelling, digital support, and coordinated governance. This study, therefore, aims to (1) examine Anuradhapura's current use as a relic-centred spiritual destination, (2) compare it with major global pilgrimage sites across different faith traditions, and (3) develop a theoretically grounded and practically applicable Relic-Centred Experience Architecture (RCEA). Using a qualitative multiple-case comparative approach combined with conceptual model development, the findings show that sacred importance alone does not ensure meaningful visitor engagement and identify gaps in pilgrimage route structuring, credentialing mechanisms, narrative interpretation, meditation programmes, digital and interpretive infrastructure, MSME integration, visitor data systems, and governance coordination. In response, the proposed seven-pillar RCEA integrates relic-based narratives, structured pilgrimage circuits, a national spiritual passport, meditation pathways, improved interpretive and digital systems, MSME participation, and multi-stakeholder governance. The study contributes to spiritual tourism literature by introducing a relic-centred perspective and offers practical guidance for repositioning Anuradhapura as a globally recognised spiritual tourism destination while strengthening cultural preservation and local Livelihoods.

Keywords: *Anuradhapura, Buddhist Pilgrimage, Credentialing, Experience Architecture, Spiritual Tourism*

Evaluating Factors Affecting Reverse Logistics Effectiveness in E-Waste Management: A Sri Lankan Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Electronic waste has emerged as one of the fastest-growing waste streams globally, posing serious environmental, economic, and public health challenges, particularly in developing countries. Reverse logistics (RL) plays a crucial role in mitigating these challenges by facilitating the collection, transportation, recovery, recycling, and environmentally responsible disposal of end-of-life electronic products. However, the effectiveness of RL systems in many developing economies remains limited due to infrastructural, institutional, and behavioural constraints. This study examines the key factors influencing the effectiveness of RL in Sri Lanka's e-waste management sector. A mixed-method research approach was adopted. Initially, a systematic literature review was conducted to identify relevant factors affecting RL effectiveness. These were thematically categorised into organisational, policy and market-based, resource-based, and public awareness and participation factors. Based on this framework, a structured questionnaire was developed and distributed among organisations involved in e-waste collection, recycling, processing, manufacturing, and logistics. A total of 126 valid responses were obtained and analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that resource-based factors and public awareness and participation have statistically significant positive effects on RL effectiveness. In contrast, organisational, policy and market-based factors were not significant in the main model. However, supplementary analyses revealed that these factors exert significant positive effects when assessed independently, suggesting the presence of interaction or implementation-related limitations. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening infrastructure, expanding local recycling capacity, improving collection systems, and enhancing public engagement to improve RL effectiveness. The study extends existing RL effectiveness models by empirically validating an integrated framework of operational, technological, institutional, and behavioural factors in a developing-country e-waste context. This provides new theoretical insights into how RL systems function under institutional, infrastructural, and market constraints typical of emerging economies, while offering practical guidance for policymakers, industry practitioners, and stakeholders seeking to promote sustainable and circular e-waste management in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *E-waste Management, PLS-SEM, Reverse Logistics, Sustainability*

Leveraging Sustainable Tourism in Sri Lanka: Opportunities and Challenges from the Experts and Service Providers' Point of View

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has long been a vital contributor to Sri Lanka's economy, offering significant potential to promote sustainable development when managed responsibly and strategically. As a sector closely linked to natural resources, cultural heritage, and local communities, tourism holds the capacity to generate economic growth while supporting environmental conservation and social wellbeing. However, balancing economic expansion with environmental protection and community welfare remains a continuing and complex challenge. This study explores how Sri Lanka can effectively leverage tourism as a driver of sustainable development by identifying existing opportunities, understanding persistent challenges, and examining the conditions that currently shape the industry's transition toward sustainability. Adopting an interpretivist qualitative research approach, the study seeks to capture diverse perspectives and in-depth insights into sustainability practices within the tourism sector. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including policymakers, tourism officials, private sector representatives, and environmental experts who are directly involved in tourism planning and implementation. These primary insights were complemented by secondary data obtained from government publications, policy documents, and international tourism and sustainability reports, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the broader institutional and policy context. The findings reveal that Sri Lanka possesses remarkable natural, cultural, and social assets that are well-suited to sustainable tourism development. Nevertheless, several structural and institutional barriers continue to hinder progress. Key challenges identified include policy inconsistency, weak enforcement mechanisms, limited coordination among stakeholders, inadequate community participation, and insufficient investment in green infrastructure and human resource development. At the same time, the study identifies emerging opportunities in areas such as eco-tourism diversification, community-based tourism initiatives, sustainable destination branding, and the use of digital innovations to promote low-impact and responsible travel experiences. The study highlights that achieving genuine and long-term progress requires a holistic and integrated strategy that aligns environmental stewardship, inclusive governance, and policy coherence. Strengthening institutional frameworks, empowering local communities, and improving coordination among stakeholders nationwide.

Keywords: *Community Participation, Policy Framework, Sri Lanka, Sustainable Development, Sustainable Tourism*

Exploring the Traveller Motivations, Experiences, and Market Potential of the Wellness Tourism Sector in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study aimed to examine the motivations, experiences, expectations, and challenges of international wellness travellers in Sri Lanka, to enhance the country's competitiveness as a wellness tourism destination, using Push-Pull Motivation Theory and the Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) framework to analyse traveller decision-making. **Design:** The study adopted a qualitative design, using purposive sampling of sixteen international wellness travellers who were interviewed through semi-structured interviews in Sri Lanka, with data analysed thematically in line with the research objectives and theoretical framework. **Findings:** The study shows that wellness travellers to Sri Lanka seek stress relief, recovery, and personal growth, and are drawn by Ayurveda, mindfulness practices, and natural environments. While their holistic and personalised experiences are a major strength, poor visibility, governance, certification, and infrastructure undermine competitiveness, making Sri Lanka's authenticity both an asset and a source of global invisibility. **Research Implications:** The study confirms the relevance of Push-Pull Motivation Theory and extends the MTE framework by highlighting the role of authenticity in creating transformative wellness experiences, while offering practical and policy insights and emphasising wellness tourism's contribution to community empowerment, cultural preservation, sustainability, and global wellbeing.

Keywords: *Authenticity, Destination Competitiveness, Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE), Push-Pull Motivation, Wellness Tourism in Sri Lanka*



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