



Faculty of Management Studies
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

3RD INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM ON MANAGEMENT

“Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures”

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**SYMPOSIUM
PROCEEDINGS**



3rd International Research Symposium on Management

Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures

Abstracts

**Faculty of Management Studies
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Mihintale, Sri Lanka**

28th November 2024

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Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka,
Mihintale, Sri Lanka.

Tel/Fax: +94252266810

Web: fms.rjt.ac.lk/irsm2024

E-mail: irsm@mgt.rjt.ac.lk

Message from the Vice Chancellor



It is a distinct honor to extend my heartfelt greetings on the occasion of the 3rd International Research Symposium on Management (IRSM) 2024, hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This symposium embodies our commitment to fostering knowledge, collaboration, and innovation in the field of management, and we are proud to see it continue to grow into an invaluable platform for both national and international scholars and practitioners.

We are reminded of our university's mission as we gather in Mihintale, a location steeped in Sri Lanka's rich cultural and educational heritage. Rooted in the legacy of Anuradhapura and inspired by the historic Abhayagiri monastery—the world's first known university—Rajarata University aspires to lead in research, education, and sustainable development. This year's symposium theme, "Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures," reflects our shared vision of a future where management practices are aligned with resilience, adaptability, and sustainability in our rapidly evolving world.

The theme chosen for IRSM 2024 is both relevant and visionary. In today's complex business landscape, a robust management ecosystem is essential, one that balances strategic objectives with innovation, resilience, and value creation for all stakeholders. This year's symposium will feature a unique business forum that builds upon these ideas, creating space for impactful dialogues on the dynamics of management ecosystems and their critical role in navigating today's challenges.

IRSM 2024 is a collaborative effort that brings together leading researchers, academics, industry experts, and students from various disciplines and regions. The symposium's objectives reflect our ambition to encourage a vibrant exchange of knowledge, share best practices, foster new partnerships, and offer a stage for young researchers to gain valuable insights and professional growth. Our commitment to academic rigor and practical relevance underscores our university's dedication to solving real-world issues and contributing meaningfully to sustainable development goals.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the IRSM 2024 symposium chair, co-chair, and the dedicated organizing committee for their tireless work and vision. I hope that all participants will take full advantage of this opportunity to share ideas, broaden their perspectives, and contribute to Sri Lanka's social, economic, and academic progress. Congratulations to everyone involved in IRSM 2024, and thank you for your commitment to this shared journey of knowledge and sustainable innovation.

Prof. (Mrs.) G.A.S. Ginigaddara

Vice Chancellor

Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Message from the Dean of the Faculty



I am delighted to warmly welcome you to the 3rd International Research Symposium on Management (IRSM) 2024 hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. IRSM 2024 serves as a premier platform for academics, professionals, and students to engage in meaningful dialogue and address pressing challenges in the field of management through rigorous research.

The theme of this year's symposium, "*Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures*" highlights our commitment to fostering resilient and adaptable management practices that support for long-term sustainability. The symposium offers an invaluable opportunity to explore critical aspects of management ecosystems that enable businesses to thrive amidst ever-evolving challenges. IRSM 2024 is enriched by keynote addresses from distinguished experts, as well as technical sessions and pre-conference webinars that position the symposium at the forefront of academic excellence.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Reviewers, Editorial team, Symposium Chair, Co-Chairs, Secretaries, Track Coordinators, Session Chairs and Organizing Committee for their invaluable contribution to making this event a success.

I am confident that this symposium will inspire a spirit of research and collaboration among academics, students, and professionals, strengthening our shared foundation of knowledge. I wish all participants a fruitful and impactful experience as we work together to advance management practices for a sustainable future.

Prof. P.M.B. Jayathilake

Dean

Faculty of Management Studies

Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Message from the Symposium Chair



It is with immense pride and heartfelt gratitude that I extend my warmest appreciation to each of you for joining us at the 3rd International Research Symposium on Management (IRSM 2024), organized by the Faculty of Management Studies at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This event exemplifies our dedication to advancing the frontiers of research and scholarship. Under the theme, "Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures," we embark on a journey into the transformative power of digitalization in business.

In an era marked by rapid technological advancements and shifting global dynamics, businesses are compelled to redefine themselves not only to survive but to lead in sustainable, resilient practices. This symposium aims to explore how digital transformation strategies empower organizations to innovate, remain competitive, and drive meaningful change. This year, we were thrilled to receive over extended abstracts, reflecting the thriving interest and dedication within the management field. After careful review, ...abstracts have been selected, each contributing unique insights to our understanding of business transformation and sustainability.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated academics, researchers, and students who have contributed their work, as well as to our esteemed reviewers and editors for their rigorous assessments. Your commitment has transformed this symposium into a prestigious venue for sharing pioneering ideas and research that will shape the future. Events like IRSM 2024 are more than academic gatherings; they are catalysts for thought leadership and collaborative innovation. They provide a space where scholars can refine methodologies, establish professional networks, and draw inspiration for future research.

The impacts of these discussions are far-reaching, influencing industries, driving economic growth, and contributing to sustainable societal progress. I am confident that this symposium will be a pivotal moment in your academic and professional pursuits. May it enrich your knowledge, spark new ideas, and inspire you to contribute even more boldly to the field. Together, we are building a legacy of knowledge, innovation, and resilience that will benefit future generations.

Once again, I extend my gratitude to our Keynote Speakers, Contributors, Academic and Professional Partners, Symposium Committee Members, Sponsors, and Participants who have made this event possible and meaningful. May IRSM 2024 be an enlightening and inspiring experience, guiding us all towards a future characterized by resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth.

Dr. H.M.B.P. Ranaweera

Symposium Chair

3rd International Research Symposium on Management

Faculty of Management Studies

Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Message from the Co-Chairs



As We come together for the 3rd International Research Symposium on Management (IRSM 2024), We are thrilled to welcome each of you, whether you are joining us in person or virtually. This symposium stands as a testament to our faculty's continued dedication to advancing the frontier of

management research. Building upon the momentum established by IRSM 2023, this year's symposium underscores a vital theme: "Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures."

In a world where the business environment is increasingly unpredictable, the capacity for organizations to not only navigate challenges but to innovate, transform, and lead is essential. Our theme encourages us to re-envision management practices to build adaptable, forward-looking ecosystems equipped to face global challenges. Through IRSM 2024, we are excited to explore the varied dimensions of digitalization, sustainable strategies, innovation, and transformation in fields such as strategic management, marketing, human resources, and beyond. The wide-ranging contributions of our participants promise a wealth of insights and forward-thinking discussions that will shape the future of sustainable business practices. We are honored to host distinguished scholars, including our keynote speakers Prof. Chatura Ranaweera, and Prof. Randika Halwathura, alongside other esteemed experts in management. Their contributions, along with the engaging panel discussions and research presentations, are set to create an inspiring environment for collaborative learning and innovation.

Our sincere gratitude goes to everyone who has played a part in bringing this symposium to life from our committed organizing committees, editors, and paper reviewers to the unwavering support of our Vice Chancellor and the Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies. This symposium thrives not only because of its organizers but also because of its participants – scholars, researchers, and practitioners like you whose ideas and contributions fuel our collective journey.

As we delve into IRSM 2024, let us embrace the spirit of exploration, collaboration, and innovation. We are confident that the knowledge we share and generate together will illuminate new pathways towards a sustainable, digitally empowered future.

Thank you for being an essential part of IRSM 2024.

Dr. A.L.M. Jameel

Symposium Co-Chair

3rd International Research Symposium on Management

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3rd International Research Symposium on Management

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Chatura Ranaweera



It is with great pride and enthusiasm that I join the 3rd International Research Symposium on Management (IRSM) 2024, hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This symposium provides an invaluable platform for the exchange of ideas, research findings, and innovative concepts among an impressive cohort of academics, practitioners, and students from around the world.

The theme of this year's symposium, "Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures," is both timely and critical. In an increasingly complex and dynamic global landscape, organizations must learn to navigate uncertainties, adapt to rapid change, and remain focused on their strategic objectives. A resilient and effective management ecosystem is the key to achieving this. Such ecosystems are characterized by alignment, adaptability, and collaboration among their many components. They empower leaders to drive performance, engage employees, and create enduring value for all stakeholders.

My own research in Service and Relationship Marketing aligns closely with the symposium's objectives. Services, I believe, are an integral part of the management ecosystem. They permeate every facet of our lives and play a central role in modern economies. As economies develop, the service sector becomes dominant, overtaking agriculture and manufacturing in size and significance. Even traditionally manufacturing-focused companies increasingly rely on services to differentiate themselves and gain a competitive advantage—a phenomenon often referred to as "servitization."

However, we are now witnessing a profound transformation in the service sector driven by technological innovation. Artificial Intelligence (AI), in particular, is revolutionizing the service frontline—the critical interface where customers interact with firms. This service revolution, a continuation of the agricultural and industrial revolutions, presents unprecedented opportunities but also significant challenges. It forces us to rethink traditional frameworks and develop new strategies to address the implications of these innovations.

At this symposium, I will introduce several frameworks from my ongoing research that address these challenges. One is the Mindfulness Orientation Framework, which equips frontline employees with the skills needed to create positive customer experiences while safeguarding their own well-being. Another focuses on AI-Human Decision Teams (HAIDTs), providing guidelines for assigning responsibilities in environments where humans and AI collaborate. Finally, I will present propositions on the Consolidation Hypothesis, which explores how future workplaces in the service sector will evolve.

While my presentation emphasizes innovation over sustainability, I will touch upon how these concepts align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). After all, fostering innovation in the service sector not only enhances economic efficiency but also contributes to the broader agenda of creating sustainable, inclusive, and equitable futures.

The IRSM 2024 is unique in its ability to bring together diverse perspectives, showcasing cutting-edge research, and encouraging collaboration across disciplines and geographies. This collaborative spirit is crucial for addressing the complex challenges we face today and for building management ecosystems that are resilient, innovative, and sustainable.

I am deeply grateful to the Faculty of Management Studies at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka for organizing this important symposium and for giving me the opportunity to share my insights with this distinguished audience. Together, I believe we can shape a future where management ecosystems thrive, not just in achieving organizational success, but also in contributing to the betterment of society and the global economy.

Thank you.

Prof. Chatura Ranaweera

Lazaridis, School of Business & Economics, Wierid Laurier University, Canada

Keynote Speaker: Prof. Rangika Umesh Halwatura



It is a privilege to present the keynote address at the 3rd International Research Symposium on Management (IRSM) 2024, organized by the Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This significant event serves as a platform where academia, industry, and policymakers unite to address the complexities of our rapidly changing global landscape under the theme, "Strengthening Management Ecosystems for Sustainable Futures. "In today's world, characterized by unprecedented technological progress, evolving societal expectations, and urgent environmental

challenges, the concept of a management ecosystem has become vital. As a Civil Engineer specializing in sustainable materials, green technologies, and construction management, I see a strong analogy between structural and management ecosystems. Both require alignment, resilience, and adaptability among their components to ensure enduring sustainability.

Similar to ecological systems, a management ecosystem flourishes through collaboration, balance, and evolution. Organizations now operate as interconnected networks, engaging with employees, customers, regulators, and communities. This interdependence underscores the need for robust systems capable of withstanding disruptions, adapting to changes, and fostering innovation while remaining true to their core objectives. To build and sustain such ecosystems, three essential elements must be addressed: Alignment of Objectives and Values, Resilience in Response to Complexity, Fostering Innovation and Sustainability. The journey to a sustainable future demands that sustainability permeates all aspects of the management ecosystem. This involves adopting practices that are environmentally responsible, economically viable, and socially inclusive. Institutions like Rajarata University play a pivotal role in driving this agenda by promoting interdisciplinary research, nurturing creativity, and strengthening the link between academia and industry. The symposium offers an opportunity for researchers, industry professionals, and policymakers to explore diverse perspectives on management and sustainability. The business forum further amplifies the practical implications of these discussions, bridging theoretical insights with real-world applications.

As we look to the future, I invite all participants to embrace collaboration. Strengthening management ecosystems requires dismantling silos, challenging established norms, and pursuing joint solutions. Through collaborative research, cross-industry initiatives, and knowledge-sharing networks, we can shape the resilient and sustainable ecosystems we envision. In conclusion, I extend my gratitude to the organizers for this remarkable platform and commend all participants for their dedication to advancing management practices and sustainability. Together, we can cultivate ecosystems that empower leaders, engage stakeholders, and create enduring value.

Prof. Rangika Umesh Halwatura

Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

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*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
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Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

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Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

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Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

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Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. (Mrs.) C.T. Gamage

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. W.W.A.N. Sujeewa

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. P.G. Munasinghe

Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. U.W.M.R.S.S.C.B. Kappagoda

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. D.M.C. Dassanayake

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. H.M.B.P. Ranaweera

Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. W.M.R.B. Weerasooriya

Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. W.M.P.G.R. Pushpakumara

Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. T.K.G. Sameera

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

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Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. (Mrs.) C.M.Y.S.S. Bandara

Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

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Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

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Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Y.M.W.G.P.K. Udurawana

Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. (Mrs.) J.S. Kumari

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. K.T.L.U.S. Dayangana

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Dr. P.R. Weerathunga

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Ms. D.M.M.I. Dissanayake

Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. K.J.S. Madhusanka

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Ms. K.G.P. Senani

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Mr. A.A.D.P. Bandara

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Dr. J.D.T. Madhusanka

Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Ms. N.H.K. Cooray

Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Ms. D.M.J. Wickramasinghe

Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

Ms. T.D.S.H. Dissanayake

*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies,
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Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

Ms. D.D.K. Sugathadasa

*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

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*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management
Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

Mrs. K.A.K.S. Rathnakara

*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
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Ms. G.M.H.P. K. Rathwatta

*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

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*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies,
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Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

Prof. (Mrs.) B.W.R. Damayanthi

Professor, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

Prof. (Mrs.) Dinoka Perera

Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Prof. (Mrs.) T.L. Sajeewanie

Professor, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Prof. Udaya Mohan

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Prof. K.S.L. Gunawardena

Professor, Department of Information Technology, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. I.N. Manawadu

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. N. Agilan

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

Dr. Ajantha Kalyanarathne

Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. G. K. Hemamali Ganewatta

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna

Dr. K.V. Aruna Shantha

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Open University of Sri Lanka

Dr. (Mrs.) Jayani Athapaththu

Senior Lecturer, Department of Management & Organization studies, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo

Dr. Niranjala Tennakoon

Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Management, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Dr. Jayarani Ramawickrama

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna

Dr. Seuwandhi B. Ranasinghe

Senior Lecturer, Department of Management & Organization studies, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo

Dr. Gayan Priyashantha

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Dr. (Mrs.) Anuradha Iddagoda

Senior Lecturer, Management Science Unit, Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. Afsheen Fathima

Lecturer, Dundee Business School, Abertay University, UK

Dr. Sulakshana De Alwis

Lecturer, Dundee Business School, Abertay University, UK

Dr. R.V.S.P.K. Ranatunga

Senior Lecturer, Center for computer studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Dr. W. Mahesh N. Fernando

Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Technology, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. Amitha Kumara

Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Technology, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Dr. K.A.S.H. Kulathilake

Senior Lecturer, Department of Computing, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Mr. P.H.A.B. Shantha

Senior Lecturer, Department of Information Technology, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Mr. T. D. Weerasinghe

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Mr. D.T. Rathnayake

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Mr. H.M.A. Lakmal

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Mrs. S. Somasiri

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Ms. R.M.U.R.K. Rathnayaka

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

Mr. Nisal Gunawardane

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Ms. A.C.I.D. Karunarathne

Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Management, Uwa Wellassa University

Mr. A.M.D.B. Nawarathna

Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Management, Uwa Wellassa University

Mrs. J.A.R.C. Sandaruwani

Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Mr. G.V.H. Dinusha

Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Mr. C.N.R. Wijesundara

Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Mr. S. Uditha Bandara

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Mr. T.D. Karunanayake

Senior Lecturer, Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Mr. M.D. Pubudu Kaushalya

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Ms. Navini Perera

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Mr. Chanaka Piyasena

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Mrs. Dhanushka Piyananda

Senior Lecturer, Department of Finance, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Mr. P.D.C. Udayashantha

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Ms. Subhashini Weerakotuwa

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

Mrs. W.A. Edirisooriya

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

Mrs. Erandathi Jayawickrama

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya

Mrs. Vimansa Ranasinghe

Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Mr. Wiraj Wickramaarachchi

Senior Lecturer, Department of Information and Communication Technology, Faculty of Technology, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Mr. V.L. Weerawickrama

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

Ms. W.T.N.M Perera

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accountancy, University of Kelaniya

Mr. M.D P. Kaushalya

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya

Mrs. T.P. Rathnasuriya

Senior Lecturer, Department of Finance, Faculty of Management & Finance, University of Colombo

Mr. S.M.R. Kithsiri Samarakoon

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Kuliyaipitiya.

Ms. J.S. Dimon Ford

Senior Lecturer, Department of Financial Management, University of Jaffna

Mrs. D.H.S.W. Dissanayake

Senior Lecturer, Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, Kuliyaipitiya.

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DOES INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL DISCLOSURE INFLUENCE FIRM PERFORMANCE IN SRI LANKA? EXAMINING THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE INTENSITY AND INDUSTRY NATURE

P. Pratheepkanth^{1,*} and S. Balaputhiran²

^{1,2}*University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ppratheep@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between intellectual capital (IC) disclosure and firm performance across diverse sectors in Sri Lanka from 2019 to 2023, considering the moderating influence of knowledge intensity and industry characteristics. Using panel data regression analysis on a sample of 100 firms, the research employs an IC Disclosure Index encompassing human, structural, and relational capital components. The findings present mixed conclusions regarding the impact of IC disclosures on firm performance. While there are indications of positive effects, such as significant relationships found for return on assets (ROA), return on equity (ROE), and Tobin's Q in certain contexts ($\beta = 0.652$, $\beta = 0.471$, and $\beta = 0.520$, respectively; all with $p < 0.01$), these effects vary significantly across industry types. Specifically, stronger positive impacts were observed in knowledge-intensive sectors ($\beta = 0.620$ for ROA, $\beta = 0.575$ for ROE, $\beta = 0.710$ for Tobin's Q, all $p < 0.01$), whereas the influence was less pronounced in less knowledge-intensive industries ($\beta = 0.270$ for ROA, $\beta = 0.115$ for ROE, $\beta = 0.125$ for Tobin's Q, all $p < 0.05$). These mixed results suggest that, while IC disclosure may enhance firm performance under certain conditions, its effectiveness is not consistent across all industry contexts, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies in IC disclosure practices.

Keywords: Firm performance, industry nature, intellectual capital disclosure, knowledge intensity

THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATED REPORTING ON VALUE CREATION OF LISTED FINANCIAL FIRMS IN SRI LANKA

W.A.D.S. Kavindi^{1,*} and H.M.D.N. Somathilake²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email:kavindis922@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Integrated Reporting (IR) demonstrates the connections between a company's financial and non-financial aspects by providing a comprehensive view. The primary goal of any organization is to increase shareholder value, which is reflected in company performance. Firm value is mainly reflected in the performance of a company, and it can be identified when potential investors first look at the company's performance before they invest. A lack of value addition over time can reduce shareholder wealth and create negative perceptions of the organization. The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of integrated reporting levels on the value creation of listed financial companies in Sri Lanka, which attempts to bridge the gaps left by inconsistent findings and gives particular attention to the financial sector because it has never been examined before in the literature, although there is a growing tendency to adopt with integrated reporting in the financial sector in Sri Lanka. A quantitative approach was employed, and data were collected from 21 listed financial companies that prepared annual integrated reports from 2018 to 2022. The independent variable "integrated reporting" was evaluated using three content elements: business model, strategy and resource allocation; risk & opportunity; based on the IR index available in existing literature; and the dependent variable "firm value" was determined by the price model or stock price per share. In this study, firm size and profitability are considered as control variables. The findings reveal that there is a significant positive impact of disclosing information about the business model, strategy, and resource allocation over time on firm value. Nevertheless, there is a negative impact of the risk and opportunity disclosed in the integrated annual report on firm value. This study emphasizes the importance of clarity and communication in IR among Sri Lankan financial companies. Management should focus on transparent disclosures of business models and resource allocation to enhance firm value and investor perception while being careful with risk disclosure. Investors should evaluate these disclosures to assess their value creation potential. Regulators and industry bodies should standardize practices to improve reporting quality. Further, future research is needed across various sectors.

Keywords: Firm value, financial companies, integrated reporting, price model

FACTORS AFFECTING ON AUDIT COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS IN LISTED CAPITAL GOODS COMPANIES ON THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE (CSE)

M.P.V. Rasanjalee^{1,*}, C.T. Gamage² and W.P. Wijewardhana³

^{1,2,3}*Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

Corresponding author (Email: m.p.v.rasanjalee@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Audit committees have been widely recognized as a very effective mechanism for ensuring good governance in corporate affairs. At present, the auditing effectiveness of most listed companies in Sri Lanka is declining. This is because most listed companies do not consider the different factors that impact audit committee effectiveness. Thus, this research examines the effect of audit committee factors on audit committee effectiveness in relation to listed capital goods companies in Sri Lanka. Audit committee size, audit committee independence, audit committee meetings, and audit committee financial expertise were taken as audit committee factors on audit committee effectiveness. The sample consists of 29 capital goods companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange over the period 2017-2021. In this study, data were collected from secondary sources, and the hypotheses were examined using descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. The results of this study show the audit committee meetings and audit committee independence are positively related with audit committee effectiveness. Audit committee size and financial expertise have a negative relationship with audit committee effectiveness. With $R^2 = n$, the results of the study could be beneficial for managers and directors in making suitable choices about audit committee factors and corporate governance mechanisms to enhance the company's audit committee effectiveness. It provides a better understanding of the different factors required for audit committee effectiveness, and the study strongly recommends that audit committee factors are much more important for the audit committee effectiveness of listed capital goods companies. Further, this study contributes to the literature by identifying the audit committee factors in a company audit committee effectiveness.

Keywords: Audit committee effectiveness, audit committee size, financial and expertise independence

EXAMINING THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT AUDIT QUALITY OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT SETTING IN SRI LANKA

A.J.D.A.H. Dilrukshi^{1,*} and J.S. Kumari²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: adilrukshi336@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to examine the factors affecting audit quality in an external audit setting in Sri Lanka. Financial statement manipulation remains a prevalent concern in today's globalized market. Public confidence in financial reporting hinges on the quality of audits, yet its measurement poses significant challenges owing to its inherent complexity and lack of a universally accepted definition. This research bridges the gap in empirical studies surrounding audit quality in Sri Lanka, where the existing findings contradict those in both international and national contexts and contribute valuable insights into a currently understudied area. This study identifies the factors that significantly affect audit quality in the Sri Lankan external audit setting. The study employed a quantitative approach using a structured questionnaire and setting 120 external audit practitioners as the sample size. The researchers used convenience sampling while ensuring the representativeness of the population. The research found that auditors' personal characteristics (auditor competence and auditor mood) affect audit quality in the external audit setting in Sri Lanka. By contrast, conventional firm characteristics (audit tenure, firm size, audit fees, and auditor independence) do not significantly affect audit quality in the Sri Lankan context. Auditors can gain a valuable understanding of the factors that influence their performance and improve their practice accordingly. Regulators can leverage them to strengthen Sri Lanka's audit-quality framework. Finally, financial reporting users can trust the reliability and fairness of audit assessments more confidently. Thus, this study holds significant potential to enhance audit quality in Sri Lanka, promoting a more robust and transparent financial reporting landscape.

Keywords: Audit quality, external audit practitioners, financial statements manipulation

GAINING COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING TECHNIQUES IN THE SRI LANKAN APPAREL MANUFACTURING SECTOR

R.M.T.S. Rathnayake^{1,*} and G.M.H.P.K. Rathwatta²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: thilindirathnayake19@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the crucial role of Strategic Management Accounting (SMA) techniques in achieving competitive advantage in Sri Lanka's apparel manufacturing sector. As traditional cost leadership strategies have become less effective because of increased competition and technological progress, there is a growing need for strategic approaches tailored to Sri Lanka's unique competitive landscape. The primary aim is to investigate how SMA techniques, categorized by cost, customer, competitor, and performance perspectives, contribute to a competitive advantage, aligning with Porter's generic strategies. A quantitative methodology was employed to collect data via a structured questionnaire administered to top- and middle-level managers of apparel companies registered with the Sri Lanka Export Development Board. Initially, 100 companies were sampled according to the Morgan table and 71 valid responses were included. The sampling method combined random and purposive sampling to ensure industry representation. A Likert scale was used to measure the agreement or frequency of responses. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis to evaluate the impact of SMA techniques on competitive advantage. The key findings indicate that implementing SMA techniques enhances companies' ability to differentiate through superior design, quality, and targeted marketing, thereby establishing distinct market positions. For cost leadership, SMA techniques focus on cost minimization and efficiency improvements. Conversely, differentiation strategies use SMA techniques to enhance product quality and customer satisfaction, thereby creating unique market offerings. These approaches enable companies to align their focus based on competitive goals and the market context. This study quantifies the significant impact of SMA on competitive advantage, attributing nearly half of the variance in the observed success among Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers to the effective use of SMA techniques. These techniques improve cost management, product differentiation, and overall competitiveness, leading to sustainable success and ongoing innovation aligned with strategic management theories. The findings suggest that prioritizing SMA techniques in alignment with company goals and market dynamics can lead to sustainable success for Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers globally. Theoretically, the SMA integrates financial and non-financial data, supporting informed decision making in line with strategic management theories. Practically, the application of SMA techniques results in tangible improvements in cost management, product differentiation, and overall competitiveness. Empirically, this study demonstrates that SMA techniques significantly contribute to the competitive advantage of Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers, enabling continuous innovation and maintaining a competitive edge in the global market.

Keywords: Strategic management accounting, competitive advantage, generic strategies, apparel sector in Sri Lanka.

PREDICTING THE CORPORATE FAILURE OF LISTED COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA.

R.W.M.K.M. Randika^{1,*}, V.G.N. Sameera² and J.K. Hewage³

^{1,3}*Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Indigenous Social Sciences and Management Studies, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine*

²*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: malithr@gwu.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Corporate failure is a critical issue that can have a significant negative impact on companies, investors, and the economy. The rapid increase in sudden corporate failure motivates studies on the prediction of corporate failure, which enhances the importance of corporate failure prediction. This study aims to investigate the ability of corporate governance and financial variables to predict the corporate failure of listed companies in Sri Lanka and to develop a sustainable model for failure prediction with higher accuracy. Furthermore, the study examined the applicability of the prediction model to all listed companies, including the finance industry, using eighty-nine (for all industries) and sixty-two (except the finance industry) matched pairs of failed and non-failed companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) in Sri Lanka from 2010 to 2022. The study employed a total of ten financial ratios, and nine corporate governance variables were used as predictors of corporate failure. Logistic regression was employed to develop the prediction model, and expectation-prediction evaluation was used to identify the prediction accuracy of the models. The results indicate that the model consisting of both corporate governance and financial variables had the highest prediction accuracy in both samples, with more than 80 percent predictive accuracy in all three years prior to failure. It was further found that three financial variables, cash flow from operations to total assets, debt to asset ratio, revenue to asset ratio, and two corporate governance variables, CEO duality and director's remuneration, are significant variables in the failure prediction of listed firms except in the finance industry, while five financial variables, cash flow from operations to net income, cash flow from operations to total assets, debt to asset ratio, return on assets, revenue to asset ratio, and three corporate governance variables, CEO duality, outside ownership, and board size, have more explanatory power to predict corporate failure in all listed companies in Sri Lanka. Research indicates that an organization's failure can occur due to poor corporate governance variables, as well as poor financial performance. Findings related to predictions of corporate failure are useful for many parties to make decisions and identify the going-concern issues of firms.

Keywords: Corporate failure, corporate governance, CSE, Failure predictions, financial variables

IMPACT OF MACRO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES ON STOCK PRICES: A STUDY ON LISTED COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

U.S.R. Udawaththa^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author: (Email: ac2018375@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between stock market prices and macroeconomic variables in Sri Lanka by focusing on the Colombo Stock Exchange, which is crucial for economic growth. Previous research has shown inconsistent findings regarding the effects of inflation rates, interest rates, money supply, and exchange rates on stock prices, thus limiting investors' decision-making abilities. Given recent economic instabilities, this study uses updated data to clarify the impact of these macroeconomic factors on stock prices. This study was conducted to obtain the correct conclusion of the effect of macroeconomic variables on Stock Market Prices in listed companies in Sri Lanka, utilizing the most recent data enabled by past researchers, indicating varied conclusions depending on the different variables. This quantitative study analyzes the effects of macroeconomic variables on stock market prices in Sri Lanka, using secondary data from 160 randomly selected companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. This study focuses on four hypotheses related to interest rates, inflation rates, exchange rates, and money supply, exploring the cause-and-effect relationships with stock prices measured through the All Share Price Index. Data were collected from annual reports and economic databases from March 2013 to April 2022. The analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlations, and multiple regression analyses using SPSS. This study revealed the varying impacts of macroeconomic variables on Stock Market Prices. The All Share Price Index served as the dependent variable. Interest rate data from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka indicate a negative correlation with stock prices, although the coefficient analysis shows no significant impact. By contrast, inflation has a positive and statistically significant relationship with stock prices. The exchange rate is also positively correlated, but the coefficient analysis reveals no significant impact. The money supply data indicate a positive and significant effect on stock prices. Overall, the model was statistically significant based on the ANOVA test. This study highlights the relationship between Sri Lanka's stock market price and macroeconomic variables. Key findings include substantial positive correlations between inflation and money supply with stock prices, whereas interest rates showed no impact. These insights are valuable for investors and policymakers to enhance risk management and investment decisions, and suggest further exploration of additional economic indicators.

Keywords: All share price index, exchange rate, inflation rate, interest rate, money supply

THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PRACTICES ON CORPORATE FAILURE IN LISTED NON-FINANCIAL COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA.

W.W.M.G.T.M. Weerakoon^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author: (Email: wwmgthisara@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of corporate governance practices on corporate failure within Sri Lankan non-financial listed companies. The global financial crises and scandals involving high-profile firms such as Enron, WorldCom, Lehman Brothers, and Satyam, due to poor corporate governance, inconsistent policies, procedures, and false financial reporting techniques during 2008, highlight the need to examine the impact of corporate governance practices on the likelihood of business failure. This research bridges the gap in empirical studies on the impact of corporate governance on business failure in Sri Lanka, where the existing findings contradict those in both international and national contexts, and contribute valuable insights to a currently understudied area. By developing five research questions, this study seeks to identify the factors that significantly influence business failure in Sri Lanka. Adopting a quantitative approach under the positivistic paradigm, the study gathered data from the annual reports of 199 companies for three years, from 2019 to 2022. The Altman Z-Score model was used to assess corporate health and the Corporate Governance Index to measure governance strengths by considering board size, CEO duality, independent directors, ownership concentration, and board ownership as independent variables and corporate failure as a dependent variable. Board size, CEO duality, independent directors, and board ownership significantly impact corporate failure, excluding the impact of ownership concentration. These findings have important implications for improving decision-making among stakeholders, reducing coordination challenges, enhancing the effectiveness of governance practices, and promoting accountability among corporate directors. They also provide valuable insights into the role of corporate governance in corporate failure in Sri Lanka, thereby offering a foundation for future research and policy formulation.

Keywords: Corporate failure, corporate governance, non-financial listed companies

FACTORS AFFECTING INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS' TAX COMPLIANCE IN SRI LANKA

N.S. Dulanji^{1,*} and K.G.P. Senani²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author: (Email: Shashikadulanji23@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

A tax system is a set of rules that govern how a government collects revenue from individuals, corporations, and other entities. Generally, the government collects taxes to finance public goods and services that benefit all members of the society. The researcher's motivation for undertaking this study stems from the absence of prior research in the Sri Lankan context that comprehensively covered all factors across the entire nation and those that only represented part of Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study examines the factors that affect individual income taxpayers' compliance with the Sri Lankan tax system. This study covered six independent variables and one dependent variable: tax knowledge, tax audits, taxpayers' attitudes, financial base, perception of tax fairness, and government spending. Employing a quantitative research approach, this study involved a sample of 100 individuals paying income tax in Sri Lanka, gathered through a structured questionnaire. This study was based on psychological and economic theories. The data analysis included descriptive statistics, reliability, correlation, and regression. The study found that taxpayers' knowledge significantly affected individual income taxpayers' compliance. Individual income taxpayers' attitudes, financial bases, and perceptions of tax fairness significantly influence taxpayers' tax compliance. However, tax audits and taxpayers' perceptions of government spending do not impact taxpayers' compliance. This study recommends that tax authorities adopt an amicable approach when conducting tax audits with individual-income taxpayers while prioritizing the fairness of tax audits and addressing concerns raised by taxpayers.

Keywords; taxpayers' attitudes, tax audit, tax compliance, tax fairness, tax knowledge

TAXPAYER'S ADOPTION OF ELECTRONIC TAX SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA

K.M.P.H. Madushani^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: Piyumih54@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of the taxpayer's adoption of the electronic tax system in Sri Lanka, addressing the research problem "What is the impact of the taxpayer's adoption on the use of electronic tax system in Sri Lanka?". To fulfil the above objective, the current study employed a quantitative approach, collecting data from Sri Lankan taxpayers. The population of this study was 437,547 taxpayers in Sri Lanka with a sample size of 383. The current study used a convenience sampling method for data collection as it was challenging to take the list of taxpayers in Sri Lanka and obtain 124 responses through an online questionnaire. This research used a structured questionnaire to collect information from taxpayers and used a 05-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After data collection, SPSS version 26 was used to analyze the data. According to the Pearson correlation value, this study can conclude that Performance Expectancy (PE), Effort Expectancy (EE), Social Influence (SI), and Facilitating Condition (FC) correlate with the taxpayer's adoption of the electronic tax system, as all the Pearson correlation values are positive and more significant than 0.1. Finally, regarding the coefficient analysis, under the regression analysis, the findings show that PE and SI positively impact taxpayers using the e-tax system, but EE and FC do not affect taxpayers using the e-tax system. According to the final analysis, this study concludes that PE and SI impact taxpayers' use of the e-tax system.

Keywords: Adoption, effort expectancy, facilitating condition, performance expectancy, social influence

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TAX FAIRNESS ON INDIVIDUAL TAX COMPLIANCE IN SRI LANKA

R.P.C. Madushika^{1,*} and K.G.P. Senani²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author (Email: chamodirajaksha889@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka has been struggling with a few long-term issues related to the country's tax system. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of tax fairness on tax compliance in Sri Lanka and examine the overall effect of fairness on tax compliance in Sri Lanka by segmenting tax fairness into distributive, procedural, and retributive fairness. A quantitative research methodology was adopted to achieve this objective, in which primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The respondents were individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka and convenience sampling techniques were used to collect data from 100 taxpayers. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. According to the findings, respondents believed that fairness could influence their tax compliance behavior. All hypotheses were supported by both regression and correlation analyses. These findings suggest that the way taxes are administered, perceived fairness in the distribution of tax burdens, and overall positive attitudes towards taxation play a crucial role in influencing tax compliance behavior among individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Distribution fairness, procedure fairness, retributive fairness, tax compliance, tax fairness

THE EFFECT OF AUDIT-RELATED CHARACTERISTICS ON AUDIT OPINION

M. I. Ifthikar^{1,*} and M.M. Shamil²

¹*University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

²*Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong*

*Corresponding author (Email: mmihilar@hkmu.edu.hk)

ABSTRACT

Independent audit opinions are critically important for various stakeholders and users of financial statements. Viewed through agency theory, this study investigates the effects of audit-related characteristics on the audit opinions of non-financial listed entities in Sri Lanka. Data were collected from fifty (50) non-financial quoted companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange for eight (08) years (2015-2022). Audit opinion was the dependent variable and operationalized as a dichotomous variable. The independent variables were audit report lag, audit fees, audit committee independence, audit quality, and previous year's audit opinion. A logistic panel data regression technique was used to analyze the data. The results show that audit report lag significantly and negatively affects audit opinion, whereas the other independent variables have a non-significant effect on audit opinion. An additional regression analysis is performed for the pre-crisis and crisis periods. The present study provides valuable insight into audit characteristics and opinions before and during the pandemic and crisis in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Agency theory, audit opinion, audit quality, audit report lag, logistic regression

FACTORS INFLUENCING ON TAX COMPLIANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN SRI LANKA

H. M. N. R Karunarathna^{1,*} and K. G. P Senani²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ac2019162@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are a crucial component of the Sri Lankan economy, playing a pivotal role in fostering innovation, generating employment, and facilitating economic diversification. This sector also serves as a significant contributor to the nation's tax revenue. However, ensuring robust tax compliance within this sector presents a challenge for tax authorities. Therefore, this study examines the factors influencing the tax compliance of SMEs in Sri Lanka, focusing on variables such as tax rate, taxpayer's attitude, rewards and incentives, fines and penalties, tax audits, and perceptions of government expenditure. A quantitative research approach was employed utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 100 SMEs registered in Sri Lanka. The study sample was selected using convenience sampling. The total population of SMEs registered in Sri Lanka served as the basis for this selection. Data analysis was conducted using the SPSS Statistical Package, employing descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation, and regression analysis. The study found a positive and significant relationship between taxpayers' attitudes ($r = 0.61, p < 0.01$), rewards and incentives ($r = 0.52, p < 0.01$), fines and penalties ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$), perceptions of government expenditures ($r = 0.19, p < 0.01$), and tax compliance. Additionally, the results reveal a significant negative relationship between the tax rate ($r = -0.47, p < 0.01$) and tax compliance. These insights suggest the need to revise the current tax rate structure to alleviate the burden on taxpayers. Implementing targeted tax incentives, simplifying the tax processes, and promoting transparency in tax policies and authorities can enhance compliance. This study provides valuable information for policymakers and tax authorities aiming to improve tax compliance among SMEs in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: SMEs, tax compliance, taxpayers' attitudes, tax policy, tax rate

FACTORS AFFECTING ON THE AUDIT EXPECTATION GAP OF AUDITORS IN CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

G.W.A.T. Ekanayake^{1,*}, C.T. Gamage² and W.P. Wijewardhana³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: achinithakshila1998@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The auditor's role is to express opinions on whether financial statements are materially misstated. Users of financial statements often have expectations exceeding the actual scope of an audit, leading to an Audit Expectation Gap (AEG). The audit expectation gap can be defined as the difference between what users believe auditors are responsible for and what auditors believe their responsibilities are. However, this study mainly aimed to identify the factors affecting auditors' AEG in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Only the Central Province was selected because of time and resource limitations. The study focused on independent variables such as audit education, auditor efforts, skills, and public knowledge. This study considered one of the largest audit firms in the country and 24 audit firms. Thus, the target population was identified using the CA Sri Lanka website and each firm's website. The necessary information was gathered from 150 auditors based on the rules of thumb using the developed questionnaire. Convenience sampling was also applied. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used as analytical tools in SPSS. This study found that four factors (audit education, auditors' efforts, auditors' skills, and public knowledge) positively impact the audit expectation gap, with an R² of 0.794. P-values for all individual variables were <0.05. The results of this study could be beneficial for making better decisions to focus on quality work by setting realistic expectations. These findings provide valuable insights to users in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Furthermore, we could consider initiatives to enhance public financial literacy and promote ongoing auditor training programs.

Keywords: Audit expectation gap, audit education, auditors' efforts, auditors' skills, and public knowledge

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING IN SRI LANKA

D.K.A. Weeraratna^{1,*} and H.M.D.N. Somathilake²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

Corresponding author (Email: dkaweerarathna@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Sustainability reporting is a practice by which companies disclose their environmental, social, and governance impacts. It includes providing insight into how the company manages its environmental footprint, social responsibility, and governance practices and measuring and communicating information related to the company's sustainability efforts and results. Corporate sustainability reporting has become essential in today's business environment as it serves as a critical tool for improving transparency, engaging stakeholders, and encouraging responsible business practices. This study explores how corporate governance affects sustainability reporting in Sri Lanka. By addressing the inconsistencies found in international research and filling the empirical gap in Sri Lankan-centric studies, it seeks to provide fresh insight and clarity into this critical relationship. A quantitative methodology was used for the data collection. The study population represents all institutions listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE). When the sample was selected, 44 companies were listed in the food, beverage, and tobacco sectors between 2020 and 2022. The independent variable, "corporate governance," was assessed through board size, board independence, board gender diversity, and board expertise. The dependent variable, "sustainability reporting," was assessed using a validated scoring system aligned with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards. The secondary data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings revealed a significant positive effect of the corporate governance attributes of board size, board independence, board gender diversity, and board expertise on sustainability reporting of companies in the food, beverage, and tobacco sectors in Sri Lanka. These findings provide valuable insights for policymakers to develop better governance policies to increase transparency and accountability. Additionally, these results provide a benchmark for companies to follow best practices and boost stakeholder confidence. Moreover, this study fills a critical gap in Sri Lankan-centric research, encouraging further research in different contexts.

Keywords: Board expertise, board gender diversity, board independence, board size, sustainability reporting

FACTORS AFFECTING THE CHOICE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANCY AS A PROFESSIONAL COURSE AMONG ACCOUNTANCY AND FINANCE UNDERGRADUATES: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

M.R.P.P. Bandara^{1,*} and J.M.N. Wijekumara²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author(Email: pasindupiyumalbandara@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The growing complexity of financial landscapes and the expanding role of Chartered Accountants have led to a rapid increase in the demand for their services across both the private and public sectors. Despite this rising need, state universities in Sri Lanka, like many other nations, do not contribute to the production of an adequate number of qualified Chartered Accountants from their accountancy and finance degree programs. Consequently, this study aims to provide an understanding of the factors that affect the choice of Chartered Accountancy as a professional course among accountancy and finance undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka. The research framework outlines the factors affecting the choice of Chartered Accountancy as a professional course as the independent variable and the choice of Chartered Accountancy as the dependent variable. Employing a quantitative methodology, this study sampled 354 undergraduates using a simple random sample from a pool of 4,500 accountancy and finance undergraduates enrolled in seven (07) state universities across Sri Lanka. Data were collected via an online structured questionnaire underpinned by seven formulated hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used as analytical techniques. Regression analysis revealed that cost, other professional courses, friends' influence, lecturers' influence, and social status of accountancy and finance undergraduates significantly influence their choice of Chartered Accountancy. Conversely, parental influence and the required number of years did not significantly impact the choice of Chartered Accountancy. Thus, the research findings shed light on the nuanced dynamics influencing the professional aspirations of accountancy and finance undergraduates in the Sri Lankan context, and provide valuable insights for academia, policymakers, and educational institutions. In addition, this research improves the existing understanding of the factors influencing professional choices. It offers practical recommendations for higher educational institutions and professional bodies to better align their programs with the preferences and needs of accountancy and finance undergraduates aspiring to become qualified Chartered Accountants in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Accountancy and finance, chartered accountancy, professional course, state universities, undergraduates

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF IFRS ADOPTION ON KEY ACCOUNTING RATIOS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF INDIAN COMPANIES

P.R. Weerathunga*

Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.

*Corresponding Author (Email: prageeth@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of adopting International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) on crucial accounting ratios and the financial performance of companies in India that transitioned to IFRS in 2017. Utilizing reconciliation statements between IFRS and the former Indian GAAP (IGAAP) for the 2016 financial year, this study creates a comprehensive database of financial ratios under both accounting regimes. The objective is to identify any significant differences in crucial accounting ratios calculated under IFRS compared to IGAAP, and to analyze how these differences affect overall financial performance and company rankings. Data were collected from a sample of 149 top-capitalized companies listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange in India. To assess whether significant differences exist between accounting ratios under the two regimes, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test and the Sign Test were applied. The findings reveal that several ratios, such as Return on Assets (ROA), Return on Equity (ROE), and Inventory Turnover, differ significantly between IFRS and IGAAP, indicating that IFRS adoption can affect these metrics. In contrast, other ratios, such as the Current Ratio (CR) and Equity Ratio (DER), show no significant changes, suggesting that IFRS adoption does not uniformly affect all financial metrics. Overall, the results indicate that IFRS adoption does not significantly alter financial performance as reflected by the accounting ratios and does not lead to substantial changes in company rankings. This study adds to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the effects of IFRS adoption in an emerging market context, highlighting the importance of understanding these impacts for accurate financial analysis and decision-making

Key Words: Emerging markets, IFRS adoption, indian GAAP, ratio analysis

AUDIT EXPECTATION PERFORMANCE GAP AMONG EXTERNAL AUDITORS AND STATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN THE ECONOMIC CRISIS SITUATION OF SRI LANKA

D.M.H.D. Dissanayake^{1,*} and J.S. Kumari²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author (Email: dinalhimanka@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In recent years, auditors have faced increasing complexity due to the intricate nature of financial reporting and rising utilization of technology. The economic downturn and external factors such as COVID-19 have significantly impacted auditors' role in recent history, prompting notable changes. This economic crisis has led many undergraduates, especially those studying accounting and finance, to form stronger opinions on the role of auditors in financial oversight. They may have heightened auditors' expectations, particularly regarding detecting fraud and ensuring the financial integrity of institutions during turbulent economic times, thus contributing to the expectation gap more than ever. This study attempts to analyze the audit expectation gap (AEG) between external auditors and state university undergraduates in Sri Lanka, and the factors contributing to AEG. Being the research methodology deductive, quantitative data was gathered from a targeted cohort of state university undergraduates pursuing management degrees across all state universities in Sri Lanka. For the analysis in this study, the identified 49 duties of external auditors were categorized as deficient performance, deficient standards, and unreasonable expectations. For this study, an independent sample t-test, descriptive analysis, and one sample t-test were performed to achieve the research objectives. The findings reveal that no significant audit expectation gap exists between external auditors and state university undergraduates concerning deficient performance, standards, and unreasonable expectations, aligning with the pre-crisis evidence. Moreover, demographic factors, particularly audit education, play a critical role; among external auditors, audit education significantly influences the formation of deficient performance and standards gaps. Conversely, a lower level of audit education among undergraduates contributes to a notable audit expectation gap regarding inadequate performance. This research provides valuable insights into the significance of understanding the audit expectation gaps between university students' and external auditors.' By incorporating a sound audit-related education system in Sri Lanka, this study offers a solid theoretical foundation for the audit expectation gap to decrease to an acceptable level. Particularly in the Sri Lankan context, this study significantly advances the necessity of audit education in general, for the benefit of many related fields.

Keywords: Audit expectation gap, economic crisis, external auditors, state university undergraduates

IMPACT OF ONLINE TAX SYSTEM ON TAX- COMPLIANCE AMONG INDIVIDUAL TAX PAYERS IN SRI LANKA

A.U.K. Fernando ^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: ushanikawindya@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of the online tax system on tax compliance among individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka. Tax compliance is essential for effective revenue collection and economic stability, yet many taxpayers struggle with traditional manual processes. The introduction of an online tax system aims to simplify tax administration, enhance transparency, and improve compliance. This quantitative study employed a cross-sectional research design utilizing a stratified sampling technique to select 384 individual taxpayers from a population of 204,467. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire, and statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS to assess the relationship between the online tax system and compliance behavior. The results reveal a positive correlation between the online tax system and increased tax compliance. Key factors such as ease of use, taxpayers' awareness, and taxpayers' knowledge significantly enhance compliance rates among individual taxpayers. However, this study also highlights the need for ongoing taxpayer education to maximize the benefits of the online system. These findings underscore the importance of implementing automated tax systems to improve compliance rates. Policymakers and tax authorities should prioritize user-friendly interfaces and provide comprehensive taxpayer education to enhance engagement. Future research should consider the experiences of corporate taxpayers and examine the long-term effects of online tax systems on compliance behavior to ensure that strategies align with the evolving needs of all taxpayer groups.

Keywords: Ease of use, online self – assessment system, tax compliance, tax payers' awareness, tax payers' knowledge.

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF BOARD GENDER DIVERSITY ON THE IMPACT OF BOARD CHARACTERISTICS ON FIRM PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM BANKING, FINANCE AND INSURANCE COMPANIES LISTED IN SRI LANKA

H.R.C. Somathilaka^{1,*}, D.D.K. Sugathadasa² and A.H. Kelumdeniya³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: rukshani.cs2000@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Corporate governance is the framework that directs and controls the functioning of companies. The board of directors is the most essential element of corporate governance mechanisms. Board diversity plays a more critical role in the process of good corporate governance. Board gender diversity strengthens corporate governance by enhancing decision making and promoting balanced oversight. In the past few years, there has been an increase in the number of working women in developed and developing nations, including Sri Lanka. This study investigates the moderating effect of gender diversity on the impact of Board Characteristics on the performance of Banking, Finance and Insurance companies listed in Sri Lanka. The data collection method employed in this study is secondary data analysis, which primarily involves the examination of annual reports from 22 Banking, Finance, and Insurance companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange in Sri Lanka, covering the period from 2018 to 2022, and representing the total population of interest. Regression, correlation, and descriptive analyses were conducted to achieve the research objectives. The independent variables are board characteristics, measured by board independence, board size, frequency of board meetings, and CEO duality. Dependent variables are return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE). The moderating variable was board gender diversity. The findings of this study reveal no significant impact of CEO duality, board size, independence, or meeting frequency on a company's return on assets or equity. Board gender diversity has a marginal moderating impact on firm performance, hinting at its subtle influence on certain aspects.

Keywords: board characteristics, board gender diversity, corporate governance

INTENTION TO USE COMPUTERIZED ACCOUNTING SYSTEM IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MATALE DISTRICT

P.M.K.G.K.T.L. Gamage^{1,*} and D.D.K. Sugathadasa²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: 99gamage@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The government of Sri Lanka recognizes Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as the backbone of its economy, accounting for over 75% of all enterprises, providing 45% of employment, and contributing 52% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Despite facing various challenges, such as environmental changes, lack of business knowledge, intense competition, and high labor turnover, SME owners must effectively manage risks to ensure their businesses' development and long-term sustainability. This study aims to investigate the factors affecting the intention to use the Computerized Accounting System (CAS) in SMEs in Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on Matale District. Consequently, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, firm size, and firm age were considered proxies for independent variables. Simultaneously, the intention to use CAS in SMEs is the dependent variable. According to a statistical report from the Department of Census and Statistics (DCS), as of the end of 2018, a total of 2003 SMEs were established in Matale District, and the research employed a quantitative approach to investigate the study's objectives, collecting data from 311 SMEs. This study used a simple stratified sampling technique with structured questionnaires as the primary method for data collection. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, tests for multicollinearity and normality, correlation analysis, ANOVA, and multiple regression. The findings showed that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, and firm age positively influenced the intention to use CAS in SMEs. In contrast, social influence and firm size affect the intention. This study suggests that improving performance expectancy, ease of use, and providing adequate support can positively influence SMEs' adoption of CAS, particularly in older firms. However, larger firms and those influenced by external social factors may face resistance and require tailored strategies to overcome these barriers.

Keywords: Computerized accounting system, effort expectancy, performance expectancy, small & medium enterprises, social influence

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND INSOLVENCY RISK: A STUDY OF LISTED NON-FINANCIAL COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

S.H.R.E. Kumari^{1,*} and R.M.N.C. Swarnapali²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author: (Email: ruwanierandi6@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Recently, discussions on corporate governance have become increasingly prominent in developed and developing countries, driven by the growing recognition of its role in ensuring corporate accountability and financial stability. According to the Agency Theory, the primary goal of corporate governance is to align the interests of managers and shareholders to mitigate potential conflicts. While numerous studies have explored this concept, only a few have considered the intricate interrelationship between corporate governance practices and insolvency risk. This study addresses this gap by focusing on listed non-financial companies in Sri Lanka. To shed light on the critical interaction, this study examines the impact of corporate governance on insolvency risk using data from a sample of 158 non-financial companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange for five years from 2018 to 2023. Board independence, women on the board, audit committee independence, board meetings, audit committee meetings, financial agreements of the board of directors, and the dual role of the chief executive officer were used as corporate governance variables. In contrast, aspects of the risk management committee and indicators of insolvency risk, such as profitability and solvency ratios, liquidity ratios, leverage ratios, and the Altman Emerging Market Z-Score Modification Model, are used as the measures of the dependent variable in this study. Additionally, the non-performing loan ratio was used as the control variable. This study uses quantitative research data using a deductive technique gathered from annual reports, financial statements, and other relevant sources. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and panel regression analysis. Increasing the number of board members and strengthening the composition of the audit committee can decrease the risk of insolvency. Other corporate governance components do not significantly affect insolvency risk. Panel regression analysis underscores that increasing board independence and risk management committees can mitigate the risk of insolvency within the sample companies. This study offers practical implications for stakeholders, policymakers, and investors in developing specific best practices to mitigate financial risk and improve financial stability.

Keywords: Agency theory, corporate governance, insolvency risk, non-financial listed companies

**EXPLORING THE ROLE AND THE USAGE LEVEL OF MANAGEMENT
ACCOUNTING PRACTICES: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY [SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO APPAREL MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA]**

S. N. L. Subasinghe^{1,*} and R. L. D. Dissanayake²

^{1,2}SAB Campus, CA Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author: (Email: lakdinithisubasinghe@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Management accounting (MA) is a continuously evolving method of accounting that is primarily used for internal purposes and creates statements, reports, and documents that help management make informed decisions related to business performance. The objective of this study is to identify the extent of usage level and explore the role of management accounting practices in relation to the apparel manufacturing industry (AMI) in Sri Lanka. Adopting an inductive approach, this study employs a qualitative perspective, focusing on five leading apparel manufacturing companies, selected based on revenue rankings. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and direct company observation. This methodological framework facilitates an in-depth exploration of the contextual and nuanced application of Management Accounting Professionals (MAPs) in real-world settings. Thematic analysis was used to achieve the objectives of this study. This study primarily focuses on costing systems, budgeting systems, information for decision-making, performance evaluation systems, and strategic management accounting. It was found that the usage levels of costing systems, budgeting systems, decision-making information, and strategic management accounting are very high. However, the usage of performance evaluation systems is considerably lower in AMI than in the other MA systems. The study identified 14 challenges in implementing MAPs, including time-consuming inventory monitoring, coordination difficulties, resource constraints, and data management complexities. Additionally, issues such as limited access to reliable data, complexities of global supply chains, balancing detailed financial analysis with practical constraints, cultural resistance, varying financial literacy levels among employees, and lack of awareness regarding the value of MAPs were also highlighted. The researchers found that the organizational cultures observed in all companies clearly recognize the important role that MAPs play in driving organizational success. Furthermore, this study discovered eight technological adaptations, trends, and future directions of MAPs in the AMI industry, including the integration of artificial intelligence (AI). Finally, this study revealed nine recommendations for improving the effectiveness of MAPs in enhancing organizational performance. Considering all these factors, researchers can conclude that this study sheds light on the extent of usage level and the role of management accounting practices in AMI in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Apparel manufacturing industry, Sri Lanka, artificial intelligence, challenges and limitations, management accounting practices.

THE IMPACT OF SELECTED BOARD CHARACTERISTICS ON FIRM PERFORMANCE OF NON-FINANCIAL LISTED COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

B.G.H.P. Balasooriya^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: hansanibalasooriya3@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the impact of selected board characteristics on the performance of non-financial listed companies in Sri Lanka. Two hundred and ninety companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) are considered the population, and the sampling process excluded Banking, Finance, and Insurance companies as they have identical financial characteristics. An efficient board is essential to achieve governance in an organization, where board size, board composition, CEO duality, number of board meetings, board gender diversity, and impact many board characteristics. This study analyzed 136 non-financial firms listed in the CSE from 2019 to 2022. ROA (Return on assets) and ROE (Return on equity) were considered independent variables. Further, leverage, firm age, and firm size were considered as control variables. Board size, board composition, CEO Duality, the frequency of board meetings, and gender diversity were the dependent variables. This study used regression analysis, descriptive tests, and correlation analysis. As per the findings of this study, board composition is positively associated with Return on Asset (ROA) and board composition is negatively associated with Return on Equity (ROE). CEO Duality is negatively associated with Return on Asset (ROA) and Equity (ROE). However, the gender diversity of the board shows a negative relationship between ROA, and the board shows a positive relationship with ROE. The study's findings support policymakers, especially top-level management and decision-makers, in obtaining strategic decisions about the firm to establish an effective board and evaluate the board's effectiveness inside the firm.

Keywords: Board composition, board size, CEO duality, frequency of board meetings, board gender diversity, ROA, ROE.

EXPLORING THE MODERATING ROLE OF BOARD SIZE ON THE NEXUS BETWEEN ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT AND FIRM PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKAN INSURANCE COMPANIES

H.I.M.I. Sajikala^{1,*} and T.P. Rathnasuriya²

^{1,2}*Department of Finance, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo,*

*Corresponding author (Email: 2019ms8987@stu.cmb.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Modern businesses face escalating demands to handle their loss exposures effectively, prompting companies to adopt a more integrated and holistic approach embodied by Enterprise Risk Management (ERM). Beyond its role in risk management, many researchers have observed that ERM also influences companies' financial performance. Although Agency Theory has established the direct effects of ERM on firm performance, empirical findings on the relationship between ERM and firm performance still need to be conclusive. Thus, this research investigates whether board size moderates the relationship between ERM and firm performance using resource dependency theory as a theoretical foundation in the context of Sri Lankan insurance companies. The study involved 28 insurance companies overseen by the Insurance Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka. Employing a purposive sampling technique, the study focused on a sample of 15 companies, ensuring that complete data were available for the variables assessed during the study period. This study followed the deductive approach, and quantitative secondary data were collected from companies' published annual reports from 2012 to 2022. Return on Assets (ROA) is a proxy for measuring firm performance. Simultaneously, ERM is assessed through an index that evaluates corporates' effectiveness in achieving organizational objectives related to strategy, operations, reporting, and compliance. The study employed panel regression analysis using EViews software. The results revealed that ERM significantly and negatively affects firm performance, whereas board size moderates the impact of ERM on firm performance. This study provides valuable insights to insurance companies and regulatory bodies, deepening their understanding of how ERM and board size influence insurance firms' financial performance.

Keywords: Board size, enterprise risk management, firm performance, insurance companies

THE IMPACT OF TAXPAYERS' ATTITUDES ON TAX COMPLIANCE IN SRI LANKA

W.D.A. Shashibhani^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

Corresponding author (Email: shashibhaniamandi@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Tax compliance is a critical concern for any nation's economic stability and development, particularly in developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, where the effective collection of tax revenue is essential for financing public services and fostering economic growth. Several studies have been conducted on tax compliance, as various factors influence taxpayers' tax compliance behavior. The attitude of taxpayers is an essential factor influencing tax compliance behavior. This study aims to address this gap by examining the impact of taxpayers' attitudes on tax compliance among individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka. Tax fairness, tax rate, understandability of the tax law, and simplicity of the tax system were used as independent variables to measure the impact on tax compliance. This study used a quantitative approach and convenience sampling method with a sample of 384 individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka. The data were collected using structured questionnaires. Reliability, descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were used to analyze and interpret the data collected in the study. These results emphasize the need for policymakers and tax authorities to focus on improving the perceptions of fairness, maintaining fair tax rates, making tax laws more understandable, and simplifying the tax system. This study finds that tax fairness, tax rate, understandability of the tax law, and simplicity of the tax system significantly impact tax compliance. A limitation of the research may be that respondents misunderstood the questions, gave socially acceptable answers, or lacked the self-awareness necessary to describe their beliefs and actions honestly. This study expects to provide insight into the operations of the revenue authority and decisions made by policymakers and academics to explore the factors that encourage tax compliance.

Keywords: Tax fairness, tax rate, understandability of the tax law, simplicity of the tax system, tax compliance

IMPACT OF TAXPAYER'S PERCEPTION ON TAX EVASION IN SRI LANKA

B.M.N. Lakshan^{1,*} and V.G.N. Sameera²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: nadunlakshan567@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Understanding the factors influencing tax evasion is crucial for developing effective tax policies and ensuring compliance, which is essential for the economic development of any country, such as Sri Lanka. By delving into taxpayers' perceptions of tax evasion, researchers can discern the underlying factors that contribute to tax evasion. Very few studies have been conducted in this regard in the recent past in Sri Lanka. Despite the significance of this issue, there is a notable gap in the literature regarding a comprehensive examination of individual taxpayers' perceptions across all districts in Sri Lanka. This study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of taxpayers' perceptions of tax evasion among individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka. Because taxpayers directly experience and form opinions on tax obligations, their insights are crucial for understanding broader societal attitudes towards tax compliance and evasion. This study identified four variables to assess taxpayers' perceptions: tax knowledge, tax fairness, tax morale, and compliance costs. This study used quantitative and convenience sampling methods, with a sample of 352 individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires distributed among individual taxpayers in Sri Lanka. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. This study finds that tax knowledge, fairness, morale, and compliance costs significantly impact tax evasion. When tax knowledge, loss of tax morale, expectation of tax fairness, and compliance costs increase, tax evasion increases. Furthermore, this study suggests that policymakers should invest in comprehensive educational campaigns and simplified resources to improve taxpayer awareness and comprehension of tax laws.

Keywords: Compliance cost, tax evasion, tax fairness, tax knowledge, tax morale

INFLUENCE OF THE PERCEPTION OF TAXPAYERS ON USAGE OF ONLINE TAX PAYMENT PLATFORMS IN SRI LANKA.

A.M.R.Y. Swarnamali^{1,*} and C.T. Gamage²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author: (Email: rrashmiyashodya1023@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of taxpayers' perceptions on the usage of online tax payment platforms in Sri Lanka. Tax collection is a critical aspect of any country's fiscal management and the efficiency of tax payment systems directly affects revenue generation. With the increasing digitization of public services, many countries worldwide are following the method of paying taxes online. This technology-driven approach to tax collection and payment has gained significant prominence in recent years, offering numerous advantages over the traditional paper-based methods. The Sri Lankan Inland Revenue Department (IRD) has recently introduced an online tax payment platform (OTPP) effective since 08.02.2021. The motivation behind this research stems from the need to understand the influence of taxpayers' perceptions of the usage of new online tax payment platforms. This study employs a quantitative approach to gather comprehensive data. Among the 204,467 individual taxpayers registered in the Inland Revenue Department of Sri Lanka, 230 (according to the Morgan table) participated in this study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. This study used a convenience sampling method to gather data from respondents. Six hypotheses were formulated for this research. According to the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, the findings suggest that accessing taxpayer satisfaction, perceived security, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use significantly influence the perception of taxpayers regarding the usage of online tax payment platforms in Sri Lanka, while fairness and system quality are not significantly influenced. Finally, this study contributes to the broader understanding of digital transformation in public sector services and offers insights into the specific challenges and opportunities within the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: Perception of taxpayers, online tax payment platform in Sri Lanka, taxpayer satisfaction, perceived security, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, fairness, system quality

EFFECT OF INVENTORY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF LISTED FOOD, BEVERAGE AND TOBACCO COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

R.A.T.K. Senarathne^{1,*} and C.T. Gamage²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: thiruni.ras@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to examine the effect of inventory management practices on the financial performance of listed Food, Beverage and Tobacco companies in Sri Lanka. The impact of specific inventory management strategies on key financial indicators, including profitability and return on assets, is assessed through inventory turnover, inventory conversion period, and inventory leanness. This is a quantitative study, and the secondary data obtained in this research comes from the annual reports of 45 Listed Foods, Beverage, and Tobacco companies over the five years from 2018 to 2023, providing a comprehensive dataset consisting of 225 observations. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in STATA. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression were used to study the effect of inventory management on the financial performance of listed Food, Beverage & Tobacco companies in Sri Lanka. This study bridges the gap in empirical research surrounding the effect of inventory management practices on financial performance in Sri Lanka, where the existing findings contradict those in international and national contexts and contribute valuable insights to a currently understudied area. This study seeks to identify the factors that significantly influence the financial performance of listed Food, Beverage and Tobacco companies in Sri Lanka by developing six research questions, where the findings indicate significant effect on inventory turnover, inventory conversion period, profitability, and return on assets. These findings have important implications for the need for better inventory management practices, investments in technology, staff training and development, lean inventory practices, and regular performance measurement of inventory management practices on the financial performance of listed Food, Beverage and Tobacco companies in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Inventory management practices, financial performance, listed food, beverage and tobacco companies

**THE IMPACT OF ACCOUNTING INFORMATION SYSTEM QUALITY ON
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES:
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA**

L.P.D. Shehara^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardana² and P.R. Weerathunga³

*^{1,2,3}Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilkishehara1201@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of the quality of the Accounting Information System (AIS) on the financial performance of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. The quality of AIS used by these enterprises can significantly influence their financial performance by improving decision-making processes, enhancing financial transparency, and ensuring regulatory compliance. This study aims to provide empirical evidence of the impact of AIS quality and financial performance on Sri Lankan SMEs. A survey instrument was used to collect quantitative data to predict the effects of AIS quality on financial performance from 370 SMEs out of the overall estimated population of 11,477. Convenience sampling was used to distribute the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used as analytical tools to achieve the research objectives. This study finds a significant relationship between AIS quality and financial performance. AIS quality is measured through the nature of the accounting information system, use of accounting information, usage of the accounting information system, and effectiveness of the accounting information system in financial performance. This study provides empirical evidence that AIS quality significantly impacts the financial performance of SMEs in the North Central Province. High-quality AIS supports better financial decision-making and improves financial performance by supporting the accuracy, reliability, and timely contributions of financial information.

Keywords: -AIS quality, financial performance, small and medium-sized enterprises

DETERMINATES OF FAIR VALUE MEASUREMENT OF BIOLOGICAL ASSET OF LISTED COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

H.M.K.S. Kumara^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardena² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1, 2, 3}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sampathkavishka29@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to identify the determinants that influence the fair value measurement of biological assets in companies listed in Sri Lanka. The independent variables were the determinants of the fair value measurement of biological assets by firm size, auditor type, and ownership structure. In contrast, the dependent variable was the fair value of biological assets. This research utilized a quantitative approach and was conducted entirely using secondary data sources. This study selected 53 listed Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) companies with biological assets. Data were collected from annual reports from 2018 to 2022. The data were entered into STATA -15 software and analyzed using Descriptive Analysis, Correlation Analysis, and Panel Regression Analysis. The results show that firm size significantly influences the fair value of biological assets. In addition, this study finds that ownership structure and auditor type have an insignificant influence on the fair value measurement of biological assets. This study focuses exclusively on listed firms in Sri Lanka, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope to include unlisted firms or comparative studies across different countries to enhance the generalizability of the results and provide a more comprehensive understanding of fair-value measurement practices. The primary objective of this study is to identify the determinants that influence the fair value measurement of biological assets in listed companies in Sri Lanka. The independent variables were the determinants of the fair value measurement of biological assets by firm size, auditor type, and ownership structure. In contrast, the dependent variable was the fair value of biological assets. This research utilized a quantitative approach and was conducted entirely using secondary data sources. This study selected 53 listed Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) companies with biological assets. Data were collected from annual reports from 2018 to 2022. The data were entered into STATA -15 software and analyzed using Descriptive Analysis, Correlation Analysis, and Panel Regression Analysis. The results show that firm size significantly influences the fair value of biological assets. In addition, this study finds that ownership structure and auditor type have an insignificant influence on the fair value measurement of biological assets. This study focuses exclusively on listed firms in Sri Lanka, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the scope to include unlisted firms or comparative studies across different countries to enhance the generalizability of the results and provide a more comprehensive understanding of fair-value measurement practices.

Keywords: Biological assets, fair value, auditor type, firm size, ownership structure.

THE IMPACT OF BOARD DIRECTORS' CHARACTERISTICS ON CAPITAL STRUCTURE DECISIONS: EVIDENCE FROM TOP 70 TURNOVER NON-FINANCIAL COMPANIES LISTED IN THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE

G.G.P.M. Guruge^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardana² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: Piyumikamadhubhashini102@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The company directors decide all corporate decisions on the board, and these decisions are implemented after voting by shareholders. Thus, the board of directors is the main decision maker. The success and productivity of a company are significantly influenced by the characteristics of its board of directors (BOD). In particular, board directors' characteristics influence their choice of optimal Capital Structure decisions. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of board directors' characteristics on capital structure decisions in the top 70 non-financial companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. The dependent variable of this study is capital structure decisions, which are measured using the debt-equity ratio. The independent variables were board size, board composition, CEO duality, board meetings, and board gender. The control variables were firm size and profitability. The study population comprises non-financial companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. To ensure a reasonable sample size, this study considered the top 70 turnover nonfinancial companies according to the purposive sampling method. The study covers a five-year dataset from 2019 to 2023. This study used descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings reveal that board size has a significant positive impact on capital structure, and CEO duality and board gender have a significant negative impact on capital structure decisions. Moreover, the findings revealed that board composition and meetings had no significant impact on capital structure decisions. It is supported by policymakers, regulators, and management to enhance the corporate governance system of non-financial companies in Sri Lanka. This study limited the generalizability of the findings due to its focus on a specific geographic area.

Keywords – Board directors' characteristics, capital structure decisions, corporate governance, non-financial, turnover

THE IMPACT OF ETHICAL ACCOUNTING PRACTICES ON FINANCIAL REPORTING IN REGISTERED SMES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

K.A. Ranaweera^{1, *}, W.P. Wijewardana² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kavinduanjana1969@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Small and medium-sized enterprises often need to help maintain transparency and accuracy in their financial reporting. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of ethical accounting practices on financial reporting in SMEs in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. In contrast, a lack of transparency in financial reporting may lead to future corporate failures. To obtain robust findings on how adherence to ethical accounting practices improves financial transparency, this study used objectivity, integrity, confidentiality, and professional competence as the independent variables and financial reporting as the dependent variable. By examining the relationship between these variables, this study sought to determine how adherence to ethical accounting standards can improve SMEs' financial transparency and accuracy. The sample size for this study was carefully chosen using the Morgan table, which recommends 361 registered SMEs to provide a statistically significant representation of the population. The study received 375 responses, which slightly exceeded the target, ensuring robust data for analysis. The data for this study were collected via a structured questionnaire that was meticulously designed to address previous studies. The gathered data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression using specialized statistical software. The findings reveal that Objectivity, Integrity, Confidentiality, and Professional Competence positively and significantly impact financial reporting within SMEs. Among these findings, professional competence has the most significant impact on financial reporting in SMEs, highlighting the professionalism of accountants toward compliance with applicable standards and the credibility of financial reports, which helps enhance the theoretical understanding of competence in accurate and transparent financial disclosure. The practical implications drawn from this research provide guidelines to be implemented by SMEs in the Western Province of Sri Lanka to develop their financial reporting practices. SMEs can foster greater transparency, mitigate risks, and secure sustainable growth in a competitive business environment by embedding ethical principles, such as objectivity, integrity, confidentiality, and professional competence in their operations. The study's findings could be more generalizable because it focuses on a specific geographic area.

Keywords – Confidentiality, integrity, objectivity, professional competence, small and medium-sized enterprises

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF DRIVERS AFFECTING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTANCY AND FINANCE STUDENTS: A STUDY ON SELECTED STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

L.L.K. Nirmani^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardena² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management of Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kaveeshanirmani2000@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Globally, education is one of the most powerful tools for enhancing the quality of human life. Education lays the foundation for a successful future for people and society. Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student achieves their short- or long-term educational goals. It is commonly measured using continuous assessments, tests, and examinations. Accordingly, this study focuses on the impact of drivers on the academic performance of accountancy and finance students at selected state universities in Sri Lanka, and how these factors have affected them. The study framework delineates driving factors as academic conduct, integrity, time management, motivation, and self-determination, which were identified as independent variables. By contrast, academic performance is a dependent variable, with resource quality as a control variable. Employing a quantitative methodology, this study used random sampling to select 331 undergraduates from approximately 2384 accountancy and finance students enrolled in selected state universities across Sri Lanka. Universities were chosen according to the availability of accountancy and finance degrees under the classification provided by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire underpinned by five hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used as analytical techniques. The results indicated a significant relationship between the selected key factors and academic performance. However, all the other variables had a positive relationship with academic performance, except for the integration factor. Overall, the findings revealed a significant positive correlation between driving factors and academic performance. The study concludes with a substantial relationship between the crucial driving factors and academic performance. Therefore, the study found that critical factors such as academic conduct, time management, self-motivation, and self-determination significantly influence the academic performance of accountancy and finance students in selected state universities of Sri Lanka. These findings highlight the importance of fostering key driving factors that enhance students' academic success. The main limitation is that the study's findings are specific to accountancy and finance students at selected state universities in Sri Lanka. However, it must be discussed whether these findings can be generalized to other disciplines or regions. This study contributes to the existing knowledge by revealing how key factors influence academic performance in Sri Lankan universities, providing insights specific to the local context. These findings can be extended to explore academic performance in other regions and disciplines.

Keywords- Academic performance, driving factors, random sampling, state universities

DETERMINATION OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOR OF ACCOUNTANCY AND FINANCE UNDERGRADUATE OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

M.D.S. Kalpani^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardena² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1, 2, 3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: shashinikalpani99@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Ethical behavior is increasingly critical today due to rising corporate scandals, financial fraud, and unethical practices that undermine public trust and economic stability. For accountancy and finance undergraduates, understanding and practicing ethical behavior is crucial, as they are responsible for ensuring the integrity and transparency of financial information. This study focuses on identifying the factors that affect the ethical behavior of accounting and finance undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This research aims to determine the significant impact of academic achievement, ethical climate, ethical awareness and education, and ethical sensitivity on ethical behavior. Data were collected from 269 undergraduate students using a structured online questionnaire. Data were collected from 50% of the Accountancy and Finance undergraduates each year. The findings indicate that academic achievement, ethical climate, ethical awareness and education, and ethical sensitivity positively affect the ethical behavior of accountancy and finance undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The study revealed an adjusted R-squared value of 0.599, suggesting that the factors of academic achievement, ethical climate, ethical awareness and education, and ethical sensitivity explain 59.9% of the ethical behavior of undergraduates. The conclusion highlights the significant impact of academic achievement, ethical climate, ethical awareness, and ethical sensitivity on the ethical behavior of accountancy and finance undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The study offers suggestions to support the career development of future professionals, outlines relevant recommendations for further study, and acknowledges the study's limitations.

Keywords: Academic achievement, ethical behavior, ethical climate, ethical awareness and education, ethical sensitivity.

THE IMPACT OF INVENTORY MANAGEMENT ON THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF COMPANIES LISTED IN THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE (CSE)

W.M.N.S. Wanasingha^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardana² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nipunisajana@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of inventory management on financial performance, with particular reference to companies listed in the CSE. Many researchers have explored the effects of inventory management on financial performance globally. However, there is no consensus among researchers regarding the impact of inventory management on financial performance, as studies have identified both positive and negative relationships. The study population comprised all the companies listed in the CSE. This study focuses on 290 companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange that are relevant to this topic. One hundred and sixty-five companies listed in CSE were sampled as per the Morgan table. The study covers five years from 2018 to 2022. This study aims to determine whether inventory management affects the financial performance of listed companies in Sri Lanka. The data were collected from 108 companies. Data on companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange for five years, from 2018 to 2022, were collected. According to this study, descriptive and inferential analyses, which include multiple regression and correlation analyses, were used to analyze the data. There are four critical variables, inventory turnover, inventory-to-sale ratio, gross margin return on investment, and inventory day, which were taken as the independent variables. The return on assets and return on equity are used as dependent variables for measuring financial performance. In conclusion, this study provides significant insights into how inventory management practices affect the financial performance of companies listed on CSE. The findings underscore the importance of strategic inventory management in optimizing ROA and ROE, offering practical recommendations for managers and investors, while highlighting areas for future research to build on these insights. However, this study was limited to companies listed on the CSE, which may not be representative of other markets. The generalizability of these findings to other contexts may be limited. In addition, the analysis is based on a specific period, which may not capture the long-term trends or effects of economic fluctuations.

Keywords: Financial performance, inventory management, listed companies

KEY DRIVERS FOR THE PERCEPTION OF ACCOUNTING ETHICS IN UNDERGRADUATES OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

A.H.P.P. Weeravansha^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardena² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: prabodha.weeravansha2000@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Ethics play a critical role in accounting, underscored by recent high-profile fraud cases that emphasize the need for integrity within the profession. The Professional Accountant Code of Ethics, which is based on international standards, is vital for maintaining trust and credibility in accounting. Effective ethics education is essential for shaping the character and professional behavior of future accountants. This study examined the key drivers of the perception that influences accounting ethics among undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Using a deductive approach and a quantitative method, the study population consisted of 504 final-year undergraduate students from Rajarata University's 2020 Faculty of Management Studies. A sample of 219 students specializing in Accountancy and Finance was selected using Morgan's sampling method. A 5-point Likert Scale was primarily employed in the questionnaire, and multiple linear regression analysis and Multicollinearity Analysis were used in the model. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25, utilizing descriptive statistical, regression, and correlation analyses. Primary data collection methods ensured a thorough examination of the students' ethical perceptions and their implications for future accounting practices. The study used a questionnaire platform to explore the factors influencing ethical perceptions, including ethics education exposure, internship experience, and awareness and understanding. This suggests that current students' ethical views can predict their future professional behavior. Demographic factors, such as age, gender, experience, and cultural background, significantly impact ethical attitudes. The study emphasizes enhancing accounting ethics education by integrating ethics into the curriculum, promoting integrity through institutional policies, partnering with professional organizations, leveraging technology, and developing ethical leadership. These strategies aim to guide educators and businesses in shaping future professionals' ethical attitudes and addressing past scandals. According to this study's findings, some factors need to be considered when evaluating the perception of ethics in accounting among university undergraduates. The researcher aimed to enhance accounting education and promote ethical behavior among undergraduates to foster a solid ethical foundation for future accounting professionals.

Keywords: Accounting, ethics, awareness and understanding, education exposure, internship experience.

IMPACT OF CORPORATE INTERNET REPORTING ON FIRM PERFORMANCE IN LISTED COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

H.P.S. Madhurenu^{1,*} and R.M.N.C. Swarnapali²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: ac2020235@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of corporate internet reporting (CIR) on firm performance among companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange in Sri Lanka. By analyzing data from 165 firms over five years (2019-2023), this research utilized annual reports and corporate websites to assess CIR, which pertains to the extent and quality of online disclosure by companies. CIR is gaining prominence in Sri Lanka owing to increased digital penetration, investor expectations, regulatory requirements, stakeholder engagement, and risk management needs. By providing transparency regarding online activities, organizations can enhance investor confidence, build trust with stakeholders, and mitigate the risks associated with the digital landscape. Tailoring reporting practices to Sri Lanka's cultural nuances and addressing infrastructure challenges are essential for its effective implementation. This study aims to fill a significant empirical gap in Sri Lanka by investigating the impact of CIR on firm performance. While studies in other countries have produced mixed results, there is limited research on CIR in Sri Lanka. This encourages conducting this type of study in the Sri Lankan context. Two metrics, return on assets and Tobin's Q, representing both financial and market performance, were employed to gauge firm performance. Aligning with the literature, the CIR was measured using a checklist that assigned binary values based on the presence of specific disclosure items. The study hypothesized that an enhanced CIR would positively impact firm performance by improving transparency and investor confidence, potentially leading to better financial results and higher market valuations. However, the results reveal no significant impact of CIR on firm performance in the sample companies. This finding suggests that, within the Sri Lankan context, CIR does not significantly impact these performance indicators. Possible reasons for this may be a lack of impact, including the quality or scope of CIR practices in the sample or other external factors affecting firm performance. The study acknowledges several limitations, such as the limited sample size, reliance on potentially incomplete data from annual reports and websites, and focus on only two performance metrics. The findings may not apply to firms in more developed markets. Future research should address these limitations by incorporating a broader sample, exploring additional CIR components and performance indicators, and considering other regions to enhance generalizability. This research can contribute to the literature by examining the unique context of emerging markets, investigating the relationship between CIR and firm performance, analyzing the role of technology and digital infrastructure, and addressing challenges and opportunities. This can provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in this field.

Keywords: Corporate internet reporting, firm performance, return on assets, Tobin's Q

THE IMPACT OF REMOTE AUDITING ON AUDIT QUALITY IN SRI LANKAN AUDIT FIRMS

A.Y.L. Arambepola^{1,*} and J.S. Kumari²

*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author (Email: yashmilakdeepani@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of remote auditing on audit quality in audit firms in Sri Lanka, a shift accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As traditional auditing methodologies were challenged during the pandemic, this research addresses firms adapted to remote auditing practices and the subsequent impact on audit quality. The study identified four independent variables: time pressure, challenges, digitalization, and work location. The dependent variable in this study was audit quality. Employing a quantitative research approach, primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 100 audit professionals across various firms in Sri Lanka. The analysis utilized Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis were conducted using the SPSS software, enabling a robust examination of the relationships between the proposed variables. Hypothesis testing reveals significant correlations between all four independent variables and audit quality. However, the regression analysis supported only two variables—time pressure and digitalization—which significantly impact audit quality. Based on these findings, this study highlights the critical need for external audit firms to invest in enhanced training programs and technology to equip auditors for remote work. Furthermore, it emphasizes the development of robust protocols to maintain high audit quality standards in remote environments. Overall, this study provides valuable insights and recommendations for improving audit practices in the evolving auditing landscape, particularly in the face of ongoing reliance on remote methodologies. Understanding these dynamics is essential for sustaining audit quality and performance as firms continue to navigate the post-pandemic environment.

Keywords: Audit quality, challenges, digitalization, remote auditing, time pressure

A blue geometric graphic consisting of overlapping shapes, resembling a stylized arrow or a series of nested triangles, pointing towards the right.

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DIGITAL FINANCIAL LITERACY ON FINANCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES OF STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

E.A.T. Dewmini^{1, *}, J.M.N. Wijekumara² and D.D.K. Sugathadasa³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: tharushikadewmini93@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The emergence of financial technology (Fintech) has reshaped the financial sector through the fusion of technology, leading to a notable proliferation of digital financial services and products. However, the increased uptake of these services exposes individuals to a spectrum of risks, including data breaches, concerns regarding confidentiality, operations by unregulated network entities, security vulnerabilities, and a deficit in proficiency in financial and digital competencies. Insufficient financial literacy may precipitate imprudent spending habits and the accrual of debt, thereby undermining prudent financial conduct. Consequently, this study investigates the impact of digital financial literacy on the financial behavior of management undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka. The research framework delineates digital financial literacy as the independent variable and financial behavior as the dependent variable. Employing quantitative methodology, this study sampled 370 undergraduate students from a pool of approximately 10,033 management students enrolled in state universities across Sri Lanka. Data collection was conducted via a structured questionnaire underpinned by four formulated hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were employed as analytical techniques. The regression analysis revealed that digital financial awareness, digital financial skills and knowledge, and digital financial usage of management undergraduates significantly influenced their financial behavior. Conversely, digital financial attitudes did not have a significant impact on financial behavior. These findings highlight the importance of comprehensive digital financial literacy initiatives. Moreover, the research advocates for educational policy interventions, endorsing collaborative endeavors between financial institutions and universities to implement pragmatic initiatives aimed at augmenting students' practical application of digital financial acumen in real-world scenarios

Keywords: Digital financial literacy, financial behavior, management undergraduate

DOES MICROFINANCE EMPOWER WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP? EVIDENCE FROM RATHNAPURA DISTRICT

B. W. N. K. Pemasiri^{1,*} and R.M.N.C. Swarnapali²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kusumn738@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Microfinance on women's empowerment in entrepreneurship is a timely topic for discussion. Accordingly, this research delves into the impact of microfinance on the empowerment of women's entrepreneurship in the Rathnapura District. The researchers targeted the Rathnapura district and conducted this research because it is among the ten (10) districts with the highest number of women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. However, research has yet to be conducted in this district, and it forged to conduct a study on the present theme. The study population consisted of women entrepreneurs running their businesses in the Rathnapura district, and 100 women entrepreneurs were selected as the sample using convenience sampling. This study employed descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses as data analysis tools. This study examined the impact of microcredit and microwaving on women entrepreneurs' social and economic empowerment. Hypothesis 1 (H1) posits that microcredit significantly influences social empowerment in women's entrepreneurship. A Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.751 indicated a strong positive relationship, and the significance value (0.000) supported this hypothesis. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 (H2) suggests that microcredit significantly affects the economic empowerment of women entrepreneurs. The correlation coefficient remains at 0.751, indicating a strong positive relationship with a significance value of 0.001, which also supports this hypothesis. The results showed a positive relationship between microfinance and women's entrepreneurship. These findings underscore the pivotal role of microfinance in fostering economic and social empowerment among women entrepreneurs, offering invaluable insights for policymakers and stakeholders in the microfinance sector.

Keywords: Micro finance, women entrepreneurship, women empowerment

MODERATING IMPACT OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RISK MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF LICENSED FINANCE COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

M.G.G.J. Buddhika^{1,*} and H.M.D.N. Somathilake²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: jayanimahanama98@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Risk Management (RM) encompasses the identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks, followed by coordinated efforts to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and impact of adverse events. Effective RM is essential for businesses in today's dynamic business climate, especially financial institutions. Sri Lanka is currently a nation with severe economic instability, shifting laws and policies, and volatile raw material costs. This study examines the moderating impact of corporate governance on the relationship between risk management and financial performance of licensed finance companies in Sri Lanka. Despite extensive research on the direct effects of risk management on financial outcomes, the moderating role of corporate governance remains underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on the moderating influence of corporate governance mechanisms including board composition, audit committees, and ownership structure. This research adopts a panel data approach, analyzing data from licensed finance companies over the period 2018-2022. This study measures risk management through dimensions such as risk identification, risk evaluation, and risk monitoring, which are more aligned with the theoretical underpinnings of risk management. The Non-performing Loan Ratio (NPLR) and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) are considered outcome variables influenced by risk management practices rather than direct dimensions of risk management itself. This methodology involves the use of advanced statistical software suitable for panel data analysis to ensure robustness of the results. The study employed descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis using SPSS to provide a comprehensive understanding. The findings reveal that corporate governance significantly moderates the relationship between risk management and financial performance, with variations observed across different governance mechanisms. These results suggest that strong corporate governance can enhance the effectiveness of risk management practices, leading to better financial outcomes. The study concludes with managerial implications and emphasizes the importance of integrating corporate governance with risk management strategies to optimize financial performance. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the moderating role of corporate governance in the risk management-financial performance nexus, offering valuable insights for practitioners and policymakers in the finance sector.

Keywords: Capital adequacy, financial performance, licensed finance companies, non-performing loan, risk management

THE INVESTORS' INTENTION TO INVEST IN THE STOCK MARKET DURING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SRI LANKAN CONTEXT: USING THE EXTENDED THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

K.P.H.G.T.D. Kumari^{1,*} and J.S. Kumari²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: ac2019@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the behavior of individual investors in the stock market during Sri Lanka's economic crisis. The study employs an extended version of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to comprehensively understand the factors influencing individual investor decisions. Utilizing a quantitative approach, this study examines investors' intention to invest in the stock market during the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka by expanding the theory of planned behavior. Based on the research problem, the individual investor intention towards the stock market is handled as the dependent variable in this study, while investor attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and perceived risk are treated as independent variables, and perceived knowledge of economic crisis is treated as a moderate variable in the relationship between investor attitudes and investor intention. Primary data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to a sample of 110 respondents from existing and potential investors in the Colombo Stock Market. The convenience sampling method was used to collect data, and the regression results demonstrated that amid the economic crisis, the subjective norms towards investing had the largest impact on individuals' intention to participate in the stock market, and perceived behavioral control had a highly significant influence on individuals' investor intentions. This study examines only current and prospective individual investors in the Colombo stock market during Sri Lanka's economic crisis. Few studies have attempted to include perceived risk and perceived knowledge of economic crises within the investors' decision-making framework, and future research should focus on comparative studies among diverse market contexts. Owing to Sri Lanka's economic crisis, the Theory of Planned behaviours (TPB) put in this study has contributed valuable insight for stock market participants, policymakers, financial professionals, and regulators to make effective and informed investment decisions, especially with reference to the crisis situation.

Keywords: Attitude, perceived risk, perceived behavior control, subjective norms, theory of planned behaviour (TPB), economic crisis, investor behaviour

BEHAVIORAL BIASES AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS OF INVESTORS

T.M.D.R. Thennakoon^{1,*} and A.L.M. Jameel²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: drasanjali926@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Behavioral bias is a systematic deviation from rational decision-making procedures that might affect judgments and decisions in the expected directions. In the context of behavioral biases, investors may make decisions that deviate from what is considered optimal or rational based on traditional economic theory. These biases can affect all stages of the investment process, from the initial research and analysis to the execution and management of investment portfolios. Although heuristics can enhance decision-making efficiency, they may simultaneously introduce systematic biases and errors. Applying this theory to a less-studied area, such as Kurunegala, could reveal distinct biases or decision-making patterns shaped by the region's specific socio-economic, cultural, or environmental context. Therefore, this study overlooks the effect of behavioral biases on investment decisions, focusing on individual equity investors from the Kurunegala area. Drawing on heuristic theory, this study examines the impact of overconfidence biases, availability heuristics, anchoring biases, and gambler fallacy using a structured questionnaire distributed to 122 investors selected according to a convenient sampling method. The gathered data were analyzed by incorporating Cronbach's alpha, Pearson's correlation coefficient, regression analysis, and descriptive statistics using SPSS. The findings depict a positive impact of overconfidence biases, anchoring biases, and the gambler's fallacy on investment decisions. Moreover, overconfidence bias was determined to be the most influential variable in making investment decisions. Additionally, the findings indicate a negative impact of the availability heuristic on investment decisions. Consequently, the implications of this study highlight the relevance of investor education and reliable market information for enhancing decision-making quality and mitigating behavioral biases.

Keywords: Availability heuristic, anchoring bias, gambler fallacy, overconfidence bias, investment decisions

THE EFFECT OF MACROECONOMIC FACTORS ON STOCK MARKET PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE

S.D.S.L. Gunawardhana^{1,*} and K.V.A. Shantha²

¹*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

²*Department of Accounting & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, The Open University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: sahirulakshan26@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Financial stability is vital for a country's economic prosperity and societal well-being. Recent evidence from Sri Lanka indicates a significant impairment in its financial strength, as characterized by severe fluctuations in crucial economic indicators such as inflation, exchange, and interest rates. Theoretically, these fluctuations are expected to affect stock market performance, which is a vital reflection of a country's financial stability. Despite their significance, the influence of macroeconomic factors on stock market performance has not been sufficiently explored in the Sri Lankan context. The objective of this study is to empirically examine the impact of key macroeconomic variables, specifically inflation rates, exchange rates, and interest rates, on the performance of the Colombo Stock Exchange. Using a quantitative approach, secondary data from the Central Bank's annual reports and the CSE database were analyzed over the six years from 2017 to 2022. The results of the correlation analysis indicate strong positive correlations between the exchange rate, inflation rate, and interest rate, highlighting the interconnected dynamics among currency movements, inflation, and interest rates. The regression analysis reveals that the inflation rate and exchange rate positively impact stock market performance, whereas the interest rate has a negative effect. These findings contribute to the literature on the macroeconomic determinants of stock market performance and provide valuable insights for investors, policymakers, and financial institutions. By incorporating these economic indicators into their decision-making processes, stakeholders can enhance their financial strategies and foster economic stability.

Keywords: Colombo stock exchange, exchange rate, financial stability, inflation rate, interest rate.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL LITERACY LEVELS: ACCOUNTING STUDENTS VS. NON-ACCOUNTING STUDENTS IN SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES.

A. Nishanthini^{1,*} and R. Sathurshana²

^{1,2}*Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: nishanthinia@esn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Financial literacy significantly affects a country's financial well-being and stability. To make correct decisions on financial obligations in any country, people need to acquire knowledge about the financial literature. Students represent the future generation and require the capacity to make informed decisions regarding financial matters through acquisition of financial literacy. If educated, they can make appropriate and timely decisions correctly. Hence, this study examines disparities in financial literacy levels among undergraduates at Sri Lankan State Universities. This study intends to investigate the possible differentiation and understanding of the facts for different financial literacy knowledge by comparing the skills and knowledge of accounting and non-accounting students. The methodology was a quantitative survey involving 230 respondents from six state universities in Sri Lanka based on the convenience sampling method, and a one-sample t-test was used to identify significant differences between accounting and non-accounting students. Students' Financial Literacy Levels were measured using three variables: personal financial management, awareness, and financial skills. The analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in financial literacy between accounting and non-accounting undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities at the 95% confidence level. However, there were differences at the 90% confidence level between the two groups of undergraduates. The results of personal financial management and financial skills show significant differences among undergraduates at the 90% confidence level. At the same time, there was no significant variation among the students in financial literacy level awareness, but there were substantial differences at the 95% confidence level. Overall, this study emphasizes that undergraduates with less literacy in personal financial management, awareness, and financial skills in economic and financial education-related decision-making have lower financial literacy than accounting and non-accounting undergraduates. There were differences between accounting and non-accounting students, but the findings did not support the argument for significant differences; thus, all undergraduates in Sri Lanka should be educated on financial literacy. These findings demonstrate the growing importance of implementing a national strategy to improve financial and economic educational programs, particularly for individuals who are not accounting undergraduates.

Keywords: Awareness, accounting and non-accounting undergraduates, financial literacy levels, financial skills and personal financial management

DIRECTORS' REMUNERATION AND FINANCIAL DISTRESS: EVIDENCE FROM MATERIALS COMPANIES LISTED IN COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE

K. Umanakenan¹ and L. Kengatharan^{2,*}

^{1,2}Department of Financial Management, University of Jaffna

**Corresponding author (Email: lingsiya@univ.jfn.ac.lk)*

ABSTRACT

Firms are endangered by various financial risks, specifically, financial distress. Financial distress provides an early warning signal for predicting future losses. Excessive remuneration for managers is believed to be a prominent cause for firms to fall into the trap of financial distress, leading to the risk of corporate failure. Extensive studies have been carried out on the effect of corporate governance attributes on financial distress, but there are only a few studies in Sri Lanka that investigate the relationship between directors' compensation and financial distress in Sri Lanka. Over the past few years, there has been a spotlight focusing on the overpayment of directors' compensation, especially for highly dignified organizations, due to the greater deviations identified in the salaries of executives and employees. Therefore, the core objective of this study is to investigate the effect of directors' remuneration on the financial distress of materials companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. This study incorporates data collected from 17 entities in the materials industry from 2016 to 2022, where it mainly focuses on a quantitative approach and is purely based on secondary data analysis. Financial distress, measured using the Altman Z-score model, served as the dependent variable, while director remuneration was used as the independent variable. Further, the control variables incorporated in this study are return on assets and firm size, and the data were analyzed using the correlation, ordinary least squares regression, fixed effect, and random effect models employing the Eviews 12 software with the data extracted from the Colombo Stock Exchange website. The regression output revealed that the fixed-effect model is applicable in which the director's compensation has a significant negative impact on financial distress. However, control variables such as return on assets (ROA) and firm size (FS) do not have a significant impact on financial distress. Thus, the findings show that financial distress becomes healthier when directors are over pumped with compensation. The outcome of the study is supported by agency theory, which states that remuneration acts as a boosting agent for managers, resulting in no conflict of interest between shareholders and managers; both interests are aligned, ultimately leading to lower financial distress. This study is imperative for various stakeholders, such as investors, the government, and financial regulators, especially for investors to make decisions regarding compensation-based incentives. Moreover, this would strengthen the government's enforcement of regulations and policies.

Keywords: Agency theory, financial distress, remuneration

THE IMPACT OF MICROFINANCE ON POVERTY REDUCTION IN BADULLA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA

W.M.A.S. Ranasingha^{1,*} and P.D.N.K. Palihena²

^{1,2} *Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ac2019283@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of microfinance on poverty reduction in the Badulla District of Sri Lanka. Poverty has been recognized as a strategically important issue that contributes to Sri Lanka's overall development. Microfinance is deemed one of the dominant concepts that influenced poverty reduction in Sri Lanka. The study's conceptual framework was developed through the literature, which focused on poverty reduction as the dependent variable and microfinance as the independent variable, divided into three dimensions: microcredit, advisory support, and micro-savings. All microloan holders in the district comprised the population of the study, and data were collected using a structured survey questionnaire given to the respondents. Data from 100 microfinance beneficiaries were analyzed to draw critical findings and conclusions. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 21 version, employing descriptive and inferential statistics. The research findings reveal a significant relationship between microfinance and poverty reduction among microfinance beneficiaries in the Badulla district of Sri Lanka. According to the correlation and regression analysis findings, positive relationships between microcredit, advisory support, and micro-savings and poverty reduction were found, emphasizing the potential of microfinance programs. While microcredit and microsavings demonstrated significant impacts, advisory support, though positive, fell short of statistical significance. The statistical analysis affirms the pivotal role of microfinance, particularly microcredit and micro-savings, in addressing and mitigating poverty in Badulla District. The limitations of this study include the sample size, although representative, which may not capture the diversity of all microfinance beneficiaries in the Badulla district. This finding highlights the critical need for microfinance interventions and strategies to reduce poverty. This study provides valuable insights for financial institutions and the government to develop strategies to reduce poverty and promote microfinance services in the region.

Keywords: Micro finance, microcredit, advisory support, micro-savings, poverty reduction.

IMPACT OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL LITERACY ON ONLINE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES OF STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

H.A.H. Kavindhaya^{1,*}, J.M.N. Wijekumara² and D.D.K. Sugathadasa³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kavindhayahirushi.ha@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Digital financial literacy is increasingly being recognized as a crucial factor in shaping consumer behavior in the digital age. With the rise of e-commerce, consumers with higher levels of digital financial literacy are more adept at navigating online marketplaces, leading to more frequent and more confident purchasing decisions. Conversely, those with limited financial literacy may experience barriers to online buying behavior, such as fear of fraud or difficulties in managing digital transactions, which can result in reduced engagement with online shopping. Thus, this study investigates the impact of digital financial literacy on the online buying behavior of management undergraduates of state universities in Sri Lanka. This study focuses on management undergraduates because of their increasing influence as future consumers and their unique digital behaviors. The research framework delineates digital financial literacy as the independent variable and online buying behavior as the dependent variable. Employing quantitative methodology, this study sampled 375 undergraduates from approximately 12,548 management students enrolled in state universities across Sri Lanka. Data collection was conducted via a structured questionnaire underpinned by five formulated hypotheses. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used as analytical techniques. The results of the regression analysis revealed that digital financial awareness, digital financial skills, digital financial knowledge, digital financial behavior, and digital financial attitude of management undergraduates significantly influenced their online buying behavior. This study contributes to the existing knowledge by offering a focused analysis of how digital financial literacy specifically influences the online buying behavior of management undergraduates in Sri Lanka's state universities, providing empirical data that can inform educational strategies and e-commerce practices in similar developing economies. The findings reveal that higher levels of digital financial awareness, skills, knowledge, behavior, and attitude significantly enhance students' confidence and frequency in making online purchases. This highlights the necessity for educational institutions to integrate comprehensive digital financial literacy programs into their curricula, equipping students with essential skills to navigate the digital marketplace effectively.

Keywords: Digital financial literacy, online buying behavior, management undergraduate

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL INCLUSION ON DIGITAL FINANCIAL LITERACY IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES): SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

F.B.H. Hanshika^{1,*} and J.M.N. Wijekumara²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hansikak1999@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Global social and economic systems have undergone substantial changes as a result of the fourth industrial revolution. This has resulted in new electronic marketing channels and financial services, along with new human and machine competencies that fully depend on the technological infrastructure supporting the digital transformation of the financial sector. Therefore, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Sri Lanka are also transforming according to changes in consumer behavior in the digital era. Changes in the financial sector during this era have had a major impact on SMEs. However, there is still a lack of research on the benefits of digitalization in advancing financial inclusion for SMEs. This study aims to address this issue by investigating the impact of financial inclusion on digital financial literacy in SMEs, with special reference to the North Central Province in Sri Lanka. The research model was constructed using the independent variables of financial inclusion and digital financial literacy as the dependent variables. The study employed a quantitative approach, drawing a sample of 372 SMEs from a population of approximately 11,477 SMEs in the North Central Province. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data, and four hypotheses were developed. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The regression results reveal that access to financial services, usage of financial services, financial innovation, and service quality of SMEs significantly impact digital financial literacy. The findings reveal significant relationships between financial inclusion and digital financial literacy, highlighting the importance of enhancing financial literacy to improve access to and the use of digital financial services among SMEs. The results offer valuable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and stakeholders in developing targeted interventions, policies, and programs to promote financial inclusion and empower SMEs. By improving digital financial literacy, SMEs can manage their finances, make informed decisions, and contribute to economic growth and poverty reduction in the region.

Keywords: Financial inclusion, digital financial literacy, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

THE IMPACT OF BEHAVIORAL BIASES ON INVESTMENT DECISION-MAKING WITH MODERATING ROLE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY OF LOCAL INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS AT THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE

H.M. Ekanayake¹, J.M.N. Wijekumara^{2,*} and A.H. Kelumdeniya³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nishantha@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Judicious investment decision-making is essential for a company to perform well. Stock market performance mainly depends on investors' activities and the decisions they make. When making investment decisions, investors often focus on their emotions, thoughts, perceptions, and psychological biases, which can affect their rationality. This means that investors become biased because their investment decision-making is affected by behavioral bias. Many individuals in Sri Lanka lack the financial knowledge and technical skills required to invest in stocks, which can lead intermediaries to manipulate their investors. Therefore, this study aims to investigate "The Impact of Behavioral Biases on Investment Decision-Making in the Stock Market and the Moderating Role of Financial Literacy of Local Individual Investors at the Colombo Stock Exchange with Special Reference to North Central Province. This study uses a quantitative research approach to gather primary data from a sample of 162 individual investors in North Central Province using a structured online questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant positive association between behavioral bias and investment decision-making. Multiple regression analysis shows a significant and positive impact of behavioral bias on investment decision making, and financial literacy moderates the relationship between behavioral biases and investment decision making in the stock market. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for investors to foster more informed decision-making.

Keywords: Behavioral biases, financial literacy, investment decisions

SHARE PRICE MOVEMENTS: INSIGHTS FROM FINANCIAL FIRMS ON THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE

P. Muraleetharan*

*Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: piriyaam@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of firm internal factors on share prices in financial sector firms listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE). Although extensive research exists on the influence of macroeconomic factors on share prices, there needs to be more understanding of how internal firm factors affect share price movements in emerging markets like Sri Lanka. Addressing this gap, the study focuses on the financial sector, which is critical for the economy and has unique characteristics compared to financial industries. The research aims to determine the relationships between critical internal factors—Dividend Yield, Earnings Per Share (EPS), Book Value Per Share (BVPS), Dividend Per Share (DPS), Return on Equity (ROE), Firm Size, Financial Leverage, and Price-Earnings Ratio (P/E Ratio)—and their impact on share prices. A sample of 20 financial firms was analyzed using secondary data from 2017 to 2022 and the software E views 10. was used. Regression and correlation analyses were conducted, and the Random Effects Model was applied to assess the influence of these variables on share prices. The results reveal that Dividend Yield, EPS, Financial Leverage, ROE, and the P/E Ratio are negatively associated with share prices, while DPS and BVPS have a positive relationship. DPS and ROE, in particular, significantly affect share prices. These findings suggest that investors in the CSE's financial sector can make more informed investment decisions by focusing on these critical internal factors. The study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the significance of internal factors in determining share prices, particularly in an emerging market like Sri Lanka. This research provides valuable insights for academics and investors interested in the financial dynamics of developing economies.

Keywords: Share price, financial sector, Colombo stock exchange, emerging markets, internal firm factors.

DETERMINANTS OF CAPITAL STRUCTURE IN LICENSED FINANCE COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA.

D.M.A.R. Karunanayaka^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardana² and C.T. Gamage³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ac2019160@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the determinants of licensed financial firms' capital structure in Sri Lanka. This study addresses a critical gap in the understanding of how firm-specific factors influence financing decisions within the sector. Based on the existing literature, a conceptual framework was developed with capital structure as the dependent variable and firm size, profitability, tangibility, and non-debt tax coverage as the independent variables. The research uses secondary data from 165 annual reports of 33 licensed financial companies from 2018-2022 analysed using STATA 15.0. The regression analysis revealed significant relationships between the variables. Notably, firm size exhibits an unexpected negative correlation with capital structure, challenging conventional theories associated with larger firms with higher debt levels. Profitability showed a positive relationship with capital structure, consistent with pecking order theory, while tangibility showed a strong negative correlation. However, non-debt tax shields are found to have a statistically insignificant effect. These findings have practical implications for the decision-making processes of licensed financial companies in Sri Lanka, particularly for risk management and capital allocation strategies. The study acknowledges limitations, including its focus on licensed financial companies, excluding other financial institutions, such as banks and non-bank financial institutions. Moreover, the analysis considered only a narrow set of criteria, excluding external factors, such as regulatory changes, economic policies, and global market influences. The relatively short study period may only partially capture the long-term capital structure dynamics. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to a better understanding of capital structure decisions in the context of economic volatility and the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting a reexamination of established ideas about firm size and the role of non-debt tax shields.

Keywords: Capital structure, firm size, profitability, tangibility, nondebt tax shield

THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL LITERACY ON E-BANKING USAGE AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

A.A.N.T. Amarasinghe^{1,*} and A.L.M. Jameel²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: niroshathilakshani123@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Financial literacy is essential today because it helps secure financial stability by forming healthy spending habits and making suitable investments for future needs. Accordingly, many studies have been conducted to determine the financial literacy of e-banking usage among bank customers globally. Undergraduates develop financial habits and make decisions that affect their long-term financial well-being. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of financial literacy on e-banking usage by management undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka. The study identified four variables—financial knowledge, financial behavior, financial attitude, and saving—as proxies for financial literacy. The study employed a quantitative approach with probability sampling, drawing a sample of 345 management undergraduates in state universities and collecting data using structured questionnaires among the management undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The study finds that financial knowledge, behavior, and attitude significantly impact e-banking usage. However, the study also finds no impact of savings variables on e-banking usage. Furthermore, the study suggests educational policy implications and recommends collaborations between financial institutions and universities to implement practical initiatives that enhance students' real-world applications of financial literacy.

Keywords: E-banking, financial attitude, financial behavior, financial literacy, saving

MODERATING EFFECT OF CAPITAL STRUCTURE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOARD CHARACTERISTICS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKA

K. Tharsika*

*Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of
Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: tharsik@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Extensive research has focused on the association between board characteristics and financial performance of listed companies. However, this method has produced inconclusive outcomes. This study analyzes the moderating impact of capital structure on the link between board characteristics and financial performance. The sample for this study comprises of 50 non-financial listed firms in Sri Lanka from 2020 to 2024. Return on Assets (ROA) measures financial performance, board size, independence, diversity, board characteristics, and capital structure measures the total debt-to-total assets ratio. The random-effects regression results indicate that board gender diversity negatively impacts financial performance, while board size and independence do not significantly affect financial performance. The presence of capital structure has little effect on the relationship between board size, board independence, and ROA. However, capital structure is found to substantially and positively moderate the relationship between board gender diversity and the financial performance of Sri Lankan companies. The findings facilitate the expansion of the existing literature and a broader theoretical framework by demonstrating the moderating effect of capital structure on the impact of board characteristics on the performance of Sri Lankan non-financial companies. In addition, the findings of this investigation are intended to assist the firm's managers, legislators, and regulators in understanding capital structure and board characteristics.

Keywords: Board characteristics, capital structure, financial performance

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL LITERACY ON UNDERGRADUATES' INVESTMENT DECISIONS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES IN RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

J.D.S. Vijerathna^{1,*} and C.T. Gamage²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dushans002@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Financial literacy refers to the knowledge and skills needed to make informed and effective decisions about money management. It plays a crucial role in advancing financial development and fostering economic growth. Given these developments, it is essential to evaluate whether the younger generation, particularly undergraduates, who are viewed as future investors and key players in the economy, possess an adequate understanding of financial concepts and whether there is a shortage of research in this field related to Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This study examines the impact of financial literacy on the investment decisions of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Management Studies at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Among 2000 students in the Faculty of Management Studies of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, 198 undergraduates participated in this study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. A quantitative approach was used for the research, a convenience sampling method was used to gather data from the respondents, and five hypotheses were formulated to conduct the research. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used as analytical tools. This study used five dimensions to identify undergraduates' financial literacy. Knowledge about financial products, accessing financial products, money management, knowledge about financial investment options, and financial skills are the independent variables, and the investment decisions of undergraduates are considered the dependent variables. The findings revealed that accessing financial products, knowledge about financial investment options, and financial skills significantly impact undergraduates' investment decisions, with significance values of 0.0, 0.0 and 0.021, respectively. Therefore, policymakers should enhance financial literacy by improving financial understanding to augment the investment decision-making capabilities of Sri Lankan undergraduates.

Keywords: Financial literacy, investment decisions, undergraduates, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

DETERMINANTS OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF LICENSED COMMERCIAL BANKS IN SRI LANKA

K.M.M.S.L. Jayathilaka^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardana² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sajithjayathilaka.2@icloud.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the determinants of financial performance in 13 licensed commercial banks listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) in Sri Lanka. These banks were selected based on their status as licensed commercial banks operating within Sri Lanka during the fourteen years from 2010 to 2023. A purposive sampling technique is employed to select a representative sample of banks based on criteria such as size, ownership structure, and geographical location. The primary focus is on two dependent variables: return on assets (ROA) and equity (ROE). Four bank-specific characteristics are analyzed: capital adequacy ratio, operating cost efficiency, Non-Performing Loans, and liquidity. In contrast, high levels of non-performing loans and liquidity issues negatively impact return on assets, as they reduce asset-use efficiency in generating profits. The study found no significant relationship between operating cost efficiency and return on investments. Further analysis reveals that non-performing loans negatively affect the return on equity, emphasizing that loan defaults diminish the returns derived from shareholder equity, highlighting the critical importance of managing loan quality. This study uses secondary data from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's annual report from 2010 to 2023 to analyze macroeconomic factors. Research on the financial performance of licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka is crucial for the country's economic health, as it influences their ability to support growth, provide efficient services, and contribute to financial system stability, enabling informed decision-making and policy implementation. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the factors driving financial performance in Sri Lanka's banking sector, offering guidance for strategic decisions to improve profitability and sustain long-term growth.

Keywords: Capital adequacy ratio, liquidity, non-performing loans, operating cost efficiency, return on assets

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF RISK TOLERANCE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE COLOMBO DISTRICT

K.A.M.S. Munasinghe^{1,*}, W. P. Wijewardane² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1, 2, 3.} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: Maduwanthishamika859@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explores how demographic factors and risk tolerance collectively influence investment decisions among individuals in the Colombo District, Sri Lanka. Investment behavior is fundamental to personal financial growth, making it essential to understand what drives individuals' choices. This study addresses knowledge gaps regarding the impact of demographic variables, such as age, gender, income, and education, on risk tolerance and investment decisions. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression modelling to evaluate the data gathered from Colombo District residents. The results revealed that age and income significantly affected risk tolerance, with younger and higher-income individuals demonstrating a more robust risk appetite. This heightened risk tolerance subsequently influences investment decisions, suggesting that such individuals are more inclined to pursue higher-risk investments. However, the findings also indicate variability in how demographic factors impact investment choices, highlighting the need for customized financial advisory services that consider demographic characteristics and individual risk tolerance. This study's insights have practical implications for financial planners, supporting the development of personalized investment strategies that align with client demographics and risk profiles. Despite the study's contributions, it acknowledges certain limitations, including a focus on one geographic area, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, self-reported data may introduce response biases as individuals overstate or understate their risk tolerance and investment behaviors. Future research should expand beyond Colombo District and explore additional demographic and behavioral variables to enhance the understanding of investment decision-making factors.

Keywords: Demographic factors, investment decisions, risk tolerance

ANALYSIS THE FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S START-UP INVESTMENT DECISIONS IN THE MATALE DISTRICT

D.M.D.H. Siriwardhana^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardane² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1, 2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hansika14d@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the factors that influence women's startup investment decisions in Matale District. The research problem centers on the limited knowledge of how specific variables, such as education and experience, supportive networks, family factors, financial resources, and new technology influence women's start-up investment decisions. A quantitative research methodology was employed to collect data from 355 female investors in Matale District using structured questionnaires. The findings reveal that education and a strong relationship suggest that higher levels of education and more relevant experience contribute significantly to more favorable startup investment decisions. Supportive networks are more likely to make positive start-up investment decisions. Although they are smaller, financial resources positively influence women's investment decisions. Family factors and new technology have a significantly favorable influence on women's startup investment decisions. The study concludes by suggesting policy interventions and community-based strategies to empower women in Matale District, aiming to foster a more supportive environment for female entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Education and experience, family factors, financial resources, investment decisions, supportive network

A STUDY OF TENDENCY TO INVESTMENT AMONG THE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

K.B.S. Lakshan^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardana² and P.R. Weerathunga³

*Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

Corresponding author (Email: lakshansandaru109@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the investment tendencies among university undergraduates, focusing on the factors that influence their propensity to invest. Understanding young adults' investment behaviour is crucial for fostering financial stability and informed decision-making in today's economy. The study aims to identify the roles of financial literacy, personal interest, and awareness of investment opportunities in shaping the investment behaviours of university students. A quantitative research methodology was employed, using structured questionnaires to gather data from 350 undergraduates selected through stratified random sampling from various state and non-state universities. The study used statistical techniques, including descriptive and regression analyses, to uncover relationships between the variables. The significant findings reveal that financial literacy and awareness of investment options are substantial predictors of investment tendencies among undergraduates. Personal interest in financial markets also plays a crucial role in motivating students to engage in investment activities. The results indicate that enhancing financial education and providing accessible investment resources can increase investment participation among young adults. The implications of this study are substantial, as they highlight the need for educational institutions to incorporate financial literacy programs into their curricula. By providing students with essential knowledge and skills, universities can empower them to make informed investment decisions, enhancing their long-term financial well-being. The study's limitations include a focus on a specific geographic region, which may affect the generalizability of the findings, and reliance on self-reported data, which can introduce bias. The study contributes to the existing literature on investment behaviour. It lays the groundwork for future studies on financial literacy among young investors.

Keywords: Awareness of investment, financial literacy, investment behaviour, investment tendency, and personal interest

THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY IN SHAPING PERSONAL INVESTMENT CHOICES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF MANAGEMENT AND NON-MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

W.M.R.C.K. Welivita^{1, *} and J.S. Kumari²

^{1,2}Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

* Corresponding author (Email: ac2020414@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of financial literacy in shaping the personal investment choices of management and non-management undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This study focuses on the differences in financial literacy levels between undergraduate management and non-management students. Even though undergraduates have no fixed income, it is essential to assess their financial literacy and tendency or attitude towards investments because they are the parties who determine the future economy and investment markets. Financial knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors measure financial literacy. A sample of 367 undergraduates from Rajarata University, comprising both management and non-management undergraduates, was randomly selected for the survey. Quantitative research was undertaken; hence, the findings were analyzed statistically using SPSS v.25 software. Reliability and validity tests were performed to assess the adequacy and reliability of the sample. Further data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, an independent sample T-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. The analysis reveals that financial literacy and the dimensions used in this study, namely, financial knowledge, financial skills, financial attitudes, and financial behavior, strongly impact undergraduates' personal investment decision-making. Furthermore, it was found that there is a substantial difference between the financial literacy levels of management and non-management undergraduates, where financial literacy is higher among management undergraduate students than among non-management undergraduates. Demographic factors such as gender, residence, academic year, and work experience were found to have no differentiated impact on financial literacy. In contrast, only educational qualifications (other diploma levels, except for a particular degree) significantly affected financial literacy. This study addressed the existing gap in assessing management and non-management undergraduates' financial literacy and their impact on investment decision-making after the research was conducted in 2020. This study was restricted to one university, and future researchers can use other universities and other qualitative factors. Given the observed disparities in financial literacy levels between management and non-management undergraduates, this study recommends that university administrations enhance financial literacy programs for all undergraduates to promote equitable financial literacy and preparedness.

Keywords: Financial literacy, financial attitude, financial knowledge, financial skills, financial behavior, personal investment decision-making.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CREDIT CARDS USAGE OF NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

A.M. Suraweera^{1,*} and J.S. Kumari²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ayeshamadhushani@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The adoption of credit cards is becoming increasingly integral to managing individuals' fast-paced lifestyles, especially in emerging markets. Therefore, this study reviews the literature on the factors influencing credit card usage that result in the intention to use credit cards. This study investigated how age, gender, income, financial knowledge, attitudes, and education influence the intention to use credit cards. The factors were constructed based on the Technology Acceptance Model, the Theory of Planned Behavior, and several other factors from the literature. An online survey was used to ensure broad accessibility, and a sample size of 384 participants was used to ensure statistical validity. This study analyzes various factors influencing credit card usage, including demographic characteristics, personal financial knowledge, attitudes towards credit cards, and the intention to use them. To analyze the collected data, the study employed the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 25), utilizing descriptive statistics to summarize the demographic profiles and responses of the participants. This rigorous statistical approach aims to identify the most significant factors influencing credit card adoption in the target population. By identifying the key factors that influence card users' decisions to adopt credit cards, this study aims to provide valuable insights for financial institutions and policymakers. These findings can help financial institutions design targeted marketing campaigns and educational programs to promote responsible credit card use. This study extends the Technology Acceptance Model by integrating demographic and financial knowledge factors, providing a localized understanding of credit card usage behavior. In conclusion, this study sheds light on the current state of credit card usage in Sri Lanka and lays the groundwork for future studies and interventions to increase credit card adoption.

Keywords: Credit card usage, demographic factors, financial knowledge, behavioral factors, technology acceptance model, Sri Lanka

THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL LITERACY ON MONEY MANAGEMENT OF MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

J.M.K.N. Jayasinghe^{1,*} and G.M.H.P.K. Rathwatta²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kaveeugc@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Financial literacy refers to the knowledge and skills required to make informed and effective financial decisions that are crucial for improving personal financial management. In today's rapidly changing financial environment, assessing the financial literacy of university undergraduates is essential as they represent future professionals and decision-makers in society. This study examines the impact of financial literacy on money management among undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Money management includes effective financial decisions and money-related practices. Money management was measured in terms of spending, saving habits, and ability to handle debt and investment. This research focuses on four core dimensions of financial literacy: spending literacy, credit literacy, saving literacy, and investment literacy. Data were collected from 322 undergraduates from 2000 management undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, using a structured questionnaire. The study followed a quantitative approach and employed stratified random sampling to gather data from the respondents. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used to analyze the impact of financial literacy components on money management practices. The findings indicate that spending and saving literacy significantly affect money management, suggesting that students who are knowledgeable in these areas are better at managing their finances. However, credit literacy and investment literacy had no significant effect on the sample's money management. This study underscores the importance of strengthening financial literacy education by mainly focusing on practical financial skills. Based on these findings, the researcher provides recommendations for financial institutions and policymakers to enhance financial literacy programs aimed at improving the money management abilities of undergraduates across Sri Lanka. This will ensure that they are well-prepared to manage their finances effectively in the future.

Keywords: Financial literacy, money management, undergraduates, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL LITERACY ON SAVING BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM SMES IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

A.N.R. Jinadasa^{1,*} and G.M.H.P.K. Rathwatta²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nimnarashmika1@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Financial literacy of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Sri Lanka because SMEs substantially contribute to developing the country's economy. The objective of this study is to identify the impact of financial literacy on the saving behavior of SME owners in Sri Lanka. The research model was constructed using the independent variable of financial literacy and the dependent variable of saving behavior. Financial Literacy is measured in three dimensions: budgeting, debt management, and investment management. The study employed a quantitative approach, drawing a sample of 147 owners of SMEs in the tourism and hospitality industry in Anuradhapura District from a population of 227 owners of SMEs in the tourism and hospitality industry in Anuradhapura District registered under the Chamber of Commerce in Anuradhapura. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and three hypotheses were formulated. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were used as analytical tools. The regression results reveal that SMEs' owners' budgeting, debt, and investment management practices significantly impact saving behavior. Furthermore, the findings suggest that enhancing financial literacy can lead to better financial decision making and improved saving practices within SMEs. Policymakers and practitioners are encouraged to improve access to financial resources and promote financial literacy to support SMEs' financial resilience and sustainability of SMEs in the tourism sector.

Keywords: Budgeting practices, debt management, financial literacy, investment management, saving behavior

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Human Resource Management

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IMPACT OF WORK ALIENATION ON QUIET QUITTING OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS IN TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

H.P.D.I. Senarathna^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: diliniishara989@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant transformations in the working environment. Moreover, this situation has a detrimental effect on the global community. Specifically, this situation damaged the manufacturing sector, leading many personnel to discreetly resign from their positions. Nevertheless, quitting is not wholly novel and is closely linked to human resource management and organizational employee behavior. Consequently, employees remain employed solely to maintain their income and lack complete emotional or intellectual involvement. In the current work environment, young employees frequently choose a strategy known as “quiet quitting.” This grave matter requires comprehension and resolution. After the pandemic, the number of employees who quietly left their jobs increased by 47%, and it has been found in previous research that this situation is common among people who are primarily engaged in temporary jobs and those who studied only for school education (25% and 31.1%31.1%. Accordingly, it has been found that many young workers are employed in the textile industry, a sub-part of Sri Lanka’s apparel industry, where many of them are school leavers, employed due to financial difficulties. Previous research shows that many employees leave their jobs and stay quiet in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Further, work alienation of employees has a trend of increasing “Quiet Quitting,” and the purpose of this study is to determine the impact of work alienation on the Quiet Quitting of front-line workers in the textile industry in Northwestern Province. This study used a cross-sectional design and quantitative approach to test the six hypotheses. This study discusses work alienation in terms of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, self-estrangement, and isolation. The sample size of this study was 162 front-line workers in the textile industry in North Western Province, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire, an interview questionnaire, an interview, and a simple random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26) and the results were validated. These findings indicate that work alienation has a significantly positive impact on quitting. The present study has not used the employees working in the textile industry of other provinces of Sri Lanka and those provinces, and this study has been limited to the front-line workers in the textile industry of North Western Province, Sri Lanka. Therefore, this research concludes that the effect of job alienation in the workplace should be investigated not only for frontline workers in the textile industry but also for workers in other fields. Moreover, employees who leave their jobs silently are disadvantageous for organizations, and this situation can be avoided by creating a satisfying working environment within the organization.

Keywords: Front-line workers, quiet quitting, work alienation, front-line workers

NEXUS BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF UNDERGRADUATES AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SMARTPHONE ADDICTION

W.M.A.G.N.K. Wasala^{1,*} and K.A.K.S. Rathnakara²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2019385@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Social media have become an essential part of the day-to-day lives of individuals, particularly in the young population. Social media can improve people's interactions and allow them to express themselves, but there have also been concerns about its possible harmful impacts on psychological well-being among university students. Therefore, this study investigated the impact of social media use on psychological well-being and smartphone addiction among undergraduate students at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Social media usage was the independent variable and psychological well-being was the dependent variable. Smartphone addiction was used as the mediating variable. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire from 368 undergraduates from a population of 8369 within six faculties at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka using a stratified sampling technique. The reliability of the measures was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The hypotheses were tested using correlation, regression, and ANOVA analyses. All proposed hypotheses were supported according to the study findings. The results of the study revealed that social media usage had a negative impact ($R = -.167$) on psychological well-being, but this negative impact increased with smartphone addiction. The study findings will benefit university students, parents, university administrators, academic staff, and the government. Further, it was recommended that undergraduates have self-control when using social media, avoid smartphone addiction, and take responsibility for their psychological well-being.

Keywords: psychological well-being, smartphone addiction, social media usage

THE MODERATING EFFECT OF ABUSIVE SUPERVISION ON THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE BULLYING ON TURNOVER INTENTION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES IN SELECTED INSURANCE COMPANIES IN BADULLA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

W.P.S. Dilshani^{1,*} and K.A.K.S. Rathnakara²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilshanisagari077@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the moderating effect of abusive supervision on the impact of workplace bullying on turnover intention among non-managerial employees working at insurance companies in the Badulla District, Sri Lanka. Workplace bullying, a pervasive issue with severe consequences for organizational dynamics, particularly in terms of elevated turnover rates, has been explored in toxic workplaces. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the moderating effect of abusive supervision on workplace bullying and turnover intention among non-managerial employees working at insurance companies in Badulla District, Sri Lanka. The dependent variable consisted of two dimensions: person- and work-related bullying. Additionally, the dimensions of abusive supervision, which encompass stealing (CS), belittling behavior (BLB), yelling (Y), and scapegoating (SG), are considered. This quantitative study collected data from non-managerial employees in selected insurance companies in Badulla District, Sri Lanka, using a stratified sampling method. The total population was 341, with a sample size of 189, and 129 respondents provided their responses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression analysis, and moderating analysis using SPSS software. Furthermore, the study was conducted in a non-contrived environment and the unit of analysis was individual non-managerial employees. The findings revealed a positive and statistically significant impact of workplace bullying on employee turnover intention. However, abusive supervision did not have a moderating effect on workplace bullying or turnover intentions. This study contributes to the understanding of the dynamics among workplace bullying, abusive supervision, and turnover intention among non-managerial employees in insurance companies, providing new insights into the absence of a moderating effect of abusive supervision on the relationship between workplace bullying and turnover intention.

Keywords: Abusive supervision, employee turnover intention, workplace bullying

IMPACT OF WORKPLACE INCIVILITY ON TURNOVER INTENTION OF FRONTLINE WORKERS IN LARGE-SCALE SUPERMARKETS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KURUNEGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

N.A.S. Madhumekala^{1,*} and K.A.K.S. Rathnakara²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2019202@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Workplace incivility has been recognized as a critical and crucial issue that occurs within the workplace, and is regarded as one that might have significant effects on employees as well as organizational outcomes such as turnover intention. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the impact of workplace incivility on the turnover intention of frontline workers in large-scale supermarkets. Moreover, the absence of research in the specific context and the lack of empirical evidence support the study's contribution to existing knowledge. This cross-sectional study used a deductive approach. The study population comprises frontline workers in large-scale supermarkets in the Kurunegala district. A stratified sampling technique was used as the sampling technique, and the sample size was 184. Personally administered questionnaires, paper surveys, and online surveys were used to collect data using quantitative methods. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The reliability of the measures was tested using Cronbach's alpha. According to the data analysis, it was found that the workplace incivility impacts 70.6% of the turnover intention of frontline workers in large-scale supermarkets. The findings suggest that workplace incivility has a significant positive impact on turnover intention, while supervisor, coworker, and customer incivility, which are considered the three dimensions of workplace incivility, also indicated a positive impact on turnover intention. It can be concluded that frontline workers in large-scale supermarkets who face incivility in their workplace have thoughts of leaving their current jobs. Therefore, it is recommended that the relevant organizational authorities be concerned about the incivility that occurs within their organizations to build retention intention among employees.

Keywords: co-worker incivility, customer incivility, supervisor incivility, turnover intention, workplace incivility

IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS ON INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR OF SME EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RATHNAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

J P. S Kumaradasa^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019183@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of employee happiness on the innovative behavior of small- and medium-sized enterprise (SME) employees in Sri Lanka, with special reference to Executives in the Ratnapura district. SMEs are the backbone of the economy and their contribution to local production is very high. One of the reasons for this could be employees innovative work behavior. Thus, employee happiness can be significant for innovative work behavior. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to the impact of employee happiness on the innovative work behavior of SME employees. There is an empirical gap in the understanding of the impact of employee happiness on innovative behavior. In response, the researchers selected executive-level SME employees in the Ratnapura district in Sri Lanka. This study uses a quantitative approach. The SME employees selected in the Ratnapura district represented the population, and 285 executive-level employees from several SMEs were chosen as the sample. Data were collected through a Google Form and printed questionnaires and were tested using SPSS software to measure reliability, correlation, and regression analysis. The model consisted of four hypotheses: Rewards, Supervisor Support, Flexible Working Hours, and Workload, which were measured to determine the impact of each variable on the dependent variable. Four hypotheses were accepted with multiple regression analysis, where all hypotheses were accepted based on the multiple regression analysis decision rule with a significance value of $P < 0.005$. According to the results, it can be concluded that employee happiness has a significant positive impact on innovative work behavior. The researchers recommend that future researchers conduct studies using different independent variables in other sectors

Keywords: Employee happiness, flexible working hours, innovative behavior, rewards, supervisor support, work load

IMPACT OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP STYLE ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUBLIC BANKING SECTOR IN BADULLA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

A.M.J.N. Aththanayake^{1,*} and K.A.K.S. Rathnakara²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: janani2000n@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is an important aspect that needs to be embraced within organizations because of its benefits not only for employees, but also for the entire organization. Employee engagement is a broad concept that positively influences employees and has positive implications for organizations. An effective work environment depends on leaders' authenticity, thereby enhancing employee engagement. It measures employees' commitment to positive organizational outcomes. Low employee engagement can contribute to multiple organizational problems and is related to increased turnover and absenteeism. However, it is difficult to determine the overall employee engagement through one or two employees' engagement with one or more employees. Leaders' falsity leads to poor employee engagement, such as decreased employee job satisfaction, motivation, and the resulting absenteeism. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the impact of the dimensions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) on employee engagement in the public banking sector in the Badulla District, Sri Lanka. The study sample consisted of 242 employees in Public Banks in Badulla District, selected from a population of 650, using the stratified sampling method. Individual employees were considered the unit of study and were conducted as a cross-sectional study. Five hypotheses are formulated and tested using a deductive approach. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data, which were analyzed using the SPSS 21 package. The reliability of the measures was checked and ensured using Cronbach's alpha values. Pearson's correlation coefficient and simple and multiple regression analyses were used as statistical tools. The results showed that relational transparency ($r = 0.550$), internalized moral perspective ($r = 0.573$), balanced processing ($r = 0.544$), and self-awareness ($r = 0.571$) had positive impacts on employee engagement. The findings of this study are significant for improving employee engagement. The results are intended to be used to acquire a better understanding of the relationship between authentic leadership styles and employee engagement. It shows the direct impact of the independent variable (authentic leadership style) on the dependent variable (employee engagement) of the study. These findings suggest that leaders who demonstrate authentic leadership behaviors have the potential to positively influence employee engagement levels within the banking sector.

Keywords: Authentic leadership style, employee engagement, internalized moral perspective, relational transparency, self-awareness.

DOES ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM INFLUENCE JOB PERFORMANCE? EVIDENCE FROM RUBBER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA

I. A.D. Kavindi^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dinuka.kavindi99@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Human capital is essential for organizations in the 21st century. Over the past two decades, Sri Lanka's rubber industry has gained recognition for its value-added products. This study investigated the impact of organizational cynicism on job performance among operational-level employees in the rubber manufacturing sector, specifically in Gampaha District, a key traditional rubber-growing area in Sri Lanka. This study employs a deductive and quantitative approach, deploying a sample of 170 operational-level employees in the rubber manufacturing industry in Gampaha District selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected using an online structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS (version 21). The multiple regression analysis results indicated a significant impact of organizational cynicism on job performance, cognitive cynicism on job performance, and behavioral cynicism on job performance. Affective cynicism was excluded from the multiple regression model, possibly because of collinearity issues. A thorough investigation of these hypotheses collectively confirms the detrimental influence of organizational cynicism on the job performance of operational-level employees in Sri Lankan rubber manufacturing firms. Each facet of cynicism—cognitive, behavioral, and affective—exerts a distinct yet interconnected role in mitigating job performance. These revelations advocate for a paradigm shift in organizational strategies, urging managers to not only address visible symptoms, but also delve into the root causes of cynicism. Additionally, this research contributes to the academic understanding of the interplay between organizational attitudes and job performance in the context of the rubber manufacturing industry and has practical implications for leaders and human resource practitioners in cultivating strategies for improving organizational culture, employee engagement, and consequently, job performance within the rubber manufacturing sector in Gampaha District.

Keywords: Job performance, operational-level workforce, organizational cynicism, rubber manufacturing sector.

IMPACT OF PROCRASTINATION ON TIME MANAGEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATES: STRESS AS THE MEDIATOR

K.B.R. Imalsha^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kbrimalsha@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of procrastination on the time management of undergraduates at selected state universities in Sri Lanka, considering the mediating effect of stress. A common experience for new students is becoming engrossed in making new friends, discovering new places, and adapting to an independent life, causing them to lose sight of their primary objective: academic success. This often results from the procrastination of compulsory and essential study-related matters. When deadlines for initial assignments or examinations approach, reality usually returns with an unpleasant rush to complete them. This quantitative study deployed six dimensions of procrastination: task aversiveness, fear of failure, difficulty making decisions, dependency, risk-taking, and rebellion against control. The measurement scales were adopted from the PASS Scale designed by Solomon and Rothblum (1984) to measure procrastination, the Scale of Razali (2017) to measure time management, and the stress scale (ASQ) developed by Kim (1970). The study sample comprised 379 undergraduates from three state universities: Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, and Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. Data were collected through a structured survey questionnaire, and the hypotheses were tested using Multiple Regression Analysis and Mediation Analysis of Baron and Kenny using SPSS software (version 21). The findings indicate that procrastination, including aversiveness of task, risk-taking, rebellion against control, and the mediating effect of stress, significantly impacts the time management of undergraduates. It was proven that fear of failure, difficulty in making decisions, and dependency are not significant dimensions of procrastination. The study recommends that both undergraduates and the administrative bodies of state universities in Sri Lanka address the issues of time management and procrastination behavior among students by implementing relevant policies and practices.

Keywords: Procrastination, Sri Lankan stress, time management, undergraduates.

HARASSMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER INTENTION: INSIGHTS FROM THE APPAREL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

K.G.K. Dulmini^{1,*} and A.K. Anjala²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019078@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of workplace harassment on employee turnover intention in the apparel industry of Western Province, Sri Lanka. Further, this research aims to address the gap in addressing workplace harassment without a sexual perspective and in considering both male and female employees working in the apparel industry. Drawing on the literature, a conceptual framework was developed with workplace harassment as the independent variable, assessed through verbal, psychological, and physical harassment. The study population included employees in the apparel sector in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, where the data were collected using a structured questionnaire from a sample of 384 employees selected through stratified sampling from several selected apparel companies and conducting the research using a quantitative approach. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23 using different analytical methods, namely, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. According to the findings, 313 of the initial 384 respondents completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 81%. The findings indicated that a significant proportion of respondents (82.7 %) reported experiencing verbal harassment, while 16.9% reported psychological harassment. The correlation coefficients revealed statistically significant positive relationships between employee turnover intentions and each form of workplace harassment. The Cronbach's alpha values used to analyze the reliability and obtained for Job Satisfaction, Job Stress, Work Environment, and the overall Employee Turnover Intention surpass the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, suggesting acceptable internal consistency. Regression analysis highlighted that the R² value was 0.213, indicating that approximately 21.3% of the variance in employee turnover intention could be explained by the combined influence of verbal, psychological, and physical harassment. Additionally, verbal harassment, psychological harassment, and physical harassment all had statistically significant positive impacts on employee turnover intention. Accordingly, this study concluded that workplace harassment significantly impacts employee turnover intention in the apparel sector of Western Province, Sri Lanka. The findings underscore the need for organizations to address and mitigate workplace harassment to reduce employee turnover rates by implementing comprehensive anti-harassment policies and conducting regular training and awareness programs to educate employees and management.

Keywords: Apparel industry-Sri Lanka, employee turnover intention, workplace harassment

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND JOB STRESS OF POLICE CONSTABLES IN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN ANURADHAPURA DIVISION, SRI LANKA

P.G.P.U. Gunathilake^{1,*} and W.W.A.N. Sujeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: pgpeshala@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Police work is inherently stressful, leading to burnout and high turnover. Constables with high emotional intelligence can better manage their emotions in tense situations, leading to more empathetic and de-escalating interactions with the public. This can foster trust and cooperation within the community. By focusing on police constables in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, this study bridges gaps in the existing literature while enhancing our understanding of the unique challenges faced by law enforcement officers in a specific cultural context. Hence, the present study aimed to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and job stress among police constables in the Anuradhapura division of the police department. Specifically, it seeks to determine how self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, as dimensions of emotional intelligence, correlate with job stress. This study employed a deductive approach and utilized a survey method for data collection. A monomethod with a cross-sectional time horizon was selected as the research choice. The unit of analysis was an individual police constable. The target population comprised 400 police constables from eight police stations in Anuradhapura. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a final sample size of 196, as determined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Hypotheses were formulated based on the existing literature and empirical observations. The Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted using SPSS version 21. The results indicate a statistically significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and job stress. Additionally, dimensions of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management, were found to have a significant relationship with job stress. These findings suggest that various aspects of emotional intelligence are related to job stress among police constables in the Anuradhapura division.

Keywords -Emotional awareness, job stress, emotional awareness, relationship management, self-management, social awareness, relationship management

THE IMPACT OF INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS ON IT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

M.S.M. Abeysekara¹, D.H.D.S. Wickramasiri^{2,*} and T.U. Senarath³

^{1, 2, 3} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: dinushikaw@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors on the performance of IT professionals. With the rapid evolution of the IT industry, maintaining a competitive edge requires a deep understanding of the key motivators that drive employee engagement and performance. This study aimed to assess the impact of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors on IT employee performance. Additionally, it explores how these motivators vary through quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, offering a comprehensive understanding of the motivational drivers. A mixed-methods approach was employed, with quantitative data collected via a structured questionnaire distributed to 152 IT employees, complemented by qualitative insights from in-depth interviews with ten participants. Data were analyzed using statistical methods for quantitative results and thematic analysis for qualitative responses. The survey results indicated that intrinsic factors, such as autonomy, mastery, and purpose, significantly enhanced employee satisfaction and performance. Interviews revealed that these motivators, along with extrinsic rewards, such as financial incentives and career advancement, play a critical role in maintaining long-term employee engagement. This study uniquely contributes to the understanding of how a balanced approach that integrates both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation strategies can optimize employee engagement in the IT sector. It provides actionable insights for IT managers and HR professionals to design motivational frameworks that cater to the unique needs of the modern IT workforce, thereby fostering innovation and sustaining high performance.

Keywords: Extrinsic motivation, employee performance, HR strategies, it workforce, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, employee performance, HR strategies, organizational culture

THE IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL AND HOUSEHOLD FACTORS ON THREE-WHEEL DRIVERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN YATINUWARA DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT, KANDY

H.M.L.H.K. Herath^{1,*} and W.W.A.N. Sujeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2019119@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Job satisfaction is influenced by workplace conditions and personal factors, and recent studies have emphasized the impact of household dynamics and stressors. For three-wheel drivers, who play a crucial role in Sri Lanka's economy, these factors are vital, yet under-researched, especially concerning regional differences. Despite their contributions, they often face undervaluation and unsafe practices that affect the service quality. Additionally, health and safety concerns, such as pollution and accidents, are critical, but insufficiently explored. This study investigated the impact of individual and household factors on the job satisfaction of three-wheel drivers in the Yatinuwara Divisional Secretariat, Kandy, focusing on economic factors, work conditions, family composition, and financial obligations. The study employed a deductive approach and a survey method as the research strategy. A monomethod with a cross-sectional time horizon was selected as the research choice. The unit of analysis was an individual three-wheel driver, and data were gathered through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. This study targeted 250 three-wheel drivers in the Yatinuwara Divisional Secretariat, Kandy, using a stratified random sampling technique to select 152 participants, as determined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). Six hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses with SPSS version 21. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive impact of individual (economic and work conditions) and household factors (family composition and financial obligations) on job satisfaction among three-wheel drivers. These results highlight the complex interplay between personal and familial circumstances in shaping the work experiences of three-wheel drivers. The findings can guide policymakers and stakeholders in developing targeted interventions to enhance working conditions and job satisfaction in this segment of the transportation workforce. Further research is needed to explore these relationships in other regions and to identify additional factors that influence job satisfaction in this sector.

Keywords: Household factors, individual factors, job satisfaction, three-wheel drivers

THE ROLE OF WELFARE FACILITIES IN BOOSTING JOB PERFORMANCE AMONG THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN APPAREL INDUSTRY SRI LANKA'S APPAREL FIRMS, SRI LANKA

K. P. T. Sajeewani^{1,*} and K.H.A.A.P. Premachandra²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Business Studies & Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.*

* Corresponding author (Email: thakshilakpts@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Organizations operate in dynamic and unpredictable environments, necessitating various strategies for their survival, most of which focus on employees. Consequently, along with other resources, humans have become a prominent resource for any organization. Employees are essential for achieving organizational goals and objectives, and thus, maintaining employee satisfaction is critical. Welfare facilities, including the benefits, comfort, and amenities provided by employers, play a significant role in enhancing employee well-being and living standards. Such welfare packages are crucial for attracting and retaining employees by satisfying their needs within an organization. This study investigated the impact of employee welfare facilities on the job performance of operational employees in the apparel sector of Sri Lanka. This study evaluated both statutory and non-statutory welfare facilities and their relationship with employee job performance. The findings confirm that statutory and non-statutory welfare facilities are essential for enhancing the performance of operational-level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel sector. A stratified random sampling method was used to select a sample size of 152 operational-level employees from two large-scale garment manufacturers. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to evaluate the impact of welfare facilities on job performance using a 5-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed through univariate, correlation, and regression analyses using the SPSS software (version 25). The main findings indicate a positive and significant correlation between the independent variable of welfare facilities and the dependent variable of employee job performance, with welfare facilities significantly affecting job performance. Recommendations from this study include improving awareness sessions on welfare facilities, discussing future welfare trends, and conducting consultations. This study underscores the vital role of welfare facilities in enhancing job performance, challenging traditional views on the primacy of financial incentives, and highlighting their importance for operational-level employees in Sri Lanka's apparel industry.

Keywords: Apparel industry, job performance, non-statutory welfare benefits, operational level employees, statutory welfare benefits, welfare facilities, non-statutory welfare benefits

WORKPLACE BULLYING AND ITS HIDDEN IMPACT ON TURNOVER INTENTION AMONG APPAREL EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

A.G.S.R. Samarathunga^{1,*} and A.K. Anjala²

^{1,2}*Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019313@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of workplace bullying on turnover intention among operational level workers in the garment industry in Kandy District, Sri Lanka. The conceptual framework was developed through literature review, focusing on turnover intention as the dependent variable and workplace bullying as the independent variable, which was divided into three dimensions: work-related bullying, person-related bullying, and physical intimidation. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed among a sample of 380 respondents working in the garment industry in Kandy District, selected using the stratified sampling method. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 23, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between work-related bullying ($r = 0.751$, $p = 0.000$), person-related bullying ($r = 0.705$, $p = 0.000$), and physical intimidation ($r = 0.694$, $p = 0.000$) with turnover intention. Further, the regression analysis indicated an R squared value of 0.637, suggesting that 63.7% of the variance in turnover intention can be explained by these forms of bullying. Regression analysis further confirmed the significant positive effects of work-related bullying ($\beta = 0.455$, $p = 0.000$), person-related bullying ($\beta = 0.206$, $p = 0.000$), and physical intimidation ($\beta = 0.108$, $p = 0.002$) on turnover intention. The study concluded that workplace bullying significantly impacts turnover intention among operational level employees in the Sri Lankan apparel industry, with work-related bullying having the strongest effect, followed by person-related bullying and physical intimidation. To address these issues, organizations should implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies, conduct regular training and awareness programs, and establish support systems such as counseling services and confidential reporting mechanisms. By implementing these recommendations, organizations can create a safer work environment, reducing turnover intentions and improving employee retention. While the study focuses on the garment industry in Sri Lanka, its findings may be applicable to other industries. Future research should consider using a qualitative analysis method and incorporating different variables. The study's reliance on one-time cross-sectional data may limit responses from operational-level employees, suggesting the need for a more durable method. Future researchers might also explore bullying and harassment among female employees.

Keywords: Apparel industry, person-related bullying, physical intimidation, turnover intention, work-related bullying.

ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: THE MODERATING ROLE OF MINDFULNESS AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

L. Mayuran¹, T. Thasika^{2,*} and S. Manjula³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna.*

*Corresponding author: (Email: ythasika@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The Attention Regulation Theory suggests that individuals have a limited capacity for attention, which must be effectively managed to maintain focus and performance amidst distractions and stressors. In organizational settings, perceived politics can be a significant distraction, depleting cognitive resources and diminishing employee commitment. Mindfulness, characterized by heightened awareness and non-judgmental acceptance of the present moment, may play a critical moderating role in this context. Through the lens of the attention regulation theory, this study examines how mindfulness moderates the impact of perceived organizational politics on employee commitment. This study focused on individual public sector employees in Sri Lanka, employing a cross-sectional design to collect data at a single point in time. A quantitative approach was used, with convenience sampling used to gather the data. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 211 were returned and deemed to be usable. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, with rigorous measures taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, and all variables demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha > 0.8). Validity was confirmed through factor analysis, ensuring that the questionnaire items accurately represented the constructs of perceived organizational politics, employee commitment, and mindfulness. The results reveal a significant negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment. Importantly, the study found that mindfulness significantly moderates this relationship, suggesting that employees with higher levels of mindfulness are better able to regulate their emotional responses and maintain their commitment to the organization, even in the presence of political behavior. This study underscores the importance of organizations recognizing and mitigating the adverse effects of perceived organizational politics on employee commitment. Additionally, it highlights the value of promoting mindfulness, which can help employees better manage their focus and emotional well-being, ultimately sustaining or enhancing their organizational commitment despite the challenges.

Keywords: Employee commitment, mindfulness, perceived organizational politics, and public sector employees.

MODERATING ROLE OF POWER DISTANCE ORIENTATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR IN SRI LANKA'S APPAREL ORGANIZATIONS

T. Thasika^{1,*} and L. Mayuran²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna.*

*Corresponding author (Email: ythasika@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

In organizational settings, abusive supervision is influenced by various factors related to both supervisors and subordinates. Supervisor-related antecedents include power distance orientation, which refers to the extent to which subordinates accept unequal power distribution. This cultural dimension significantly shapes behaviors and expectations within the workplace's power dynamics. Downstream-related antecedents include organizational citizenship behavior, which encompasses voluntary actions that benefit the organization. In high-power distance cultures, employees are more accepting of hierarchical order and authority, leading to greater tolerance for abusive supervision. Conversely, low-power distance cultures foster expectations of egalitarian relationships and reduce tolerance for such behaviors. This study aimed to clarify the negative impact of abusive supervision on organizational citizenship behavior and elucidate the moderating role of power distance orientation. Employing social comparison theory, this study examines how employees' perceptions of fairness and equity influence their responses to supervisory behavior, particularly in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka. Data were collected using questionnaires from apparel organizations in Sri Lanka employing a convenience sampling method. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 224 were returned and deemed usable. The study found that power distance orientation significantly moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Employees with a high-power distance orientation tend to tolerate abusive supervision, viewing it as part of a hierarchical structure, and thus show less reduction in OCB. In contrast, employees with a low power distance orientation perceive abusive supervision as unfair, which has a stronger negative impact on their OCB. Our study underscores the importance of organizations recognizing and mitigating the adverse effects of abusive supervision on organizational citizenship behavior. Additionally, understanding the role of power distance orientation can help organizations recognize how cultural dimensions influence the acceptance of abusive supervision. High power distance cultures may inadvertently tolerate or even normalize abusive behaviors, which can negatively impact employee morale and performance.

Keywords: Abusive supervision, organizational citizenship behavior, power distance, Social Comparison Theory.

EXAMINING THE MODERATING INFLUENCE OF INJURY-INITIATED ATTRIBUTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR IN SRI LANKA'S APPAREL INDUSTRY.

T. Thasika*

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna.

*Corresponding author (Email: ythasika@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) by focusing on the role of injury-initiated attributes in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. Injury-initiated characteristics were found to be significant factors influencing malpractice supervision in apparel organizations, as the industry is often characterized by tight deadlines, high production targets, and cost constraints. This high-pressure environment can create situations in which supervisors may engage in abusive behavior, which significantly affects employee behavior and attitudes. Therefore, this study examines the moderating effect of injury-initiated attributions on the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. Attribution theory is used to clarify how employees' interpretations of the causes of abusive supervision affect these dynamics, shedding light on how these attributions influence their willingness to engage in extra-role behaviors. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed within Sri Lanka's apparel industry, using a convenience sampling method. Given the fast-paced nature of the apparel sector, where trends have shifted rapidly, convenience sampling offers a time-efficient and cost-effective approach. Of the 400 distributed questionnaires, 224 were returned and considered usable. This study identified a significantly negative relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, the results underscore the significant moderating influence of injury-initiated attributions. Specifically, the study demonstrated that injury-initiated attributions significantly moderated the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. Employees may attribute misconduct to either the supervisor's inherent personality flaws (internal attribution) or the external pressures the supervisor faces (external attribution). This study emphasizes the necessity for organizations to acknowledge and mitigate the negative effects of abusive supervision on OCB. Moreover, it highlights the importance of creating environments that minimize abusive behavior and support employees in making healthier attributions. Leaders need to be aware of how their behavior impacts employees and be equipped to manage their stressors without resorting to abusive supervision.

Keywords: Abusive supervision, apparel industry, attribution theory, injury-initiated attributions, organizational citizenship behavior.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT: A STUDY OF SRI LANKAN PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES

S. Manjula^{1,*}, T. Thasika² and L. Mayuran³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna.*

*Corresponding author (Email: manjulasivarajah@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The influence of psychological capital on the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment is not well understood, particularly in Sri Lanka. This study aims to examine the role of psychological capital as a key resource within the framework of the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, focusing on its ability to buffer the adverse effects of stressors such as perceived organizational politics. Specifically, this study seeks to elucidate how psychological capital, defined as an individual's positive psychological state, moderates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment. Data were collected using questionnaires from public sector employees in Sri Lanka using a convenience sampling method. Through a quantitative analysis of 211 usable responses from a sample of 400, this study used SPSS to reveal a notable negative correlation between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment, and the significant moderating role of psychological capital. This study revealed a significant negative relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment. Furthermore, our findings highlight the significant role of psychological capital as a moderator, demonstrating that an individual's psychological state moderates the effects of perceived organizational politics on employee commitment. Therefore, this study demonstrates that an individual's positive psychological state positively moderates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by deepening our understanding of the role of psychological capital in organizational settings, particularly within the context of the COR theory. This study also provides valuable insights into the protective function of psychological resources against workplace stressors. This study underscores the imperative for organizations to acknowledge and address the detrimental effects of perceived organizational politics on employee commitment. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of fostering the positive attributes of psychological capital to enhance an individual's ability to manage stress and recover from challenging situations.

Keywords: Employee commitment, psychological capital, perceived organizational politics, public-sector employees.

THE MODERATING ROLE OF PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT ORIENTATION IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABUSIVE SUPERVISION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOR: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKA'S APPAREL ORGANIZATIONS

L. Mayuran*

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna.

*Corresponding author (Email: mayuranl@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Abusive supervision refers to the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviors by supervisors towards their subordinates, which can significantly impact employees' attitudes and behaviors. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) encompasses discretionary actions by employees that are beneficial to the organization, but are not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system. This study investigates how performance improvement orientation, defined as an individual's focus on learning, growth, and achieving higher levels of performance, might influence the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. This study is important because it explores how a performance improvement orientation can buffer or exacerbate the negative effects of abusive supervision on OCB, offering new insights into mitigating workplace harm. This study fills a gap by investigating the moderating role of performance improvement orientation, which has not been extensively studied in the context of abusive supervision and its impact on OCB. By applying Goal-Setting Theory, this study aims to clarify how clear, challenging goals and effective performance management practices can mitigate the negative effects of abusive supervision and promote positive organizational citizenship behaviors. Data were collected through questionnaires from employees in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka, using a convenience sampling method. Of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 224 were returned and deemed to be usable. The data were analyzed using SPSS to explore the negative relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior and to demonstrate the moderating role of performance improvement orientation on this relationship by employing correlation and regression analyses. This study revealed a significant negative relationship between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior. Furthermore, our findings highlight the significant moderating role of performance improvement orientation, demonstrating how it influences the effects of abusive supervision on OCB. Consequently, this study demonstrates that a performance improvement orientation positively moderates the relationship between abusive supervision and OCB. In high-performance improvement-oriented environments, employees may be more resilient or less negatively impacted by abusive supervision because they are driven by personal and professional growth goals. Conversely, in low-performance improvement-oriented settings, the negative effects of abusive supervision on OCB might be more pronounced, as employees may lack the intrinsic motivation to overcome adverse supervisory behavior.

Keywords: Abusive supervision, goal-setting theory, organizational citizenship behavior, performance improvement orientation.

IMPACT OF WORKPLACE SURVEILLANCE ON MENTAL HEALTH OF IT PROFESSIONALS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR IN SRI LANKA.

P. Thivyabarathy^{1,*} and S. D Weerawardane²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management, Horizon Campus, Malabe*

ABSTRACT

The advent of remote work and technological advancements has led to an increase in the prevalence of workplace surveillance in various industries. This trend has sparked concerns regarding the potential detrimental effects of workplace surveillance on employees' mental health. Despite this, there is a lack of comprehensive research examining the specific impact of workplace surveillance on mental health in the Sri Lankan context. This gap hinders the development of informed policies and practices that balance organizational needs with employee well-being. Unmitigated surveillance has the potential to contribute to increased stress, anxiety, and depression among employees and a general decline in employee well-being. Therefore, drawing on equity theory and psychological reactance theory, this study examines the impact of workplace surveillance on the mental health of IT professionals, focusing on the IT sector with its distinctive surveillance methods, and finding links between exposure to surveillance and its impact on employees' mental health. This study utilizes positivist philosophy and a deductive approach. A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 200 employees in the IT sector, with individuals as the unit of analysis. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire and analyzed using IBM-SPSS version 25 and Excel 2016. The empirical data revealed that workplace surveillance had a significant negative impact of 0.820 on the mental health of IT professionals at a 99% confidence level. The validity of the measurement was also ensured, with a value of 0.674 at a 99% confidence level. This study provides insights into the delicate balance between the security needs of the organization and the mental health of IT professionals. Consequently, it is recommended that organizations review their current practices to assess how to minimize the negative effects of workplace surveillance on mental health. Suggestions include moving towards preventive measures, investing in the introduction of less invasive methods, further developing employee assistance programs (EAP), and providing access to tailored intervention programs where necessary to foster healthier work environments in surveillance-intensive industries.

Keywords: Information technology, mental health, psychological stressors, well-being, workplace surveillance

NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PERMANENT NON-ACADEMIC STAFF OF STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA: A DESCRIPTIVE CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

L.A.D.H.R. Wijayathunga^{1,*} and W.B. Dissanayake²

¹*Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Saliyapura.*

²*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: heshanrw@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

Herzberg's two-factor theory suggests that extrinsic rewards (salary, allowances, etc.) help only to reduce job dissatisfaction, while intrinsic rewards (non-financial rewards) help to increase job satisfaction. Studies on non-financial rewards among non-academic staff members of state universities in Sri Lanka are scarce. Therefore, researchers aim to describe the impact of non-financial rewards (IV) on job satisfaction (DV). This study used a deductive research approach and survey strategy employing a mono-method and cross-sectional design. Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire covering demographics, non-financial rewards, and job satisfaction. The study examined recognition, personal development, work-life balance, and workplace environment. ANOVA was used to identify variations in job satisfaction based on age group and experience. A simple regression analysis was performed to identify the impact of nonfinancial rewards on job satisfaction. Based on the Morgan table, 415 ($377 \pm 10\%$) questionnaires were circulated using a simple random sampling method. In total, 141 entries were included in the final analysis. The majority of employees (53.9%) were male, married (83.7%), and served as Management Assistants, with most holding G.C.E. (A/L) qualifications (50.1%), and commutes over 30 km daily. The ANOVA test revealed that employees aged 18-23 years and with less than 10 years of experience reported the highest job satisfaction. University recognition, career development support, fair work schedules, and a healthy workplace environment significantly impacted job satisfaction ($P < 0.05$). The study found that non-financial benefits significantly influenced job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.406$, $F = 95.196$, $\beta = 0.638$, $t = 9.757$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI) among non-academic staff at Sri Lankan state universities. Recognition ($\beta = 0.327$, $t = 3.522$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI) and the workplace environment ($\beta = 0.334$, $t = 4.056$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI) were identified as the most affected dimensions of non-financial rewards, supporting Herzberg's two-factor theory that addressing and enhancing such rewards can increase job satisfaction. The research team suggests that state universities introduce intrinsic rewards, such as recognition, a healthy work environment, personal development, and work-life balance, to boost employee satisfaction and performance.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, non-academics, non-financial rewards, state universities

THE NEED OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FOR IMPROVING LABOR PRODUCTIVITY: AN ANALYSIS OF MANUFACTURING SMALL BUSINESSES IN BADULLA DISTRICT

A.R.M.P. Hemasiri^{1,*} and H.I.S. De Zoysa²

^{1,2}*Department of Public Administration, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: imeshasathsara@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Human Resource Development (HRD) is pivotal for business growth and efficiency, especially in the manufacturing sector. Paradoxically, many small- and medium-sized businesses in Sri Lanka have closed over the past few years, with the rate of new firms entering the market declining. More importantly, the high failure rate of small enterprises may be attributed to their failure to embrace human resource development practices. The present study explores the need for HRD practices in small businesses in the Badulla district. The study was conducted using a sample of 20 employees from a small manufacturing industry in Badulla district, selected through simple random sampling. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The findings indicated several challenges, including a lack of career development opportunities, a skills gap, insufficient HRD interventions, the need for mentorship and support, and conflicts between work-life balance and family. To address these challenges, this study suggests implementing HRD strategies, such as training and development programs for employees, employee motivation programs, flexibility in work arrangements, workforce planning, and talent management. Human resource development practices are crucial for enhancing labor productivity; however, most small manufacturing firms do not focus on HRD. This study bridges the practical gap between HRD and labor productivity. According to this study's suggestions, these businesses can enhance their productivity, competitive advantage, and employee performance.

Keywords: Employee Motivation; Employee Performance; Human Resource Development; Manufacturing Industry; Small Businesses

**IMPACT OF HR PRACTICES ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KANDY DISTRICT APPAREL SECTOR IN SRI
LANKA.)**

B.W.L.C. Dhanapala^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}, *Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019056@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

A successful quality management system (QMS) would be largely implemented and maintained by the human resource department to improve the performance of groups. To enhance human resource practices, they must be aligned with a quality management system. This study aims to investigate the impact of human resource (HR) practices on the performance of quality management systems in the apparel sector, with a focus on the Kandy district of Sri Lanka. This study investigates the impact of key HR practices (recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and reward, and performance appraisal) on the effectiveness of quality management systems in the garment industry of the Kandy district. A stratified sampling strategy was used to select the sample, which was a stratified sample with basic random selection. Data were collected from 370 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The researchers developed the hypothesis that there is a significant positive impact of individual variables on quality management systems in the garment sector. SPSS software was used for the analysis, and the reliability of the variables was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The Pearson correlation coefficient showed a significant positive relationship between all independent variables and the dependent variable. Regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis, and all the hypotheses were accepted based on the decision rule of $P < 0.05$. The R^2 value (76%) explained that human resource practices can significantly impact the performance of quality management systems in the garment sector of the Kandy district. According to the findings, the researchers recommended encouraging open communication, involvement in problem solving, and recognition of contributions to human resources to enhance QMS performance.

Keywords: Human resource practices, apparel sector, Kandy district, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and reward, total quality management

THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT OF NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES IN THE APPAREL SECTOR

U.L. Jeewantha¹ and D.M.A. Pavithra^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ashanp@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Volunteer dedication is essential for improving organizational effectiveness and employee engagement. Perceived Organizational Support (POS), which measures how much employees believe their organizational values and support their contributions and well-being, is a crucial element that affects volunteer commitment. The capacity to motivate volunteers for sustained engagement with the organization has declined, reflecting a shift from lifelong to sporadic volunteering. This trend underscores the importance of thoroughly understanding the factors influencing volunteer commitment. Research on organizational commitment among volunteers has been limited; thus, further investigation is necessary to explore the determinants of volunteer commitment and enhance the understanding of how organizational context affects this commitment. To bridge this knowledge gap, this study was conducted to identify the impact of perceived organizational support on the voluntary commitment of non-managerial employees in the apparel sector (with special reference to Gampaha District). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to 280 non-managerial employees. The popular statistical SPSS package was used to analyze the data. The results obtained from descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses were used for interpretation. The results indicated that every aspect of perceived organizational support significantly influences volunteer commitment. The regression analysis confirmed all five hypotheses, with significance values below the 0.05 threshold. The analysis reveals that procedural justice is the main contributor, resulting in a higher proportion of volunteer commitment than other factors of perceived organizational support.

Keywords: Apparel sector, perceived organizational support, volunteer commitment

EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES IN TEA SMALLHOLDINGS: A STUDY IN THE RATNAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

W.M.N.S. Weerasekera*

Claude Littner Business School, University of West London, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author (Email: nipuweerasekera@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Employee retention is crucial for maintaining competitiveness in labor-intensive sectors, as employees are vital for transforming an organization's vision into reality. The Sri Lankan tea smallholding industry contributes significantly to the economy through income and employment generation in rural areas. However, rising production costs and labor shortages threaten their sustainability, necessitating the retention of skilled employees to maintain global competitiveness. The industry faces labor shortage issues, primarily when operations cannot rely solely on family labor. As holdings expand, demand for labor increases. Moreover, the younger generation hesitates to remain in the tea industry because of their aspirations for upward social mobility. The limited research on employee retention in tea smallholdings in Ratnapura district underscores the need for further study. Therefore, this study aims to identify and analyze factors influencing employee retention in tea smallholdings in Ratnapura District, Sri Lanka, and propose effective retention strategies based on these factors. A quantitative approach was employed to collect data using structured questionnaires from 119 tea smallholders in Ratnapura District, selected through a non-probability snowball sampling technique. The absence of a suitable sampling frame hinders probability sampling. The responses were analyzed using correlation and regression analyses using SPSS software. The results revealed that the independent variables of training and development, compensation, welfare facilities, and job satisfaction positively correlated with and impacted employee retention. Training, development, and compensation are the most significant factors impacting employee retention, with coefficient values of 0.765 and 0.626, respectively. Key recommendations include implementing skill development programs to maximize employee potential, introducing a comprehensive compensation plan to ensure financial security, and prioritizing employee welfare facilities to enhance job satisfaction and maximize organizational commitment.

Keywords: Employee retention, retention strategies, Ratnapura district, Sri Lanka, tea smallholding industry

DOES ROLE CONFLICT AND ROLE AMBIGUITY UPSURGE EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY? STRESS AS THE MODERATOR

N.N. Nimaja^{1,*}, H.M.R.D. Kularathne² and K.A.K.S. Rathnakara³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nilumnimaja69@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Every organization should prioritize human capital because the success of a company greatly depends on the creativity of all managerial-level employees. Specifically, the creativity of the upper management is a critical element that influences the growth of the public banking sector. A pilot study conducted at several public sector banks in Colombo District concluded that upper-level management staff members lack creativity. Additionally, the researcher identified that stress exacerbates confusion regarding managerial roles in a dynamic world. An empirical research gap was also noted through a comprehensive literature review; hence, this study was carried out among 155 management-level staff of selected public sector banks in Colombo District, chosen using a stratified sampling method. This study adopts a positivistic, deductive, and quantitative approach, in which a survey is conducted as the research strategy. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 21 using descriptive statistics. Significant multiple regression coefficients were found for role ambiguity (H1: $\beta=.257$, $p=.005$) and role conflict (H2: $\beta=.402$, $p=.000$) on employee creativity. The moderating effect of stress on the relationship between role conflict and creativity was not supported (H3: $\beta=-.125$, $p=.062$), whereas it was reported that stress moderates the relationship between role ambiguity and creativity (H4: $\beta=-.133$, $p=.043$). Thus, H1, H2, and H4 were accepted, whereas H3 was rejected. Regarding managerial implications, this research suggests that top management in the public banking sector should take numerous measures to minimize role conflicts, employee stress, and role ambiguity to foster creativity among managers. Recommendations include establishing proper survey and feedback mechanisms, training programs, a supportive working atmosphere, balanced and flexible workload management, and stress reduction workshops. Future researchers are encouraged to study managerial decision-making in relation to role theory, with some methodological advancements to produce more practical and generalizable findings and enrich the existing body of knowledge.

Keywords: Employee creativity, role ambiguity, role conflict, stress

IMPACT OF BULLYING VICTIMIZATION ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL SCHOOL CHILDREN'S DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS IN NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

P.H.S. Arshiya^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sabriarshiya5@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Depression is a persistent mental illness that affects populations worldwide. Previous research indicates that depression affects 19.4% of the Sri Lankan population, with the Anuradhapura district reporting 17.9% and the Polonnaruwa district reporting 14.4% prevalence of mental diseases. Depression significantly impacts special education students, with bullying recognized as a leading contributing factor among vulnerable populations. Given the substantial empirical research gap in this area, this study provides a thorough examination of the impact of bullying victimization on depressive symptoms among special-education students. This positivistic, deductive, and quantitative study applies both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The population comprised 551 special education schoolchildren in North Central Province, with a sample size of 241. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS version 21. Significant regression coefficients were identified for bullying victimization (H1: $\beta=.779$, $p<.001$) and its dimensions: relational bullying (H2: $\beta=.280$, $p<.001$), physical bullying (H3: $\beta=.474$, $p<.001$), cyberbullying (H4: $\beta=-.063$, $p=.264$), and culture-based bullying (H5: $\beta=.168$, $p=.003$) on depressive symptoms. Four hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H5) were supported, whereas H4 was not. Physical bullying showed a significant correlation with higher depressive symptoms, unlike cyberbullying among special education children in the North Central Province. This study validates existing relationships and offers culturally relevant insights for the North Central Province. These results have implications for customized interventions aimed at reducing depressive symptoms among children with special education and creating a supportive developmental environment. Education policymakers are urged to promote safer and more supportive learning environments. Understanding the various forms of bullying and their impact on depressive symptoms will help educators and mental health professionals develop effective prevention and intervention programs, improve school environments that promote a pleasant and inclusive atmosphere, reduce bullying and its negative consequences on mental health, and support future research.

Keywords: Relational bullying victimization, physical bullying victimization, cyberbullying victimization, culture-based bullying victimization, depressive symptoms

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON POLICE OFFICERS' TRUST IN THE PUBLIC: MODERATING ROLE OF WORK ENGAGEMENT: (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA)

M.P. Galagedara^{1,*} and W.W.A.N. Sujeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2020444@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This research identifies critical gaps in the existing literature on police-public relations, particularly within the socio-cultural context of Sri Lanka's Western Province. There is a notable lack of studies focusing on police officers' trust in the public, as most studies emphasize public trust in law enforcement. This study addresses this gap by exploring how police officers' perceptions of organizational justice affect their trust in the community, an area underexplored in non-Western settings. The introduction of work engagement as a moderating factor is a novel approach that provides a deeper understanding of how it influences the relationship between organizational justice and trust. These insights are crucial for enhancing policy-community relations in regions where public trust is essential for effective law enforcement. This study aimed to assess the impact of police officers' perceptions of organizational justice on their trust in the public, moderated by work engagement. A deductive approach, with a cross-sectional survey design, was employed, focusing on individual police constables as the unit of analysis. A multi-stage sampling method combining stratified random sampling and convenience sampling techniques was used to select a sample of 364 participants from a target population of 6,666 officers across four police administrative divisions in Sri Lanka's Western Province. Hypotheses were formulated based on the existing literature and empirical observations. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 21 with Pearson product-moment correlation and multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed that organizational justice significantly and positively affects police officers' trust in the public. Among its dimensions, procedural justice had the strongest positive effect, while distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice had moderate positive effects. Moreover, work engagement significantly moderated the relationship between organizational justice and trust. The study concludes that enhancing police officers' perceptions of organizational fairness is crucial for fostering greater trust in the public, and that this relationship is further strengthened by work engagement. These insights are essential for law enforcement agencies and policymakers seeking to improve organizational practices and strengthen police-community relations in Sri Lanka's Western Province.

Keywords: Distributive justice, interpersonal justice, informational justice, organizational justice, procedural justice, trust, work engagement

THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE RETENTION OF BANKING EMPLOYEES: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LICENSED COMMERCIAL BANKS OPERATED IN PUTTALAM DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

M.A.K. Divanjana¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

* Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The banking industry in Sri Lanka plays a pivotal role in the economic growth of the country, yet it faces significant challenges in retaining skilled employees. Higher employee turnover among supervisory and junior grades threatens organizational stability and the effective delivery of services. In the context of Puttalam District, unique socioeconomic and cultural factors heighten these challenges and lead to a critical need for better employee retention strategies in licensed commercial banks. This study focuses on identifying specific factors, such as training and development, working environment, leadership styles, remuneration, and promotion, that influence employee retention in licensed commercial banks, offering insights to address turnover and enhance the overall effectiveness of the banking sector. The objective of this study is to identify the key determinants of employee turnover, provide actionable solutions to overcome this issue, and ensure a stable and skilled workforce in the commercial banking sector of Puttalam District. This study was based on a deductive approach and used a convenience sampling method to survey 200 banking employees in licensed commercial banks in the Puttalam District. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire focusing on factors such as the working environment, training, remuneration, promotion, and leadership style. SPSS software was used for data analysis, including reliability, correlation, and regression analyses, to validate the hypotheses. The findings of the study identified a significant positive impact of retention factors, such as training and development, working environment, leadership style, remuneration, and promotion of employee retention. These findings highlight the importance of these factors in enhancing employees' commitment and retention. Future studies should expand the geographic scope, implement mixed-methods research, and regularly update the findings to adapt to the dynamic banking environment.

Keywords: Banking sector, employee retention, promotions, training and development

THE IMPACT OF GRATITUDE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF SCHOOL TEACHERS IN THE RATHNAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

L.P.D. Udeshika^{1,*} and U.W.M.R.S. Kappagoda²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: liyanapathiranaudeshika@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the importance of understanding and improving the psychological well-being of school teachers has been increasingly emphasized. Enhancing teachers' psychological well-being is crucial for fostering healthy relationships between teachers and students as well as for improving positive work behaviors and outcomes. Various factors influence teachers' psychological well-being, with gratitude being one of them. Few studies have been conducted in the Sri Lankan context, and few have examined the impact of gratitude on the psychological well-being of schoolteachers. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the impact of gratitude on the psychological well-being of schoolteachers in Ratnapura District. Gratitude was assessed using three main dimensions: attitudinal gratitude, relational gratitude, and collective gratitude. A sample of 231 schoolteachers from all four zonal educational units in Ratnapura District was selected using a stratified random sampling method. Data were analyzed using univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. The findings revealed that both attitudinal gratitude and collective gratitude have a significant positive impact on psychological well-being. Relational gratitude did not have a significant effect on psychological well-being. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that gratitude significantly impacts the psychological well-being of schoolteachers. Cultivating a culture of collective appreciation and encouraging personal reflection practices are recommended to boost gratitude, which significantly affects teachers' psychological well-being.

Keywords: gratitude, psychological well-being, school teachers

STUDY OF JOB-RELATED FACTORS AFFECTING THE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF MICROFINANCE CASH COLLECTORS: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

I.M.C.D. Wijesena^{1,*} and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates occupational stress among microfinance cash collectors in Anuradhapura District, Sri Lanka. These employees face challenges, such as demanding workloads, difficult collections, and security risks, leading to stress and reduced job satisfaction. This stress adversely affects mental and physical health, productivity, and organizational performance. Therefore, it is essential to study job-related factors affecting this stress. This study aims to fill this gap by identifying key job-related factors and providing insights for improving employee well-being and organizational sustainability in the microfinance sector. This methodology employs a deductive quantitative approach. Primary data were gathered from 150 microfinance cash collectors in Anuradhapura District through a structured survey using a self-administered questionnaire. Key variables, including work overload, time pressure, role ambiguity, role conflicts, and responsibility, were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, with techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression analysis, to assess the relationships between job-related factors and occupational stress. This study confirms that excessive workloads, unclear job expectations, and collection duties are key stressors for cash collectors in the microfinance sector. High work demands and low job control significantly contribute to stress, aligning with the demand-control model and the conservation of resources theory. However, the time pressure was less impactful than the workload and targets. These findings underscore the need for targeted organizational interventions to manage these stressors and protect employee well-being, validate established theories, and provide context-specific insights for the microfinance industry.

Keywords: Employee stress, job-related factors, microfinance

THE IMPACT OF CYBERBULLYING ON TEACHER BURNOUT: A STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE PUTTALAM DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

W.R.N.S. Fernando^{1,*} and W.W.A.N. Sujeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email:hr2020443@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Job burnout, a multifaceted issue impacting individuals and organizations, is characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced accomplishment. These symptoms harm individual well-being and lead to decreased productivity and higher turnover rates in organizations. Cyberbullying, involving harmful electronic behaviors, exacerbates stress and significantly contributes to job burnout, causing increased emotional exhaustion, lower job satisfaction, and a sense of helplessness, which further deteriorates mental health and disrupts team dynamics. This study investigates the impact of cyberbullying on job burnout among international schoolteachers in Sri Lanka's Chilaw Divisional Secretariat, Puttalam District, using a deductive approach and survey method. Data were collected from 137 teachers using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, with a final sample size of 108 selected through stratified random sampling. Five hypotheses were formulated based on existing literature. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analyses, conducted using SPSS version 21, indicated a significant positive relationship between cyberbullying and job burnout, with correlation coefficients of 0.718 (general cyberbullying), 0.548 (work-related), 0.589 (person-related), and 0.540 (physically intimidating). Multiple regression analysis showed significant p-values (0.000, 0.001, 0.004, and 0.001) and regression coefficients (0.624, 0.419, 0.502, and 0.337), with R² values of 0.516, 0.300, 0.347, and 0.292, respectively, indicating the impact of each cyberbullying type on burnout levels. These findings highlight the significant effect of cyberbullying on teacher well-being and the necessity for targeted interventions to mitigate this impact.

Keywords: Cyberbullying, job burnout, physically intimidating cyberbullying, person-related cyberbullying, work-related cyberbullying

THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING ON PERFORMANCE QUALITY IN SRI LANKA'S APPAREL INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF SEETHAWAKA EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE

J.A.G.K. Jayathunga^{1,*}, C.M.Y.S.S Bandara² and J.M.G.C Jayasundara³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: gayanjayathunga8@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of employees' psychological well-being on performance quality in Sri Lanka's apparel industry, specifically within the Seethawaka Export Processing Zone. The apparel industry is characterized by high-pressure environments, demanding production targets, and long working hours, which often contribute to stress and burnout among operational employees. Understanding how psychological well-being influences performance in challenging contexts is crucial. The study is grounded in the PERMA model, which includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment as key components of psychological well-being. The research begins by establishing the relevance of employee well-being to performance in the competitive apparel industry. This background highlights the need to understand how psychological well-being affects operational performance, given the demanding nature of the industry. The primary objective was to determine this impact, with specific questions addressing each PERMA component's influence on performance quality. A comprehensive literature review revealed the multidimensional nature of psychological well-being and its significant role in enhancing job performance. Data were collected from 375 operational-level employees using convenience sampling, and the analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The findings indicate a significant positive relationship between the dimensions of psychological well-being and employees' performance quality. Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses further confirmed that positive emotions, engagement, meaningful relationships, sense of purpose, and accomplishment contributed significantly to improved performance outcomes. This study concludes that psychological well-being significantly affects performance quality in the apparel industry. Enhancing employee well-being through targeted interventions can improve productivity and overall performance. This research suggests that organizations should prioritize strategies that foster a supportive and fulfilling work environment to maximize employee potential and achieve organizational goals. Future research should consider longitudinal studies to better understand the causal relationship between psychological well-being and performance quality. Expanding the sample size and including diverse geographical locations can enhance the generalizability of the results. Incorporating objective performance measures and exploring the impact of specific well-being interventions can provide deeper insights into effective strategies for enhancing employee performance. This study underscores the importance of fostering a positive work culture to sustain high levels of operational efficiency and employee satisfaction.

Keywords: Positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, apparel industry and employee performance

MODERATING ROLE OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND MENTAL WELLBEING AMONG FISHERMEN IN WENNAPPUWA, SRI LANKA

W.A.P.R. Wijesinghe^{1,*} and W.W.A.N. Sujeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2020430@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study is crucial as it sheds light on the unique challenges faced by fishermen in Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, a community in which occupational stress is deeply intertwined with the demands of their livelihoods. The primary objective was to assess how different stressors, such as work overload, safety concerns, career development issues, and workplace conflicts, affect the mental well-being of this population. Prior research has focused primarily on occupational stress and mental well-being in various professional contexts, such as medical and police services, with limited attention paid to fishermen. Studies have examined moderator variables, such as COVID-19-related trauma, but have not specifically investigated social isolation. Internationally, research on these topics has been conducted; however, there is a gap in studies addressing occupational stress and mental well-being among fishermen in Sri Lanka. This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the relationship between occupational stress and mental well-being among fishermen in Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka. Data collection was conducted via structured questionnaires, ensuring reliable measurement of variables. A stratified random sample of 183 fishermen was selected from a population of 350 based on the Morgan table. This study tested eight hypotheses on how occupational stress impacts fishermen's mental well-being in Wennappuwa, Sri Lanka, including the moderating role of social isolation. Data were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation, multiple regression, and moderation analyses. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between occupational stress and mental wellbeing. Specific dimensions of occupational stress, including safety concerns, work overload, career issues, job control, hazards, and conflict were also significantly related to mental well-being. However, social isolation did not significantly moderate the relationship between occupational stress and mental wellbeing. In conclusion, this study revealed a significant negative relationship between occupational stress and mental well-being among fishermen in Wennappuwa and Sri Lanka. While various dimensions of occupational stress were found to impact mental well-being, social isolation did not moderate this relationship, as hypothesized. These findings underscore the importance of addressing occupational stressors in fishing communities to improve their mental health outcomes. Further research and targeted interventions are needed to support the well-being of this vital yet vulnerable workforce.

Keywords: Career, conflict, fisherman, job control, hazards, occupational stress, overload, safety, social isolation, mental wellbeing

THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY ON JOB ENGAGEMENT OF NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES OF THE PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA.

D.L. Karunathilaka¹, K.A.K.S. Rathnakara² and T.M.O.K.K. Bandara^{3,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

³*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ovaadinibandara1998@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of workplace spirituality on the job engagement of non-managerial employees in a private hospital in Anuradhapura district, Sri Lanka. Previous literature indicates that fluctuations in job engagement may be influenced by the presence (or lack) of spiritual practices in the workplace. However, these studies primarily explored general workplace environments. In this study, I specifically tested this relationship within the hospital sector, where the emotional and psychological demands of healthcare professionals provide a unique context for examining the impact of spiritual practices on job engagement. The main objective of this study was to examine the level of workplace spirituality among non-managerial hospital employees who are in direct contact with customers in a service provider organization and to explore the impact of spirituality practices on their job engagement. This study used a stratified sampling method, and data were collected from a sample of 102 non-managerial employees at a private hospital in the Anuradhapura district. The population size was approximately 500 non-managerial employees. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which was validated and tested for reliability. This study found a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work engagement. However, there was no significant relationship between the connection of employees, compassion of employees, and work engagement. It was also found that the dimensions of workplace spirituality—meaningful work, mindfulness, and transcendence—had an impact on work engagement. However, based on the collected data, there was no significant impact of the connection between employees and compassion dimensions on work engagement. The study concludes that workplace spirituality has a significant impact on the job engagement of non-managerial employees in a private hospital in Anuradhapura district. Based on these findings, the study recommends that organizations implement spiritual practices in the workplace to enhance employee job engagement and productivity. Specifically, organizations should provide opportunities for employees to engage in meaningful work, promote mindfulness and transcendence, and create a work environment that supports workplace spirituality. This study found that connections between employees have no bearing on how motivated private hospital staff members are at work.

Keywords: Connection of employees, compassion of employees, work engagement, meaningful work of employees, mindfulness of employees, transcendence of employees

GENDER DISCRIMINATION AMONG FEMALE MANAGERS IN THE SRI LANKAN APPAREL INDUSTRY

P.M.I.V.K. Wickramathilaka*

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: vindya@mgt.pdn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The study was contextually undertaken in three major apparel companies in Sri Lanka with two objectives: to explore the different forms of discriminatory cases female managers encounter in relation to various HRM practices within the Sri Lankan apparel industry and to examine the nature of reactions of female managers in the Sri Lankan apparel industry to such discriminatory practices. This study involved nine female workers in managerial positions. Given the subjective nature of gender discrimination, a qualitative approach was employed as the main methodological stance and the research was based on an inductive approach. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, using a predetermined interview guide. At the initial stage, purposive sampling was used to identify key participants who were known to have experienced gender discrimination. From the second stage onward, snowball sampling techniques were used to refer to other female managers with similar experiences. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data after transcribing the interviews. The analysis revealed three major forms of gender discrimination addressing the first research objective: bias in recruitment and selection, barriers to promotion and career advancement, and inequities in salaries and benefits. Regarding the second research objective, the study found that female managers typically react in one of three ways: by hiding discrimination (Unreported, Hider), using reporting and support systems, or resigning and seeking new opportunities. The study also revealed that cases of discrimination often go underreported or unnoticed owing to factors such as fear, organizational culture, social influence, lack of awareness, and lack of support systems. Significantly, this research will enhance solutions to overcome and reduce gender discrimination matters and inform females about ways to protect themselves from the gender-related issues commonly seen in the apparel industry.

Keywords: Qualitative research, apparel industry, female managerial employees, gender discrimination, Sri Lanka

IMPACT OF EMPLOYER BRANDING ON JOB APPLICATION INTENTION OF FINAL YEAR MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES UNDERGOING INDUSTRIAL TRAINING: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STATE UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

R.D.S. Kanishka^{1,*}, K.A.K.S. Rathnakara² and H.M.R.D. Kularathne³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hr2020185@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

In today's competitive global job market, employer branding has emerged as a critical strategy for attracting and retaining top talent. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of cultivating a strong employer brand to appeal to potential candidates, particularly as the demand for skilled human capital intensifies. In Sri Lanka, this trend mirrors global practices, with leading corporations emphasizing employer branding to mitigate brain drain and secure the best talent. Accordingly, this research assesses the impact of employer branding on the job application intentions of final-year management undergraduates of state universities in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, who are undergoing industrial training. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from a sample of 327 final-year management undergraduates, as determined using the Morgan table. This was a quantitative, cross-sectional study in which the unit of analysis was an individual final-year management undergraduate who underwent industrial training. The sampling technique employed was stratified random sampling to ensure representation across various state universities in the Western Province. Data were analyzed using the SPSS 21 package, which includes both univariate and bivariate analyses. The analysis included multiple regression, descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson's correlation. The study identified that employer branding has a significant impact of employer branding on the job application intentions of final-year management undergraduates undergoing industrial training in the Western Province, Sri Lanka. The study emphasizes the significance of employer branding in shaping the job application intentions of final-year management undergraduates in Sri Lanka. By identifying the key dimensions that influence these intentions, this study provides a framework for organizations to enhance their employer branding strategies and better compete for top talent.

Keywords: Employer branding, job application intention, management undergraduates

A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE GRADUATES' JOB FIT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

A.R. Ramesh*

University of Jaffna.

*Corresponding author (Email: arajramesh03@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This research aims to evaluate the influences of person-organization fit and person-job fit on the organizational commitment of development officers in the Jaffna District. This study seeks to understand how well an individual's values, goals, and personality fit with the organizational culture, values, and objectives of the organization. It also examines the harmony between an officer's skills, abilities, and preferences and the job requirements, and how these factors influence Organizational Commitment. This study used deductive, correlational, and cross-sectional methods. The study population consisted of 675 officers, and a stratified random sample size of 251 was selected. Google Forms received 198 responses (79%), which were analyzed using SPSS-20. The internal consistency of the ten items showed Cronbach's alpha values above 0.840. The independent variables were Person-Organization Fit and Person-Job Fit, while the dependent variable was organizational commitment. The perceived person-organization fit was at a high level, and its two dimensions—values congruence fit and need-supply fit—were also at a high level, indicating a strong congruence between employees' values and those of the organization as well as a strong satisfaction of individuals' needs, desires, or preferences by the organization. Similarly, perceived person-job fit is also high, with its two dimensions—need-supply fit and demand-ability fit—indicating a strong alignment between the individual's needs and abilities and the requirements and expectations of the job. Further, organizational commitment was moderate, with moderate continuance commitment, high affective commitment, and low normative commitment. Two hypotheses were tested: First, Person-Organization Fit significantly influences Organizational Commitment, with 3.6% variation, while 96.4% was influenced by other factors; second, Person-Job Fit significantly influences Organizational Commitment, with 16% variation (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.160$), and 84% was influenced by other factors. Both alternative hypotheses were accepted. The study revealed high levels of perceived Person-Organization and Person-Job fit, and a moderate level of Organizational Commitment. Nevertheless, Person-Organization Fit has a weaker influence on commitment than Person-Job Fit does. Employers should prioritize officers' needs and provide optimal working conditions to foster stronger commitment.

Keywords: Perceived person-organization fit, perceived person-job fit, organizational commitment

IMPACT OF RESILIENCE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES, WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

D.T. Sewmini^{1,*} and U.W.M.R.S. Kappagoda²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: tharakeesewmini622623@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of resilience on the psychological well-being of management undergraduates in state universities across the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Resilience, conceptualized as the ability to recover and adapt positively to adversity, was explored as an independent variable, while psychological well-being was the established variable. This observation operationalizes resilience through four key dimensions: personal competence, tolerance of negative effects, positive acceptance of change, and control. Psychological well-being is regarded as a multifaceted construct encompassing the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions that are critical to student fulfillment. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 249 undergraduate students, and validated scales were used to measure both resilience and psychological well-being. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression statistical analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between resilience and different dimensions of psychological well-being. The results revealed a significant correlation between resilience and psychological well-being, with each dimension of resilience contributing uniquely to the overall psychological well-being of university college students. In particular, personal competence, tolerance of negative effects, positive acceptance of change, and control are strongly associated with higher psychological well-being, underscoring the essential role that resilience plays in college university students' ability to handle academic pressures and personally demanding situations. These findings are particularly relevant in the Sri Lankan context, where socioeconomic and cultural tensions may accentuate the psychological health challenges faced by university students. Given the competitive environment of universities, particularly within Western Province, this study highlights the importance of interventions aimed at enhancing student resilience. Such interventions may be critical to creating an educational environment that supports the psychological health and well-being of university students. This study contributes to the wider literature on student psychological health by providing empirical evidence of the role of resilience in maintaining psychological well-being in higher education settings. The research also identifies gaps within the current educational support systems and indicates that future studies should explore other mental factors, including social support, mindfulness, and coping techniques, that could further enhance the psychological well-being of university students. By understanding the role of resilience, policymakers and educators can implement targeted interventions, including resilience education programs, counseling services, and curricular reforms, to enhance students' mental health outcomes. Finally, this study underscores the importance of resilience as a key determinant of psychological well-being among university undergraduates. As resilience becomes increasingly important in today's challenging academic landscape, fostering this trait among university students may lead to improved psychological health, academic performance, and overall life satisfaction.

Keywords: Control, higher education, management undergraduates, personal competence, positive acceptance of change, psychological well-being, resilience

IMPACT OF INDIVIDUAL TEMPERAMENT ON WORK-RELATED STRESS AMONG TEA ESTATE SUPERVISORS IN THE NUWARA-ELIYA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

M.G.A.K. Gunapala^{1,*} and U.W.M.R.S. Kappagoda²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: achalakalpani571@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Work-related stress is a critical issue across various professions; however, the influence of individual temperament on stress levels among tea estate supervisors remains underexplored. A pilot study using the “Workplace Stress Scale revealed severe stress levels among participating supervisors, highlighting the urgent need to address this issue. This study examined the impact of individual temperament on work-related stress among tea estate supervisors in Nuwara Eliya District, Sri Lanka. Specifically, it explored how sanguine, choleric, melancholic, and phlegmatic temperaments affect stress levels within this occupational group. Employing a quantitative research design, data were gathered from 165 randomly selected supervisors out of a population of 288, using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS software by applying regression models to assess the impact of temperament on work-related stress. The findings revealed that individual temperament significantly influences work-related stress. Supervisors with a sanguine temperament experienced lower stress levels, whereas those with choleric and melancholic temperaments exhibited higher stress levels. Phlegmatic temperament is also associated with reduced stress. These results suggest that personality traits play a crucial role in determining stress levels among tea estate supervisors. This study enhances the existing knowledge by emphasizing the need to account for temperament in stress management strategies. Tailored interventions based on individual temperaments can improve supervisors' well-being, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and productivity in the tea industry. This study offers valuable insights for future research, policymakers, and tea industry authorities, providing a foundation for targeted support programs and stress management policies.

Keywords: Choleric temperament, individual temperament, melancholic temperament, phlegmatic temperament, sanguine temperament, work-related stress

**MEDIATING ROLE OF HAPPINESS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
NEUROLEADERSHIP AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT OF COSMETIC
SECTOR CASUAL EMPLOYEES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA**

A.D.S. Kumarasiri^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

*^{1, 2} Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilshanishashikala666@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of neuroleadership on human capital development among casual workers in the cosmetic sector, focusing on Sri Lanka's Anuradhapura District. A quantitative research approach was applied, utilizing a sample of 108 casual workers selected through simple random sampling from a population of 150 people working in cosmetic shops in Anuradhapura. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS software version 21. Descriptive and inferential analyses were performed to decipher the complex relationships between variables. The results of the multiple regression analyses supported four out of five hypotheses: H3 ($\beta = .224$, $p = .022$), H4 ($\beta = .239$, $p = .006$), H5 ($\beta = .419$, $p < .001$), and H6 ($\beta = .978$, $p = .022$), while H2 ($\beta = -.047$, $p = .642$) was rejected. The mediation analysis indicated a partial mediation effect of employee happiness on the relationship between neuroleadership and human capital development. These findings suggest that neuroleadership positively affects happiness and subsequently enhances human capital development among casual workers in the cosmetic sector. These results contribute to the growing body of research on workplace dynamics, highlighting the intricate relationship between interpersonal relationships and professional outcomes in the cosmetics field. This study provides valuable insights for leaders and HR practitioners aiming to foster a positive work environment and enhance human capital in cosmetic shops and in similar contexts.

Keywords: Neuroleadership, casual workers, cosmetic sector, happiness, human capital development

IMPACT OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP ON TURNOVER INTENTION THROUGH THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS: EVIDENCE FROM BANKERS IN SRI LANKA

N. Jasintha*

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna

*Corresponding author (Email: Jasinthabn@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Employee retention is critical to organizational success, as long-term employees provide both financial and nonfinancial benefits to companies. To highlight the importance of retention, this study explores the direct and indirect effects of ethical leadership on turnover intention in Sri Lanka's banking industry, focusing on the mediating role of the perception of organizational politics analyzed through the lens of social exchange theory. A questionnaire was administered to 367 conveniently selected banking employees. Validity and reliability analyses were conducted, followed by regression analysis using Smart PLS 4.0 to test the hypotheses. These results confirm that ethical leadership has a negative effect on turnover intention. Additionally, ethical leadership was found to reduce the perception of organizational politics, which in turn lowered turnover intention, demonstrating a partial mediation effect. This study expands on the existing literature by presenting a more comprehensive model that explains how perceptions of organizational politics mediate the relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention. Moreover, by applying this model in the context of a developing nation like Sri Lanka, the study provides empirical evidence from a non-Western perspective, adding a new dimension to the existing research on employee outcomes. Future research should examine these relationships across various industries and cultural contexts by incorporating additional employee outcome metrics. This study contributes to the understanding of the relationship between ethical leadership and turnover intention in Sri Lanka's banking sector, both theoretically and experimentally, by investigating the mediating role of organizational politics.

Keywords: Banking industry, ethical leadership, perception of organizational politics and turnover intention

IMPACT OF DIGITAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY THROUGH THE MODERATING ROLE OF JOB EMBEDDEDNESS: A STUDY ON APPAREL SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

N. Jasintha*

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna

*Corresponding author (Email: Jasinthabn@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Creativity is the ability of an employee to generate new and useful ideas that are crucial for achieving effectiveness, innovation, and significant breakthroughs, which are considered mandatory elements in achieving competitive advantage in any organization. However, the extent to which employees have creative abilities remains a puzzle for top-notch companies. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the impact of digital leadership on employee creativity through the moderating effect of job embeddedness in Sri Lanka's apparel sector. No evidence was found to study these impacts, and no studies have incorporated job embeddedness into digital leadership and employee creativity, with an emphasis on the conservation of resource theory. The study collected data through structured questionnaires from conveniently chosen 428 individual participants from the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. This study adopted a structural equation modeling technique for data analysis using Smart PLS 4.0. The results revealed that digital leadership negatively impacts employee creativity. The negative effect of digital leadership on employee creativity is lessened by job embeddedness. As a result, booming sections in apparel where less digitization would be beneficial to employees for having good connections, as most employees are unskilled workers and they expect social interactions. The current study advances research on job embeddedness by empirically examining the effects of digital leadership on employee creativity; in addition, it expands the nascent knowledge on digital leadership in apparel. The findings highlight the importance of job embeddedness in the workplace for reducing the negative outcomes of digital leadership in organizational settings.

Keywords: Digital leadership, job embeddedness and workplace creativity

IMPACT OF JOB AUTOMATING TECHNOLOGY USAGE ON PERCEIVED JOB INSECURITY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES IN PRIVATE BANKS IN MONARAGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

H.G.I.S. Hewagallage^{1,*} and Y.W.H.M. Premathilaka²

^{1,2} *Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hgisewwandi@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Automation, AI, and robotics advancements have intensified concerns regarding job insecurity worldwide. The rapid advancement of automation technologies has sparked concerns about job displacement and employee insecurity across various industries, including banking. The purpose of this study is to ascertain how job automation affects non-managerial staff members' perceptions of job insecurity in private banks located in the Monaragala District of Sri Lanka. This study investigates the level of perceived job insecurity among non-managerial employees in the private banking sector of the Monaragala District, Sri Lanka. A stratified random sampling method was used for sample selection. The sample size is 169 non-managerial employees in private banks in the Monaragala District. The population consists of 300 non-managerial employees in private banks in the Monaragala District. The data were gathered using a structured questionnaire to evaluate the impact of job automation technology on job insecurity using a 5-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed through univariate, correlation, and regression analyses using the SPSS software (version 21). The unit of the study was individuals: non-managerial employees of private banks in Monaragala District, Sri Lanka. This study was designed using a descriptive method. The findings reveal a surprisingly low level of perceived job insecurity among respondents, indicating that employees do not view technological advancement as a direct threat to their job security. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure internal consistency reliability. All items have item-total statistics that are 0.70 or higher, which is considered acceptable. This study investigated the impact of perceived job insecurity and various technological factors, including Internet usage, mobile phone usage, and the presence of internet-based jobs, on job insecurity using multiple linear regression analysis. The research shows that automation in the banking sector offers both benefits and challenges, but by recognizing employees' complex perspectives, plans that protect both the industry's continued prosperity and the well-being of the workforce can be developed. In an era of rapid technological change, this study provides important insights into how non-managerial bank employees in Monaragala District perceive job security.

Keywords: Automation, internet based job, internet usage, job insecurity

ANALYZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FOR EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION: MEDIATION EFFECT ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN ABC BANK PLC

S.L. Jayasinghe^{1,*} and R.A.M. Maduwanthi²

London Metropolitan University, UK.

*Corresponding Author (Email: shamini0316@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Several business organizations worldwide face difficulties in achieving their goals and objectives. Owing to these challenges, some organizations have struggled significantly, leading to costly setbacks. ABC Bank is a reputed private-sector bank in the Sri Lankan financial industry. Employee strength is one of the determinant factors of success, and ABC Bank has its own performance appraisal system. This study aimed to assess the effects of the performance evaluation process on employee satisfaction, including the mediating effect of employee retention. The objective was to investigate the performance appraisal techniques adopted for 1,623 junior executive officers, a category in which ABC Bank has identified the highest turnover rate. After reviewing the literature, a conceptual framework was designed with the following dimensions based on the literature: performance evaluation process, employee benefits, and behavior of the appraiser and supervising manager. The researcher adopted a cross-sectional time horizon owing to limited time. To measure the relationship between the variables, a questionnaire consisting of 16 questions was distributed to executive officers. The study population included 1,623 junior executive-level employees at ABC Bank, and a sample of 310 employees was selected based on the Morgan table and analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. According to the data analysis, tests measuring the reliability of the research instrument were conducted with the questionnaire distributed among randomly selected officers across the island. Correlation, ANOVA, and regression tests were performed to determine the significance of the hypotheses. The results were compared with previous research findings, and conclusions and recommendations were made while exploring further research opportunities. Furthermore, the majority of executives expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs, and the research findings suggest that banks may include some quantitative competencies in the performance evaluation process to improve satisfaction and retention. As the first and only study on the bank's current performance evaluation system, this research project is significant, and the information provided will benefit management, staff members, and trade unions. Suggestions are also made for future researchers to obtain valuable outcomes through further studies.

Keywords: Employee retention, employee satisfaction, performance evaluation process



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PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS ADOPTION OF QR CODE MENUS IN RESTAURANT INDUSTRY IN KANDY DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

J.M.I.K. Jayasinghe^{1,*}, D.M.J. Wickramasinghe² and D.M.M.I. Dissanayaka³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: irunikeshika123@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In an era dominated by technological advancements, the hospitality sector, particularly restaurants, has been somewhat reticent in embracing digital transformations, such as QR code menus. This study aims to unravel the complexities behind this resistance in Kandy, Sri Lanka. Despite the global push towards digitization, QR menu adoption in Sri Lanka remains limited. The study employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing self-administered structured questionnaires to gather primary data from employees, managers, and owners of 25 registered restaurants in Kandy. The sample was randomly selected with five individuals from each group, ensuring a diverse representation. This methodological rigor, involving the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for data analysis, ensures a comprehensive assessment of how Menu Informativeness, Technical Barriers, Usability, and Intention to Use affect the adoption of QR menus. Regression analysis revealed that Intention to Use, Usability, and Technical Barriers positively influenced QR menu adoption, suggesting that ease of use and low technical challenges encouraged their adoption. Conversely, Menu Informativeness had a negative impact, indicating that a lack of comprehensive menu information was associated with a decrease in the adoption of the QR menu. These findings provide valuable insights for restaurant professionals, policymakers, and technology developers. This research highlights the necessity for targeted strategies to address specific barriers, such as enhancing the informativeness of QR menus and improving user experience to encourage broader acceptance. This study underscores the importance of addressing usability issues and technical barriers while enhancing menu informativeness to foster the adoption of QR menus in Kandy. The anticipated outcomes aim to guide stakeholders in implementing effective solutions, thereby contributing to the digital transformation of the restaurant industry in Sri Lanka. This research significantly contributes to the existing knowledge by identifying and analyzing the multifaceted factors impeding QR menu adoption in a culturally rich and diverse context. This study provides a foundation for further studies and practical strategies to overcome these challenges, thereby facilitating smoother digital transitions in similar settings.

Keywords: Digital transformation, intention of use, menu informativeness, QR menu, technical barriers, usability

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

M.S.N. Lakmali^{1,*} and D.M.J. Wickramasinghe²

^{1,2} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: shanika98n@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Social Media platforms allow individuals to connect, communicate, and interact with others globally, fostering the creation and sharing of user-generated content such as text, images, videos, and links. Social media usage among undergraduate students has become a pervasive and influential aspect of their academic and personal lives. Although social media use has positive social and educational benefits, scholars are currently attempting to identify whether it is destructive because it relates to psychological aspects. Thus, the main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of social media usage (duration of time, motives, social media addiction, and social isolation) on the psychological well-being of undergraduates. A quantitative research approach was used to achieve the study goal. Self-administered structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from 367 undergraduate students. Stratified sampling techniques were used to represent the strata and ensure that all groups were represented. Regression analysis and basic descriptive statistics were performed using SPSS software. Accordingly, the main conclusions showed that psychological well-being was positively and significantly impacted by all four variables: duration of time, motives, social media addiction, and social isolation. Furthermore, the most important component of social media use that has the greatest ability to predict psychological well-being is user motive. To effectively address this emerging phenomenon, the conclusions of this study will be helpful to parents, academic and non-academic personnel, social network developers, and mobile application developers.

Keywords: Psychological well-being, social media, undergraduates

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE ON THE MORAL DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS: PARENTS' PERCEPTION

R.M.C.C.K. Rathnayaka^{1,*} and D.M.J. Wickramasinghe²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: chathunika1014@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media has become an integral part of daily life, particularly among adolescents. With approximately 4.48 billion active users globally, its pervasive influence extends into various aspects of life, including the moral development of young individuals. The rapid adoption of social media in Sri Lanka has prompted concerns about its effects on the youth. This study focuses on parents' perceptions of the impact of social media on the moral development of adolescents in the Anuradhapura district, Sri Lanka, a region where such research is notably scarce. The investigation aimed to understand the nuanced ways in which social media usage, including frequency, duration, addiction symptoms, and social comparison, affects the moral development of adolescents. To achieve the proposed research objectives, a quantitative research method was adopted and data were gathered through self-administered structured questionnaires. The study involved parents of 384 teenagers in the Anuradhapura district of Sri Lanka, using a convenience sampling technique. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS, employing basic descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and stepwise regression tests to examine social media usage and its impact on the moral development of adolescents from parents' perspectives. Consequently, the findings revealed that the frequency of social media usage and social comparison had significantly positive impacts, while the duration of social media usage and social media addiction symptoms had a negative impact on the moral development of adolescents. The findings of this study would be beneficial to teenagers, parents, educators, and mental health professionals. The insights gained can guide teenagers in making informed choices, help parents manage and support their children's digital lives, inform educators about integrating social media into moral education, and assist mental health professionals in developing effective interventions.

Keywords: Adolescents, moral development, parents' perceptions, social media usage

**FACTOR INFLUENCING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS E-BANKING
SERVICE IN GOVERNMENT BANKING SECTOR IN SRI LANKA
(SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AMPARA DISTRICT)**

N.T.N. Nimalsiri^{1, *} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: neranjana609@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Despite considerable technological advancements and a high capacity for adoption within Sri Lanka's government banking sector, a notable proportion of banking customers in Ampara District continue to prefer in-person visits to bank branches over online banking. This study investigates the factors influencing consumer behavior toward e-banking services in this sector, focusing on the Ampara District. This study examines the transformation of the banking industry, as it increasingly adopts online solutions. Technological advancements in financial institutions have enhanced customer convenience. However, many customers choose physical banking over online alternatives. Using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to frame the study, the researcher analyzed data from a sample of 384 online banking customers in Ampara District, determined through the Morgan table. Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire, and the analysis was performed using SPSS software. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between consumer behavior and ease of use, perceived usefulness, social factors, and compatibility. Regression analysis further indicated that all the hypotheses were accepted, except for ease of use, which showed a significance level of 0.12. Based on these findings, the researcher provides recommendations for industry professionals and policymakers to promote the adoption and effectiveness of e-banking services. In conclusion, this study contributes to an understanding of consumer behavior in the context of e-banking services within Sri Lanka's government banking sector, offering insights specific to the unique dynamics of Ampara District. The findings aim to guide stakeholders in fostering smoother integration of banking services into consumers' lives.

Keywords: E-banking, consumer behavior, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, social factors, compatibility

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BY SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN AMPARA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

N.P.S.M. Bandara¹ and T.U.S. Senarath^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: udesh.senarat@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) by small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ampara District, Sri Lanka. SMEs play a crucial role in the economy, yet they often face challenges in adopting advanced technologies, such as AI. This research aims to identify the benefits, challenges, technological readiness, and social influences that affect AI adoption. Using a structured questionnaire, data were collected from a sample of 373 SMEs in the Ampara District through stratified random sampling. The quantitative approach facilitated the analysis of the relationships between the identified factors and their impact on AI adoption by employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis using SPSS software. The findings reveal that perceived benefits such as increased efficiency and cost reduction significantly encourage AI adoption. However, high implementation costs, data security concerns, and limited technical expertise are major barriers. Technological readiness and social influence, particularly peer and customer perceptions, are critical in shaping SMEs' decisions to adopt AI. These results contribute to the academic discourse on technology adoption in SMEs and provide insights that can inform public policy and industry practices. The study highlights the need for targeted strategies to enhance AI adoption, fostering technological advancement, and economic growth within the SME sector in regions similar to Ampara District.

Keywords: AI adoption, Ampara district, artificial intelligence, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), technology adoption

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ADOPTION OF FREELANCING BY STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

D.G.M.C. Dunumadalawa¹, T.U.S. Senarath^{2,*} and S.A.H.S. Sudasingha³

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

³*Edith Cowan University (Sri Lanka Campus), 288, Sri Jayewardenepura Mawatha, Rajagiriya*

*Corresponding author (Email: udes.senarat@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The freelance career model has become increasingly popular among the younger generation, as it offers flexible and independent work arrangements. This study investigates the factors influencing state university students' adoption to freelancing in Sri Lanka, given the high unemployment rates and potential of freelancing to contribute to economic growth. Using a structured questionnaire, data were collected from a sample of 385 State university students selected through simple random sampling. The quantitative approach facilitated the analysis of key factors, such as personal restraints, freelance market characteristics, technical knowledge, payment restraints, and social restraints. The findings revealed that these factors significantly impact students' decisions to engage in freelancing. Personal and payment restraints, along with technical knowledge, play pivotal roles, and social and market characteristics also contribute to the overall adoption process. The results provide valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and students, highlighting the need for targeted strategies to promote freelancing as a viable career option by addressing identified barriers and enhancing support systems for student freelancers. This study contributes to the academic discourse on freelancing and offers practical implications for integrating freelancing into the academic and economic frameworks of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, freelancing, Sri Lanka, unemployment, university students

IMPACT OF HRIS ADOPTION ON EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION IN THE APPAREL INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF MANAGERIAL LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN GARMENT FACTORIES IN RATHNAPURA DISTRICT

W.H.S.A. Fernando¹, T.U.S. Senarath^{2,*} and G.S.R. Gunathunga³

^{1, 2, 3} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: udesh.senarat@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) are increasingly recognized for their role in enhancing employee satisfaction by optimizing HR processes, improving decision-making, and reducing operational costs. Despite its potential benefits, the adoption of HRIS within the apparel industry, particularly in the Rathnapura District of Sri Lanka, remains under-researched. This study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of HRIS adoption on employee satisfaction among managerial-level garment factory employees. This study specifically examines the extent to which HRIS adoption influences various aspects of employee satisfaction, including the HR process efficiency, time and cost savings, information accuracy, and decision-making quality. The study employed a questionnaire survey method, distributing several questionnaires to managerial employees with a moderate number of usable responses collected. Despite the limited sample size, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, providing initial insights into the relationship between HRIS adoption (independent variable) and employee satisfaction (dependent variable). The findings reveal a significantly positive impact of HRIS adoption on employee satisfaction, particularly in enhancing HR processes, saving time and costs, and supporting strategic HR functions. These insights are valuable for HR managers and policymakers in the apparel industry, emphasizing the importance of targeted HRIS implementation strategies to improve employee satisfaction and contribute to the overall success of garment factories in Rathnapura District.

Keywords: Apparel industry, employee satisfaction, human resource information systems, Rathnapura district

FACTORS AFFECTING ONLINE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN ONLINE SHOPPING; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ONLINE CUSTOMERS IN WESTERN PROVINCE

R.M.B.I. Rathnayake¹, T.U.S. Senarath^{2, *} and D.H.D.S. Wickramasiri³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: udesh.senarat@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

As e-commerce continues to burgeon globally, understanding the complexities of online customer satisfaction is paramount for businesses to thrive in the online marketplace. This independent research paper investigates the factors influencing online customer satisfaction, with a focus on the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The study identifies five independent variables—information correctness, website design, purchasing process convenience, security, and customer service—and explores their impact on online customer satisfaction as the dependent variable. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 385 respondents, selected through random sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analyses. The findings revealed that all five factors significantly influenced online customer satisfaction. Information correctness, user-friendly website design, convenient purchasing processes, robust security measures, and effective customer service were identified as key determinants of customer satisfaction in online shopping. This study provides actionable recommendations for businesses, policymakers, and academia to enhance their online shopping experience in Sri Lanka. By optimizing online interfaces, strengthening security measures, streamlining purchasing processes, and elevating customer service, businesses can foster greater online customer satisfaction, thereby achieving competitive advantage and sustainable growth in the Sri Lankan e-commerce market.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, e-commerce, online shopping, Sri Lanka, western province

THE IMPACT OF THE ADOPTION OF HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION PRINCIPLES ON THE USAGE OF LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BY THE UNDERGRADUATES IN RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

W.T.M. Silva¹ and T.U.S. Senarath^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: udesh.senarat@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of adapting Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) principles on the usage of the Learning Management System (LMS) by undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The research focuses on key HCI principles—consistency, flexibility, readability, learnability, and minimalism—to understand their influence on user experience and engagement. Using quantitative methodology, data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to a sample of 366 undergraduates selected via random sampling. The findings reveal that HCI principles significantly enhance the usability and effectiveness of LMSs. Consistency and readability were pivotal in improving user satisfaction, whereas flexibility and learnability facilitated better engagement and ease of use. Minimalism contributes to a more efficient user interface, reduced cognitive load, and enhanced overall user experience. This study provides valuable insights for educational institutions that aim to optimize their LMS platforms. By integrating HCI principles into LMS design, universities can improve student satisfaction and engagement, thereby enhancing their overall learning experience. This study contributes to the broader discourse on educational technology, and offers practical recommendations for developing user-centric LMS systems.

Keywords: Educational technology, human-computer interaction (HCI), learning management system (LMS), Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, user experience, usability

AI-POWERED LEARNING ANALYTICS: IMPACT ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

P.M.M.D. Pathiraja*

Department of Management and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

*Corresponding author (Email: malinthapathiraja23@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on student engagement in higher education, addressing the issue of declining student participation in the traditional educational system and the potential of AI to enhance learning experiences. The main objective was to assess the effectiveness of AI-based applications and platforms in enhancing students' engagement, motivation, and academic performance. This study used a qualitative research approach, gathering data from 200 undergraduate students at a state university in Sri Lanka representing various faculties and academic years. Primary data were collected through qualitative surveys and secondary data were obtained from previous academic surveys. Data analysis involved breaking down the data into categories and codes, with interpretation focused on understanding the generated principles and exploring theories to explain relationships. The findings indicated that AI applications such as personalized learning systems, intelligent tutoring, and AI-based feedback systems significantly improved student engagement by providing customized learning experiences and immediate feedback. The study also found that students had significantly increased motivation and interest in learning when AI solutions were employed in the learning process. Moreover, the study implied that AI, presented in the form of analytics, contributed to enhancing academic performance by enabling instructors to meet the learning needs of individual students. This study suggests that integrating AI into higher education can lead to more effective teaching strategies and improved student outcomes. The research revealed that learning motivation and interest improved among students when AI solutions were integrated into teaching, and also implied that AI improved academic performance because instructors were able to address the learning needs of each learner.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, higher education, personalized learning, academic performance, and student engagement

FACTORS AFFECTING ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONLINE SHOPPING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

S.S.N. Lakshan^{1,*} and P.G. Munasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: mgt2019199@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

In recent years, mobile phones, computers, and laptops have become essential technologies that significantly impact daily transactions, particularly among young and educated individuals. Despite the increasing popularity of online shopping, there is a critical need to comprehensively identify and understand the factors that influence consumers' attitudes toward engaging in online transactions. Without a clear understanding of these factors, businesses may struggle to target and engage online shoppers effectively, potentially hindering their competitiveness in the digital marketplace. This study examined the factors influencing attitudes toward online shopping among undergraduates at Rajarata University in Sri Lanka. Based on a comprehensive literature review, a research model was developed with independent variables, including perceived benefits, perceived web quality, and trust, and a dependent variable of attitude toward the adoption of online shopping. A questionnaire was distributed to 367 respondents using stratified purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The study found that perceived benefits, web quality, and trust were significant determinants of online shopping adoption among undergraduates. These findings provide clear insights into students' attitudes toward online shopping and the factors influencing them. Based on these findings and causal analysis, this study provides practical recommendations for universities, students, governments, and cloud vendors. Efforts should be made to enhance positive attitudes toward online shopping in student learning activities, as increased IT knowledge can provide significant benefits for students' educational pursuits. Future research should focus on improving respondent freedom without restrictions, and consider methods to increase response rates, reduce reaction time, and improve response quality.

Keywords: Online shopping, attitude, undergraduates, perceived benefits, trust

THE IMPACT OF PLAYING VIOLENT VIDEO GAMES ON PHYSIOLOGICAL DESENSITIZATION TO REAL-LIFE VIOLENCE BY YOUNG VIOLENT VIDEO GAME PLAYERS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT

W.M.C.P. Wijekoon¹, T.U.S. Senarath^{2,*} and K.M.P.G.A.J. Bandara³

^{1, 2, 3} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: udesh.senarat@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between playing violent video games and physiological desensitization to real-life violence among young violent video game players in Colombo District. The study focused on a sample of 385 participants, utilizing a self-administered questionnaire to collect quantitative data. The primary objective was to determine whether frequent exposure to violent video games correlates with significant physiological desensitization, measured through physiological indicators and self-reported perceptions. A quantitative approach was employed using snowball sampling to gather data. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, reliability tests, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to explore the potential impact of violent video game exposure on the emotional and physiological responses of young players. The results indicated a correlation between violent video game exposure and reduced physiological responses to real-life violence, suggesting a desensitization effect. These findings have significant implications for public policy, academic literature, and mental health therapy. By revealing the link between exposure to violent video games and physiological desensitization, this study contributes to a more nuanced discourse on media impact. This supports the development of targeted interventions and educational initiatives for young gamers. Additionally, the findings can aid legislators in formulating evidence-based policies to mitigate the potential effects of violent video games on mental health in Colombo District and beyond.

Keywords: Colombo district, physiological desensitization, real-life violence, violent video games, young gamers

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADOPTION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY OF STATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA

L.P.T.S. Wickramanayaka^{1,*} and V. K. N. Gamini²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: thanujawickramanayaka99@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of AI technology has had profound implications for cognitive psychology among state university undergraduates in Sri Lanka. A significant knowledge gap is evident in the current research, highlighting the lack of understanding of the impact of AI adoption specific areas of cognitive psychology among these undergraduates. The objective of this study was to address this gap by examining the effects of AI adoption on cognitive functions such as working memory, memory retention, reading comprehension, and decision-making. This study employs a quantitative cross-sectional approach rooted in positivist research philosophy. A stratified random sample of students from state universities in Sri Lanka was surveyed using structured questionnaires to collect data. The theoretical model posits AI adoption as the independent variable, with four cognitive functions identified as the dependent variables. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software, involving rigorous examination of the impact of AI adoption. Descriptive analysis indicated a strong level of agreement among the respondents on the premise of the study. The analysis revealed that AI adoption exhibited a significant positive relationship with all cognitive psychological variables, including working memory, memory retention, reading comprehension, and decision-making. Key findings indicate that, while AI adoption positively impacts working memory, memory retention, and decision-making, its effect on reading comprehension is comparatively less pronounced. Furthermore, the regression analysis suggested that a substantial portion of the variance in AI adoption among undergraduate students could be explained by the studied variables, while a considerable amount was influenced by other factors, highlighting an important limitation in the research. This study fills a critical gap in the literature on AI adoption and cognitive psychology among Sri Lankan State University undergraduates by addressing the paucity of research in this area. It is recommended to bridge this knowledge gap by offering valuable insights for researchers, educators, and policymakers and laying the groundwork for comprehending the impact of AI adoption on state university undergraduates. Future investigations into the complex interplay between cognitive psychology and AI adoption should explore additional variables or different samples to understand the intricate linkages influencing educational settings and verify the findings.

Keywords: AI adoption, cognitive psychology, memory retention, reading comprehension, working memory

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USAGE OF AI-BASED EDUCATIONAL TOOLS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA

B.M.S. Sandaruwan^{1,*} and K.M.P.G.A.J. Bandara²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: ssandaruwan015@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the usage of AI-based educational tools among undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, focusing on psychological and perceptual elements, such as hedonic motivation, perceived credibility, ease of use, perceived social presence, and perceived usefulness. This research problem centers on the need to identify the factors that contribute to the acceptance and effective use of AI-based educational technologies in a specific academic context. The main objective of this research was to examine the factors associated with the use of AI-based educational tools and their impact on the learning experiences of undergraduate students at Rajarata University. The methodology includes quantitative surveys, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of students' perceptions, preferences, and challenges related to AI in education. The population (8,330) of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, including six faculties, was sampled (367) using a stratified sampling technique, considering all faculties as percentages. Findings from the study revealed a nuanced understanding of the factors associated with the use of AI-based educational tools among undergraduates. Quantitative data analysis indicated that factors such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and technological self-efficacy significantly affect students' willingness to engage with AI tools for learning purposes. The conclusions drawn from the study underscore the multifaceted nature of the factors influencing the use of AI-based educational tools. A holistic approach that considers both technological and pedagogical aspects is crucial for successful implementation. This study contributes to the existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence specific to the context of Rajarata University, enriching the literature on AI in education with insights from diverse cultural and educational settings. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the need for educational institutions and policymakers to address the identified factors to foster a conducive environment for AI integration in higher education.

Keywords: Perceived usefulness, perceived credibility, perceived ease of use, Perceived social presence, Hedonic motivation

THE IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN GOVERNMENT COMMERCIAL BANKS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

D.W.D. Abewickrama¹ and W.M.R.B. Weerasooriya^{2,*}

^{1, 2}, *Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: wmr@mgmt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Digitalization is crucial for the banking sector, as it transforms traditional processes to offer enhanced convenience and accessibility. As the industry rapidly moves towards digital transformation, driven by the need to remain competitive and meet evolving customer expectations, banks are focusing on online value creation, hybrid interactions, and blockchain technologies. This shift operates at both strategic and customer-oriented levels, impacting business models and customer adoption of new technologies. This transition impacts both strategic and customer-oriented levels, influencing business models and the customer adoption of new technologies. The shift from traditional to digital services, fueled by advancements in information technology, has significantly altered how banks communicate, deliver services, and foster customer loyalty. This study examines the impact of digitalization on customer loyalty in government commercial banks in Colombo District, Sri Lanka. The study employed a comprehensive methodology, including a review of the relevant literature, primary data collection through a self-created questionnaire, and statistical analysis. Due to challenges in obtaining precise digital banking user data from Colombo District's population of 632,543, a sample of 300 was selected using convenience sampling, adjusted based on Morgan's (1970) table. Reliability and validity tests were conducted to ensure data accuracy and consistency. Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire employing a quantitative methodology to gather and analyze the numerical data. The findings revealed strong positive correlations between six predictor variables: privacy, security, convenience, functional quality, accessibility, speed of delivery, and customer loyalty. Privacy and security, along with the speed of delivery, exhibited the strongest correlations. All correlations are statistically significant, supporting the hypothesis that these factors significantly influence customer loyalty in the government banking sector. The findings indicate that privacy and security, convenience, functional quality, accessibility, and speed of delivery are significant predictors of customer loyalty. These results align with the existing theories, reinforcing the importance of these factors in the context of government banking. This study provides empirical evidence that supports and strengthens the theoretical framework of this field. It recommends that the banking sector prioritize digitalization efforts to enhance customer loyalty.

Keywords: Privacy & security, convenience, functional quality, accessibility, speed of delivery

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ADOPTION OF AI-GENERATED CONTENT IN DIGITAL MARKETING

R.D.V. Lahiru^{1,*} and K.M.P.G.A.J. Bandara²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: vihangalahiru22@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors associated with the adoption of AI-generated content in digital marketing, with a focus on digital marketing agencies within the Colombo District. While existing studies have examined the broad implications of AI in marketing, there is a noticeable gap in understanding the unique contextual elements that influence its adoption in this specific locale. This study aims to bridge this gap by identifying key factors that facilitate or hinder the integration of AI-generated content in digital marketing strategies. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from a sample of seventy-three digital marketing agencies in Colombo District. This study employs a quantitative methodology to analyze the relationships between four pivotal variables: compatibility, environmental, facilitating conditions, and performance, assessed in terms of awareness and integration. The data analysis revealed a positive and significant correlation between each independent variable and the dependent variable of the AI-generated content adoption. Compatibility emerged as the most influential factor, contributing significantly to the variation in adoption levels. The findings of this study underscore the importance of enhancing compatibility, optimizing facilitating conditions, and continually improving performance to maximize the potential of AI in digital marketing. These insights are vital for digital marketing agencies in the Colombo District and similar regions seeking to leverage the benefits of AI technologies. This study contributes to the academic discourse on AI-generated content adoption in digital marketing by providing practical recommendations for agencies to effectively navigate the evolving landscape. By addressing these identified factors, digital marketing agencies can strategically position themselves to adopt AI-generated content, thus improving their operational efficiency and gaining a competitive advantage in the market. This study emphasizes the necessity for continuous research and adoption to emerging technological trends and evolving consumer preferences to ensure sustained growth and innovation within the digital marketing sector.

Keywords: AI-generated content, compatibility aspects, digital marketing, environmental aspects, facilitating conditions.

ADOPTION TO REAL-TIME ONLINE LEARNING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES OF SRI LANKAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES: EXTENDING DECOMPOSED THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR WITH IS SUCCESS MODEL

R. Arthika*

Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: arthiratnam@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Real-time online learning is a relatively new paradigm in education. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global education system has relied entirely on real-time teaching and learning. However, the adoption of a novel real-time online learning model has not been adequately addressed in literature. This study attempts to predict undergraduates' acceptance of real-time online learning at Sri Lankan national universities by extending the decomposed Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) using the Information System Success Model (IS Success Model). The research employs PLS-SEM of SmartPLS 3 to determine the impact of the identified variables on the adoption of real-time online learning. The overall research design was deductive, positivist, and explanatory. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data. Using an a priori sample size calculator, 127 was determined as the minimum sample size. Using the area-sampling technique, 382 responses were obtained. Decomposition of TPB indicated that the antecedents of attitude (ATT) were Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Perceived Risk (PR), and compatibility (COM). The antecedents of Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) were Perceived Self-Efficacy (PSE) and Facilitating Conditions (FC). The proposed model has fourteen (14) hypotheses: The findings indicate a positive effect of PU ($\beta = 0.391, p < 0.05$), PEOU ($\beta = 0.227, p < 0.05$), and COM ($\beta = 0.195, p < 0.05$) on Attitude with an R^2 value of 53.6%. However, PR did not influence attitudes. PSE ($\beta = 0.438, p < 0.05$) and FC ($\beta = 0.392, p < 0.05$) had positive effects on PBC, with an R^2 value of 59.2%. User Satisfaction was explained by System Quality ($\beta = 0.209, p < 0.05$) and Information Quality ($\beta = 0.564, p < 0.05$), with an R^2 value of 53.3%. Subjective Norm ($\beta = 0.102, p < 0.05$), System Quality ($\beta = 0.232, p < 0.05$), Information Quality ($\beta = 0.238, p < 0.05$), and User Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.249, p < 0.05$) positively affected Behavioral Intention to Use with an R^2 value of 56.2%, whereas Attitude and Perceived Behavioral Control did not. This study indicates that behavioral intentions to use real-time online learning will improve if the quality of the information and content made available improves.

Keywords: Real-time online learning, information system success model (IS Success model), Sri Lanka, theory of planned behavior (TPB).

**THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED VALUE OF MOBILE APPS ON BRAND LOYALTY
WITH THE MEDIATION ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TELECOMMUNICATION INDUSTRY IN
SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA**

K.N.N. Himayangani^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: nipuninisansala20@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The telecommunications industry is highly competitive, with companies striving to increase consumer brand loyalty. Perceived value plays a critical role in shaping customer experience and brand loyalty, encompassing the functional, social, cognitive, emotional, and conditional value dimensions. In Sri Lanka's competitive telecommunications industry, companies like Dialog, Mobitel, Hutch, and Airtel have launched branded mobile apps such as My Dialog, Mobitel Self-care, My Airtel, and Hutch Self-care to enhance customer experience and build brand loyalty. However, these apps often suffer from significant technical issues, causing customers to experience long wait times, frequent buffering, and the need to repeatedly refresh the app. These technical and support-related problems significantly impact perceived value and customer satisfaction, and undermine the effectiveness of apps in fostering brand loyalty. Thus, this study demonstrates how technical barriers significantly affect perceived value and user satisfaction, which, in turn, impacts brand loyalty. This study used a cross-sectional survey design targeting telecommunications service consumers in Sabaragamuwa Province, Sri Lanka. The perceived value dimensions, customer satisfaction, and brand loyalty were measured using a structured questionnaire. The sample consisted of 384 participants, selected through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed using SPSS to test the hypotheses and understand the variable relationships. The analysis revealed that functional, emotional, and conditional values significantly affect brand loyalty, whereas social and epistemic values do not. Mediation analysis showed that customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between perceived value and brand loyalty, highlighting its importance in the value-loyalty relationship. These findings suggest that enhancing the functional, emotional, and conditional value of branded mobile applications can significantly increase brand loyalty among telecom consumers. The role of customer satisfaction as a mediator emphasizes that perceived value indirectly contributes to brand loyalty by increasing levels of customer satisfaction. The lack of significant influence from social and cognitive values suggests that these dimensions may be less relevant to telecommunication services. The findings of this study suggest that telecommunication companies should prioritize enhancing the functional, emotional, and conditional aspects of their branded mobile applications to foster brand loyalty effectively. Future research should explore other mediating variables and industry contexts to validate and extend these findings.

Keywords: Brand loyalty, conditional value, customer satisfaction, emotional value, epistemic value, functional value, perceived value, social value.

**THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE USE OF DIGITAL PIRACY PRODUCTS
AMONG STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAJARATA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS)**

K.K.G.U.D. Senadheera^{1, *}, S.A.H.S. Sudasinghe² and H.K.G.M.N. Karunarathne³

*^{1,3}Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University
of Sri Lanka*

*²Edith Cowan University (Sri Lanka Campus), 288, Sri Jayewardenepura Mawatha,
Rajagiriya*

*Corresponding author (Email: upulsenadheera08@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The initial research problem for this study, though the use of pirated products is an unethical and illegal activity, most university students are addicted to using that type of pirated product using various methods. It is unclear why students used pirated products. This study examines the influence of pirated products on university students at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka (RUSL). A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on the results of previous studies. To examine the use of pirated products, by applying simple random sampling, 372 students were drawn from the total population of 8,369 at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, using an online survey for data collection. A research model was developed on digital piracy, including the use of pirated products as a dependent variable, and attitude, computer experience, digital media cost, and moral obligation as independent variables. The results revealed that attitude, computer experience, and digital media cost positively affected the use of pirated products. Moral obligation has no significant influence from moral obligation on the use of digital piracy products. Students should be enlightened about the consequences of pirated products on the economy of the country. In addition, they should be informed that the use of pirated products is illegal and then informed of the use of free open-source products in their tasks. The results of this study are limited to RUSL undergraduates. To generalize and validate the results, more research is needed with a wider sample of all students in Sri Lanka and by selecting students who belong to other domains.

Keywords: Attitude, computer experience, digital media cost, digital piracy product, moral obligation.

**IMPACT OF THE ADOPTION OF CHAT-GPT ON CREATIVITY OF UNIVERSITY
UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA
(REFERENCE TO FIVE SELECTED UNIVERSITIES)**

A.M.M.M. Abesingha^{1,*} and H.M.B.P. Ranaweera²

*^{1,2}Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University
of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: maheshmadhusanka2019@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In the 21st century, artificial intelligence has become increasingly important in various areas, including education. ChatGPT, created by OpenAI, is a powerful tool that reaches 1 million users in just five days, much faster than Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This is particularly popular among university undergraduates, and is the top choice among AI tools for creating content. The educational approach prioritizes general skills, such as creativity, and promotes collaborative learning through real-world problem solving in classrooms. Studying the impact of ChatGPT on the creativity of university undergraduates is important, because they are at a pivotal point in their education and career development. As undergraduates use the ChatGPT more for assignments and research activities, it is crucial to understand how it affects their creativity. University undergraduates represent a unique group owing to their distinct characteristics, including their educational background, advanced thinking skills, creativity, and potential future career paths. An online questionnaire was used to collect data from five state universities, using a stratified sampling technique. The selected sample size was 382, and 416 responses were received. Consequently, all collected responses were included in the subsequent analyses of descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression. The findings revealed that ChatGPT has a positive relationship with creativity among university undergraduates. This study offers valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, undergraduates, and school students to integrate ChatGPT into the academic environment and suggests implementing monitoring techniques.

Keywords: AI in education, Chat-GPT, creativity, university undergraduate.

FACTORS AFFECTING FOR MOBILE BANKING ADOPTION AMONG EDUCATED YOUTH IN SRI LANKA

P.G.N.D. Jayalath^{1,*} and V.K.N. Gamini²

^{1,2} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University
of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nilushadlrksh@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Advancements in information technology have significantly impacted the banking industry, resulting in increasingly flexible payment options and user-friendly financial services. Mobile banking has become more accessible to a wider audience owing to the rapid development of mobile phones and smartphones, allowing users to conduct financial transactions anywhere and at any time. However, consumer adoption is widely accepted as the biggest obstacle to mobile banking growth. Additionally, some researchers have pointed out that Sri Lankan customers are reluctant to rely on banking services via mobile phones, although there is a trend of mobile banking adoption among educated youth in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to assess the factors affecting mobile banking adoption among the educated youth in Sri Lanka. This study employs a quantitative methodology with an explanatory research design. A theoretical framework was developed with mobile banking adoption as the dependent variable, and perceived credibility, trust, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness as independent variables. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted using SPSS software to explore the relationships between these variables. The results of the study indicate that perceived credibility, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use are positive and significant indicators, while trust is a negative and significant indicator of the adoption of mobile banking. Trust has been identified as a significant factor influencing the adoption of new technologies. Educational programs are needed to enhance our understanding of mobile banking's benefits and security features. Future researchers should investigate the impact of social networks and influencers on mobile banking adoption. Additionally, future studies could delve deeper into security concerns and their influence on mobile banking adoption and explore ways to enhance perceived credibility and trust by addressing security issues in mobile banking applications.

Keywords: Mobile-banking adoption, perceived credibility, perceived usefulness, trust

THE IMPACT OF SMART INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION (SICTA) ON ISLAMIC CULTURAL CONVERGENCE IN SRI LANKAN SOCIETY

M.H.P. Hasliya^{1,*} and H.K.G.M.N. Karunarathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinhale, Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: pathimahasliya1998@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The rapid adoption of Smart Information and Communication Technology (SICTA) is transforming various aspects of society globally, including Sri Lanka. This study explores the impact of SICTA on Islamic cultural convergence within Sri Lankan society. Islamic cultural convergence refers to the process through which different cultures become more alike because of shared technologies and media. Despite the widespread use of SICTA, there is limited research on its effects on Islamic cultural identities and practices in Sri Lanka, which creates a critical research gap. The purpose of this study is to investigate how SICTA influences Islamic cultural convergence in Sri Lankan society by examining the relationships between smart ICT infrastructure, smart ICT access, smart ICT usage, and smart ICT skills and their impact on Islamic cultural convergence. The choice of these four variables was deliberate, based on their relevance in assessing the multidimensional effects of SICTA. This study employed a quantitative research methodology utilizing a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 384 smart device users from an Islamic community in three remote villages in Anuradhapura, ensuring homogeneity among respondents. The major findings of the regression and correlation analyses indicate that all four independent variables positively influence Islamic cultural convergence. However, smart ICT usage and skills showed a stronger and more significant positive relationship with Islamic cultural convergence compared to smart ICT infrastructure and access. The correlation analysis revealed significant values for smart ICT usage and skills, underscoring their critical role in driving Islamic cultural convergence. This study has significant implications for policymakers and educators, emphasizing the need to enhance smart ICT skills and promote meaningful smart ICT use to foster cultural integration while maintaining diversity.

Keywords: Islamic cultural convergence, smart ICT access, smart ICT infrastructure, smart ICT skills, smart ICT usage

EXPLORING THE FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMPLOYABILITY OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES: A STUDY AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

G.H.I. Madushani¹ and D.H.D.S. Wickramasiri^{2,*}

^{1,2} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: dinushikaw@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates specific factors influencing the employability of Information Technology (IT) graduates from Rajarata University of Sri Lanka with a focus on testing hypotheses related to professional qualifications, practical experience, soft skills, and technical expertise. Employability was assessed as the ability to secure and sustain employment in the IT industry, and a quantitative research method was employed to gather data via surveys from graduates. The collected data were analyzed using correlation and regression techniques to evaluate the relationships between the identified factors and employability outcomes. The results reveal that practical training and industry experience have a significant positive effect on employability, while the impact of professional qualifications and technical skills varies between the correlation and regression analyses. Surprisingly, soft skills were not found to be a major determinant of employability, contrary to the common expectations in the field. These findings underscore the critical role of practical experience over formal qualifications in enhancing the employment prospects of IT graduates. To align academic outcomes with industry needs, this study recommends the integration of industry-specific training programs, continuous professional development initiatives, and structured mentorships within the university curriculum. However, this research is limited by its single-institution focus and suggests that future studies should expand the sample to include graduates from multiple institutions to improve generalizability.

Keywords: Employability, IT graduates, practical experience, professional qualifications, soft skills

EFFECT OF THE TECHNOSTRESS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (A CASE STUDY OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA)

R.M.N.G.H. Rathnayaka^{1,*} and H.M.B.P. Ranaweera²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University
of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nilminirathnayake695@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of technostress on university students' academic performance. The initial research problem for this study was that technostress, a modern phenomenon arising from students' constant use of technology, has significant research evidence showing its impact on students' academic performance. While global studies often highlight both the positive and negative effects of technostress on academic performance, there is a notable lack of studies that focus on this in the Sri Lankan context. The five dimensions of technostress were techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, techno-invasion, techno-overload, and techno-uncertainty through extensive literature support. A deductive approach was applied to construct the model and formulate hypotheses. To examine the impact of technostress, 368 students were drawn from a total population of 8,369 at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka by applying simple random sampling using an online survey for data collection. Descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analyses, and t-tests were performed to analyze the data. Overall, the results indicated that technostress had an insignificant impact on students' academic performance. Specifically, techno-invasion, techno-overload, and techno-uncertainty had a positive impact on students' academic performance. Conversely, techno-complexity and techno-insecurity negatively correlated with students' academic performance. Thus, this study reveals the varying impacts of technostress on academic performance, suggesting the need to develop interventions and strategies to manage technostress effectively among undergraduates, ultimately contributing to enhanced academic achievement and student well-being.

Keywords: Academic performance, technostress, techno-complexity, techno-insecurity, techno-invasion

OBSTACLES FACING SMES IN THE ADOPTION OF E-COMMERCE: REFERENCE TO SMES IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

R.M.M.U. Rajapaksha^{1,*} and Y.M.W.G.P.K. Udurawana²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: madhaveerajapaksha22@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify and address the obstacles faced by SMEs in Anuradhapura District in adopting e-commerce. E-commerce plays a crucial role in driving the national economic growth. E-commerce is essential for SMEs, as it promotes business growth and competitiveness. Despite their importance, SMEs in Sri Lanka face considerable challenges in adopting e-commerce, with the business maturity for e-commerce in the country estimated at 34 percent. This indicates that, although some companies have adopted e-commerce, their current maturity level is inadequate. A literature review guided the development of a conceptual model incorporating five variables: attitude, awareness, compatibility, readiness, and external forces. This study employed a quantitative approach, facilitated by convenience sampling, using a structured questionnaire directed at a representative sample of 370 SMEs in Anuradhapura District. Data analysis conducted using the SPSS software confirmed that all constructs were valid, reliable, and fit the proposed model. The findings revealed that all independent variables except compatibility had a significant positive effect on e-commerce adoption. Therefore, targeted interventions and support programs should be implemented to help SMEs overcome barriers to e-commerce adoption, facilitate their integration into the digital marketplace, and enhance their competitiveness within Sri Lanka's economic landscape.

Keywords: Attitude, awareness, compatibility, external forces, readiness

FACTORS AFFECTING THE USAGE OF CLOUD COMPUTING SERVICES AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES

R.M.C.D. Rathnayaka^{1,*} and P.G. Munasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: chamikadilshanrmcd@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Cloud computing provides undergraduates with flexible access to resources, reduces the need for a physical infrastructure, and offers cost-effective solutions. However, despite their potential to enhance education through increased accessibility, collaboration, and efficiency, many students in Sri Lankan state universities lack awareness and understanding of these services. This study examined the factors influencing the adoption and usage of cloud computing services among undergraduates, focusing on awareness, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and security concerns. Data were collected from 384 undergraduate students across various disciplines using a structured questionnaire and purposive sampling. The analysis revealed moderate adoption levels of cloud computing, with significant variations across faculties. Correlation analysis showed that awareness, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and perceived security are key factors influencing usage, with perceived usefulness and ease of use being the most impactful. The regression model further confirmed the influence of these factors on the usage patterns. To improve cloud computing adoption, universities should implement awareness campaigns and training programs that emphasize practical benefits. Enhancing perceived security and simplifying interfaces can encourage adoption. These findings offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and cloud service providers seeking to promote cloud computing in higher education.

Keywords: Cloud computing, technology adoption, undergraduates, education, security

DOCTORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF IOT MEDICAL DEVICES IN SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

W.A.S. Navodya^{1,*} and P.G. Munasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nawodyawijesinghe20@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The Internet of Things (IoT) represents a significant technological advancement that utilizes Internet-connected smart devices and sensors to improve various aspects of daily life, including healthcare. IoT medical devices have the potential to revolutionize healthcare by providing accurate, data-driven insights and enhancing health-condition management. These concerns lead many medical experts to question whether IoT device integration genuinely enhances patient care, fearing that it may negatively impact the social aspects of medical practice. Doctors are especially wary of privacy intrusions, data breaches, and misuse of personal health information, which can undermine their confidence in these technologies. Limited research has explored doctors' attitudes toward IoT in the Sri Lankan context, particularly in Anuradhapura District, creating a knowledge gap. This study aimed to examine how security, privacy, familiarity, and risk perception affect doctors' attitudes toward the use of IoT medical devices in healthcare delivery. A conceptual framework was developed, identifying familiarity, risk perception, privacy, and security as independent variables, and attitudes toward the use of IoT medical devices as the dependent variable. Data were collected from doctors in the Anuradhapura District using a purposive sampling method and an administered questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed that security, privacy, familiarity, and risk perception are significant factors influencing the adoption of IoT medical devices, with doctors generally exhibiting a positive attitude towards their use. A notable finding was the high level of familiarity with IoT medical devices among doctors, which primarily contributed to their positive attitude. Enhancing familiarity and addressing security and privacy concerns could further improve doctors' perception and acceptance of IoT medical devices.

Keywords: IoT medical devices, healthcare technology, privacy and security, doctors' attitudes, risk perception

THE ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ADOPTING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN BUSINESS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

I.K. Dissanayake*

University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: ishara369dissanayake@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Business organizations continually strive to enhance their decision-making capabilities and integrate innovations through technological advancements. Among these, Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents significant ethical considerations that require thorough examination. The main objective of this review is to identify and categorize the ethical issues that business organizations may face as they design and adopt AI in their processes. Additionally, it analyzes trends in the ethical challenges associated with AI to understand how these issues have evolved over time. A systematic approach was applied to relevant databases to gather and analyze appropriate scholarly articles. The rapidly changing nature of AI has limited the availability of relevant articles and excluded several publications. Among the articles retrieved through the search strategy, those published between 2008 and 2024 were used for the review. Ethical frameworks and case studies were applied to build a comprehensive analysis of the ethical landscape. The findings reveal key ethical issues such as the long-term impact of AI, privacy concerns, job displacement, cybersecurity, and data protection. This review provides insights into the ethical landscape of adopting emerging technologies in business and offers a conceptual analysis of practical issues to inform ethical decision-making and future policy development. By examining how these ethical implications have developed over time, this review highlights significant gaps in existing research. These insights lay the groundwork for future research to address the existing gaps and develop standardized practices. This review emphasizes the need for up-to-date practical ethical governance to address the complex ethical challenges created by emerging technologies in today's business environment. Furthermore, it underscores the responsibility for policy and governance related to the adoption of emerging technologies in the business context. The findings also highlight the importance of stakeholder engagement and transparency, workforce implications and skill development, long-term sustainability, and ethical innovation practices in the modern business context.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, business ethics, cybersecurity, ethical implications, governance

FORECASTING STOCK PRICES ON THE COLOMBO STOCK EXCHANGE WITH MACHINE LEARNING

A.M.K.B. Abeysingha^{1,*} and H.M.B.P. Ranaweera²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kushanbandara237@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE) is a major financial market in Sri Lanka that plays a crucial role in the country's economy by facilitating the trading of equities and other securities. This study aims to forecast stock price movements in CSE using machine learning classification models. Traditional methods of stock analysis, such as fundamental and technical analyses, often fail to accurately predict stock prices because of their inability to capture intricate patterns within the data. To address these limitations, this study employs machine-learning techniques to predict the direction of stock price movements (i.e., whether the price will increase or decrease) rather than the exact stock price itself. This approach enhances the accuracy of trend predictions and assists investors in making informed decisions. This study focuses on five prominent companies listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange. The primary objective was to evaluate the accuracy of four classification algorithms—Logistic Regression, Support Vector Machine (SVM), K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN), and Random Forest—in predicting daily stock price movements based on historical stock prices and exchange rates. The methodology involves collecting historical stock data and relevant economic indicators, followed by pre-processing and feature engineering to prepare the data for model training. The models were assessed based on accuracy, precision, recall, and the F1 score to determine the most effective algorithm in the context of the Colombo Stock Exchange. The findings indicate that Random Forest performs more accurately than the other algorithms. Accordingly, this study shows the potential of machine learning models to enhance investment decision-making processes, reduce reliance on intermediaries, and manage investment risks more effectively. These results are expected to benefit investors, financial institutions, and researchers interested in advancing stock price prediction methodologies.

Keywords: Forecasting stock prices, machine learning, Colombo stock exchange, random forest

THE ROLE OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN ENHANCING GREEN ACCOUNTING PRACTICES: A STUDY ON CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTAL AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

S.L.K. Adhikari¹ and K.M.M.H.B. Senevirathna^{2,*}

¹*St. George International Teacher Training Institute Sri Lanka*

²*Edith Cowan University (ECU) Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: look4madawa@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Integrating sustainable business practices is essential for balancing financial performance with environmental responsibility. Green accounting, which incorporates environmental costs into traditional accounting frameworks, is a critical tool in this effort. Information systems (IS) play a vital role in advancing green accounting by enabling organizations to accurately track, analyze, and report both environmental and financial data. This study investigates the impact of IS on green accounting practices and its influence on corporate environmental and financial performance. Corporations are increasingly adopting sustainable practices in response to mounting concerns over environmental degradation and climate change. Green accounting provides a framework for quantifying the environmental costs of business operations, facilitating informed decision making, and promoting transparency. However, implementing green accounting poses challenges such as the complexity of data collection, analysis, and reporting. This study explores how IS can address these challenges and improve both environmental and financial outcomes. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combined both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative component surveys 150 corporations across various industries, assessing their use of IS in green accounting and measuring environmental and financial performance. The qualitative component included interviews with key stakeholders including CFOs, environmental managers, and IS specialists. The findings reveal that IS significantly enhances green accounting efficiency and accuracy. Corporations using advanced IS report more precise and timely environmental cost data, leading to better decision making, increased transparency in sustainability reporting, and stronger environmental performance. In addition, these corporations benefit from reduced emissions, improved resource efficiency, cost savings, and increased investor confidence. The study also highlights that challenges, such as data complexity and integration, can be mitigated through strategic IS deployment, further reinforcing positive environmental and financial impacts. The findings suggest that practitioners should invest in robust IS for green accounting, while policymakers should develop guidelines and incentives to encourage IS adoption, thereby promoting corporate sustainability.

Keywords: Environmental management, information systems, green accounting, performance metrics, sustainability

REMOTE WORKING PERFORMANCE AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS IN SRI LANKA

R.A.I.M. Rathnayaka^{1,*} and G.S.R. Gunathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: is2020470@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of remote working on the job performance of IT professionals in Sri Lanka, focusing on three key variables: work environment, job satisfaction, and work motivation. Remote work has gained significant attention, particularly during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic; however, there remains limited research on its specific impacts within the Sri Lankan IT sector. This study aimed to fill this gap by assessing how these variables influence job performance. An online questionnaire was distributed to 384 IT professionals, and their responses were analyzed using SPSS. The findings revealed that remote work fosters higher job satisfaction and motivation, leading to improvements in work engagement. However, the direct impact on productivity remains inconclusive as the results vary across contexts and individual experiences. This study highlights the complexities of remote work and suggests that while it may enhance certain aspects of performance, the relationship between remote work and overall productivity is not straightforward. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on remote work by offering insights for both IT professionals and business leaders. It provides a foundation for future studies to explore the long-term effects of remote work on performance, taking into consideration factors such as work-life balance, organizational support, and evolving remote work practices. These findings are particularly relevant to organizations seeking to optimize remote work strategies in the post-pandemic world.

Keywords: Remote work, IT professionals, job performance, work environment, job satisfaction, work motivation, Sri Lanka.

IMPACT OF DIGITAL BANKING ADOPTION ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LISTED COMMERCIAL BANKS IN NUWARA – ELIYA DISTRICT SRI LANKA

T.I.N. Shakeera¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

* Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Digital banking has transformed financial services by providing convenient and efficient online and mobile platforms, a trend that has accelerated after the COVID-19 pandemic. In Sri Lanka, digital banking adoption varies across regions, with areas such as Nuwara Eliya facing opportunities to further enhance adoption through increased digital literacy and improved digital infrastructure. This study aims to identify the factors affecting customer adoption of digital banking services in Nuwara Eliya District by addressing a gap in the literature and providing insights for promoting financial inclusion. The study employed a descriptive research design; it systematically collected, analyzed, and interpreted data to offer a comprehensive understanding of digital banking adoption and its impact on customer satisfaction. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire and the research followed a deductive approach to test five hypotheses related to digital banking adoption and customer satisfaction. A cross-sectional time horizon was adopted, with data gathered over two weeks, and the individual served as the unit of analysis. The findings reveal that the factors discussed under banking adoption, such as ease of use, privacy, reliability, responsiveness, and efficiency, all have positive and significant effects on customer satisfaction. Notably, ease of use has emerged as the most significant contributor, with customers valuing the simplicity and convenience of digital banking platforms. To further enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, this study recommends the implementation of digital literacy programs to increase the awareness of the benefits of digital banking. Additionally, enhancing digital infrastructure, particularly improving Internet connectivity in the Nuwara Eliya District, will ensure broader access to digital banking services across various devices. Continuous technological innovation to meet evolving customer expectations and personalized user experiences has also been highlighted as a key strategy for enhancing customer satisfaction. Strengthening security measures and transparently communicating these efforts to customers was identified as critical for building trust and confidence in digital banking platforms.

Keywords: Digital banking, customer satisfaction, ease of use, privacy, reliability

IMPACT OF ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION (RPA) ON OPERATIONS IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AREA, ANURADHAPURA

R.D. Mekala^{1,*} and H.M.B.P. Ranaweera²

^{1,2} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: Is2018229@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the extent to which Robotic Process Automation (RPA) has impacted operational workflows in commercial banks by assessing both its advantages and potential challenges. Additionally, this research provides insights into how RPA adoption influences employee roles, customer satisfaction, and overall business performance within banks operating in this specific geographical region. Many bankers are expected to invest in adopting and implementing the RPA. This study aims to understand the impact of RPA on commercial bank operations through the value of such investments. Sri Lanka consists of twenty-three licensed commercial banks and twenty-five licensed specialized banks. This study was limited to commercial banks in the Anuradhapura Municipal Council. Factors such as processing functions, audit and compliance, retail banking, and chatbots were considered under robotic process automation, whereas the operational workflows of selected commercial banks were considered dependent variables in the literature. A total of 103 responses from 21 banks were collected through convenience sampling. The collected data were tested for reliability and analyzed using correlation, regression, and descriptive analyses. The results show the positive effect of robotic process automation on bank operations. With this new technology, banks can improve operational efficiency, maximize employee productivity, and provide better services to customers by properly managing financial services. The results of this study indicate that the use of RPA for operational work is beneficial and has a positive impact on bank operations.

Keywords: Chatbot, operations, robotic process automation

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF IOT FOR E-LEARNING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN STATE UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

N. Maheshika^{1,*} and G.S.R. Gunathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: is2020211@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing the adoption of Internet of Things (IoT) for e-learning among undergraduates at state universities in Sri Lanka. As technology has become increasingly integrated into education, understanding the determinants of IoT adoption is crucial for enhancing e-learning experience. Despite the transformative potential of the IoT in education, its adoption in e-learning contexts remains limited, highlighting a significant research gap. The objective of this study was to identify and examine the technological, environmental, organizational, and individual factors that influence IoT adoption in e-learning. Data were collected through an explanatory research approach using a questionnaire administered to a sample of 364 undergraduate students at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. This study illustrates how the IoT is reshaping education by creating interactive learning environments. Traditional whiteboards are being replaced by interactive screens and smart boards, promoting more hands-on learning experience. IoT-powered classroom management systems are adapting learning environments to better meet students' needs, whereas wearable devices monitor student health and provide real-time feedback. Additionally, adaptive learning platforms enhance educational outcomes by personalizing learning experiences according to each student's requirements. The findings indicate that improving organizational support and technological infrastructure within universities can significantly boost IoT adoption in e-learning. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of IoT adoption in higher education and offers valuable insights for administrators, policymakers, and educators seeking to optimize e-learning using modern technology.

Keywords: Internet of things, e-learning, higher education, technology adoption

INVESTIGATING THE MOST EFFECTIVE DATA AUGMENTATION TECHNIQUES FOR ENHANCING IMAGE CLASSIFICATION PERFORMANCE IN CNN MODELS

P.H.H.C. Jayasooriya^{1,*} and H.M.B.P. Ranaweera²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: is2020171@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of drones across various sectors has created the need for effective image classification techniques to accurately distinguish between drones and birds, particularly to mitigate potential hazards. This study addresses the challenge of improving image classification performance in Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) models through the application of data augmentation techniques. The primary objective is to identify the most effective augmentation techniques for enhancing precision, recall, accuracy, and F1 score in a CNN model using the "Bird vs Drone" dataset. Four augmentation techniques were evaluated: rotation, flipping, cropping, and color jittering. Initially, a baseline CNN model was trained without augmentation to establish a performance benchmark, achieving a precision of 0.5725, recall of 0.9375, accuracy of 0.6187, and an F1 score of 0.7109. Each augmentation technique was then applied separately and the performance of the model was re-evaluated. The results indicate that the flipping technique achieved the highest precision (0.9400) and accuracy (0.7750), proving to be particularly effective in reducing false positives while maintaining strong classification accuracy. Although rotation and cropping also increase precision and accuracy relative to the baseline, they exhibit lower recall values, suggesting a trade-off between false-positive reduction and the ability to detect all positive samples. Color jittering strikes a moderate balance, improving precision to 0.6591 and recall, leading to an increase in overall accuracy to 0.6750 and F1 score of 0.6905. This study demonstrates that data augmentation significantly enhances the CNN performance in image classification. Flipping is especially effective for increasing precision and accuracy, whereas color jittering helps to balance performance metrics. These findings offer valuable guidance for selecting appropriate augmentation techniques for optimal CNN performance in image classification tasks.

Keywords: Convolutional neural network, data augmentation, image classification, performance metrics, drone detection

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INTENTION OF DIGITAL PAYMENT ADOPTION AMONG GENERATION Z: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KURUNEGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

D.M.S.P. Dissanayaka¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Digital payment systems are essential in modern economies, streamlining financial transactions and facilitating the exchange of value. Globally, there has been a marked shift towards digital payments driven by new consumer behaviors and the widespread use of mobile devices. However, despite these advancements, Sri Lanka remains largely cash-dependent, with over 90% of retail transactions being conducted in cash. This indicates a significant research gap in understanding the low adoption of digital payments, particularly among Generation Z, who are digitally natives with high Internet readiness. In regions such as Kurunegala, a commercial hub with a growing digital infrastructure, the adoption of digital payments remains relatively low compared to other Southeast Asian countries. This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the factors influencing Generation Z's intention to adopt digital payment systems in the Kurunegala District. Utilizing a quantitative, cross-sectional design and a deductive approach, the study applied the Onion Model framework. A sample of 333 Generation Z respondents was identified using convenience sampling. The data were analyzed to examine the impact of Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Risk, Trust, and Facilitating Conditions on digital payment adoption. The findings revealed that Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Risk, and Facilitating Conditions significantly influenced the intention to adopt digital payments. However, Trust was not found to be a significant factor in this context. Future research should further explore the role of trust in different regional settings and conduct longitudinal studies to observe evolving digital payment behaviours among Generation Z.

Keywords: Digital payment adoption, facilitating conditions, generation z, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, perceived risk

FACTORS INFLUENCING CLOUD COMPUTING ADAPTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS IN SRI LANKA

V. Vinietha^{1,*} and G.S.R. Gunathunga²

^{1,2} *Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: is2020482@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The adoption of cloud computing in private higher education institutions in Sri Lanka, particularly in Western Province, has grown significantly, shaped by various organizational, technological, environmental, and cultural factors. Despite their advantages such as enhanced accessibility, scalability, and cost efficiency, these institutions face challenges in effectively implementing cloud solutions. This study aimed to identify the critical factors influencing cloud computing adoption in these institutions. Using the Technology-Organization-Environment (TOE) framework and considering cultural aspects, this study explored the key drivers and barriers affecting the integration of cloud computing in institutional operations. An explanatory research design was employed to examine the relationships between independent variables such as technological readiness, organizational support, environmental pressures, cultural factors, and cloud computing adoption as the dependent variable. Data were collected through a survey administered via Google Forms to administrative staff, faculty, and students from three private universities in the Western Province. A purposive sampling strategy was used, with a target sample of 384 respondents as determined by the Morgan table. The data were analyzed using SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including regression analysis. The findings suggest that successful cloud computing adoption in private higher education institutions in Sri Lanka requires addressing diverse technological, organizational, environmental, and cultural dimensions. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights specific to private higher education in the Western Province of Sri Lanka and offers guidance for future cloud computing implementations in similar contexts.

Keywords: Cloud computing, cultural factors, private higher education, technology-organization-environment framework, technology adoption

A blue geometric graphic consisting of overlapping shapes, resembling a stylized arrow or a series of nested triangles, pointing towards the right.

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**IMPACT OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY IN APPAREL INDUSTRY. (SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO KATUNAYAKE EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE, SRI LANKA.)**

P.N. Dharmawansa^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

*^{1,2}Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email:bm2019060@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Currently, the world is facing significant environmental issues, including climate change, resource depletion, and increasing hazards and emissions. Sustainable solutions are essential for addressing these challenges. In the context of the Sri Lankan apparel industry, which consumes substantial amounts of materials, water, and electricity for air conditioning, adapting Green Supply Chain Management (GSCM) practices is crucial. However, not all apparel organizations in Sri Lanka utilize environmentally sustainable practices. Additionally, most studies on GSCM practices have been conducted in developed countries rather than in developing ones. This study aimed to assess how GSCM practices impact the economic pillars of sustainability. This research utilized variables such as green purchasing, green manufacturing, green distribution, and eco-design under GSCM practices as independent variables. This study presents a new approach to the Sri Lankan apparel industry and analyzes whether such practices affect the dependent variable of economic sustainability. To test the hypothesis that GSCM practices impact economic sustainability, an online survey was conducted among managerial-level employees using a sample size of 232 employees in apparel manufacturing organizations in the Katunayake Export Processing Zone, Sri Lanka. Managers provided information and opinions on how their companies engaged with suppliers and customers to improve the green concept and sustainable practices to protect the environment. Respondents were selected based on their positions in the organization. The results were analyzed using correlation and multiple regression analyses to assess the impact of GSCM practices on economic sustainability. However, some sub-hypotheses showed results opposite those hypothesized. These results suggest that GSCM practices are important for today's business. Therefore, the implementation of GSCM practices in the apparel industry is recommended.

Keywords: sustainability, economic sustainability, green supply chain, apparel industry

IMPACT OF INSTAGRAM ADVERTISEMENTS ON ONLINE PURCHASING INTENTION OF GENERATION Z IN SRI LANKA

I.M. Rajapaksha^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}, *Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019277@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

As Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms, it can also be used as a strong digital marketing tool for businesses, enabling them to expand their reach and connect to a massive customer base. Instagram has emerged as a powerful platform for online businesses, offering immense potential for building brand identity and enhancing overall business performance. This study aims to identify the impact of Instagram advertisements on Generation Z's online purchasing intentions in Sri Lanka. According to the Morgan table, 384 Instagram users from Generation Z in Sri Lanka were selected for this study. Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire and a simple random sampling technique was employed to select the sample. To measure the independent variables, consumer trustworthiness, ease of use, informativeness, and social influence were tested using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses. SPSS software was used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses of the study. The findings revealed that consumer trustworthiness, informativeness, and social influence had significantly positive impacts on online purchasing intentions, with significance values of 0.002, 0.003, and 0.000, respectively. The value of ease of use was 0.132, indicating that it did not have a significant impact on online purchasing intentions. The findings of this study may assist businesses and marketing managers in adapting their Instagram advertising tactics to effectively reach their target audiences and drive growth in the digital landscape. In conclusion, the researcher affirms that the results of the study clearly demonstrate that Instagram advertisements have a positive and significant influence on online purchasing intentions.

Keywords: Customer ease of use, informativeness, instagram advertisements, online purchasing intention, social influence, trustworthiness

IMPACT OF CODE-MIXED TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS ON PERSUASION OF CUSTOMERS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT

L.I. Manorathne*

Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Education, CINEC Campus, Millennium Drive, IT Park, Malabe, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: lakshithamanorathne@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Code mixing refers to moving back and forth between two or more languages or language varieties during speech. It is a branch of sociolinguistics that appears in both bilingual and multilingual societies. In Sri Lanka, television advertisements often utilize code mixing, integrating elements from multiple languages, especially Sinhala and English. Although existing research has explored how code mixing affects comprehension in advertising, a gap exists in understanding how it influences persuasion, particularly in a multilingual context. Thus, this study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing how code-mixing strategies impact customer decisions in Colombo District and how they compel the target audience to buy the product or service. Twenty code-mixed television advertisements distributed among 384 young adults and middle-aged adults were selected and incorporated into a self-administered questionnaire. Convenience sampling was employed to determine the sample, and a quantitative approach was used in this study. Secondary data were collected from journal articles, conference proceedings, government and industry reports, and other articles. The gathered data were analyzed, and it was concluded that code-mixed advertisements enhance persuasion with a higher purchase intention for products, as they can influence both the central route by enhancing message clarity and the peripheral route by triggering positive emotions, compared to ads solely in one language. Furthermore, it can increase the comprehensibility for customers with limited proficiency in either English or Sinhala. Future research could examine the impact of code mixing in digital and social media advertising among younger audiences or explore its long-term effects on brand loyalty and customer trust. As this paves a prolific pathway to enhance advertisers' craft by creating more effective campaigns that resonate with the target audience and ultimately drive sales, it could be beneficial to incorporate code-mixing in future advertisements to enhance customer persuasion without compromising clarity or inclusivity.

Keywords: Code mixing, consumer persuasion, advertising, Sinhala, television ads

**THE EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC BANKING SERVICE QUALITY ON E-CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA)**

B.B.A. Dilhani¹, * W.P. Wijewardena², and C.T. Gamage³

*^{1,2,3}Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bbanushadilhani@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

With rapid advancements in technology, lifestyle, and demographics, traditional banking is increasingly transitioning to e-banking systems, which provide faster and more reliable services. This study examines the effect of electronic banking service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka. Although several studies have been conducted in this area, limited research has focused on the impact of e-banking service quality on e-customer satisfaction and loyalty, particularly examining four specific dimensions: personal need, site organization, user-friendliness, and website efficiency. This study was conducted using an explanatory research design, followed by a positivist research paradigm within a quantitative research method framework. A survey technique was used to collect data from private and public e-banking customers in Anuradhapura through a structured questionnaire, with responses gathered from 352 of a targeted sample size of 384, derived from the unknown population equation. Data analysis was performed using the SPSS software. The results indicate that electronic banking service quality, consisting of the four dimensions, has appropriate reliability, and each dimension has a positive significant relationship with e-customer satisfaction and loyalty. The findings demonstrate that a higher level of e-banking service quality significantly affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study was limited to customers in the Anuradhapura district, suggesting the potential for broader research across Sri Lanka in the future. Based on existing knowledge from previous research on e-banking services, this study offers recommendations for further enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty in e-banking.

Keywords: E-banking, E-customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, service quality

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL SUPPLY CHAIN ON LEAN METHODS USED IN APPAREL INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN PROVINCE)

R.M.C.M. Rathnayake^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}, *Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019296@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Apparel manufacturers in Sri Lanka have adopted lean methodologies to enhance their operational efficiency, reduce waste, and improve product quality. The advent of digital advancements has significantly transformed supply chains in the apparel industry. Although numerous studies have focused on digitalization and supply chain practices within the Sri Lankan apparel sector, this study specifically aimed to examine the impact of the digital supply chain on lean methods used in the apparel industry in Sri Lanka, with special reference to Western Province. This study's methodology included a review of relevant literature, primary data collection using a self-created questionnaire, and correlation analysis. The respondents were managerial and executive-level employees from apparel industries in Western Province. Using simple random and systematic sampling methods, a sample size of 302 managerial and executive-level employees was determined from a population of 1,400 employees currently employed across 300-350 apparel industries in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The sample and population data for the study were derived from EDB and pilot studies. Reliability and validity tests were conducted to ensure data accuracy and consistency. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using Pearson's correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis to test the five hypotheses. The findings revealed a high correlation among all five variables and a significant positive relationship between digital supply chain components—digital information technology, digital suppliers, digital manufacturing systems, digital logistics and inventory, digital customers, and lean methods. All five hypotheses were accepted under multiple regression analysis, except for digital suppliers, which showed a regression value of 0.074, indicating that it was not a significant predictor. In conclusion, this study identified the impact of the digital supply chain on the lean methods used in the apparel industry. These findings suggest that digital information technology, digital manufacturing systems, digital logistics and inventory, and digital customers are significant predictors of lean methods. The study recommends that the apparel industry should thoroughly examine, implement, and pay more attention to every digital supply chain practice to improve lean methods effectively.

Keywords: Digital information technology, digital logistics, digital manufacturing system, digital suppliers, digital supply chain

EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF AUGMENTED REALITY APPLICATIONS IN SUSTAINABLE DIGITAL MARKETING: A CASE STUDY OF ARTS AND CRAFTS MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN SRI LANKA

S. Dilogini^{1,*} and S. Shivany²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna.*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the challenges faced by micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in digital marketing, specifically focusing on Augmented Reality Applications (AR Apps). This addresses a critical gap in understanding the specific challenges MSMEs encounter when utilizing AR apps for digital marketing to support sustainability. This research highlights that MSMEs in Sri Lanka's arts and crafts sector lack a clear comprehension of both the existing practices and the anticipated outcomes of using AR applications. There are significant gaps in the literature on sustainable digital marketing within this context. Employing a qualitative research method and an in-depth case study approach, interviews were conducted with an art and craft MSME owner in Northern Sri Lanka. The research design adopted thematic analysis, which included data familiarization, generation of initial codes, theme identification, theme review, and definition and naming of themes, culminating in the final report generation. The findings revealed that device compatibility issues and high development costs hinder the effective operation of AR apps on older smartphones, and make it prohibitively expensive for local businesses to develop such apps. Barriers to user adoption include a lack of awareness and understanding of AR technology, preference for traditional methods among many customers, and privacy and security concerns due to AR apps requiring access to sensors and cameras. Additionally, content creation and maintenance pose challenges, as developing engaging and accurate AR content is resource-intensive and requires continuous updates. Environmentally, the manufacturing and disposal of devices required for AR apps contributes to e-waste and increased energy consumption, thereby negating sustainability benefits. Scalability issues were identified, as AR apps by MSMEs often have limited reach owing to constrained marketing resources. The originality of this study lies in its focus on the specific digital marketing challenges faced by MSMEs aiming for sustainable digital marketing, thus providing valuable insights into technological, educational, content-related, environmental, and scalability barriers. The research implications suggest that addressing these challenges requires technological advancements, improved user education, strategic partnerships, and continued investments in content and infrastructure. Overcoming these barriers can help MSMEs use AR and other digital marketing tools more effectively, engage customers in sustainable practices, and support long-term business sustainability.

Keywords: Augmented reality, micro, small, and medium enterprises, Sri Lanka, sustainable digital marketing.

LEAN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY: FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

S. Ekanayake^{1,*} and S. Rajapaksha²

^{1,2}*Department of Management Studies, Gampaha Wickramarachchi University of Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: sachi96m@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Lean Supply Chain Management focuses on optimizing all activities from the customer's perspective by eliminating waste, improving quality, reducing costs, and increasing flexibility throughout the supply chain. Sustainability in supply chain management involves considering economic, environmental, and social impacts, known as the triple bottom line, to make decisions that enhance organizational effectiveness and profitability. The integration of sustainability aspects with economic considerations has gained importance in managerial decision making, particularly in supply chain management, to enhance organizations' overall performance. This conceptual study aims to review the literature on the synergistic effects between lean and resilient supply chain practices and their impact on sustainability dimensions. It also evaluates the effectiveness of extending lean management principles downstream in the supply chain to the final customer to enhance overall sustainability and competitiveness. A rigorous review was conducted using the PRISMA framework to ensure a comprehensive examination of the current findings. Using VOSviewer, we performed a keyword co-occurrence analysis. All articles were sourced from the Scopus database to guarantee data accuracy. The findings of this study indicate that lean and resilient methodologies demonstrate synergistic effects, wherein lean methodologies serve as catalysts for resilient methodologies, ultimately resulting in both direct and indirect ramifications for supply chain sustainability. The implementation of lean methodologies within supply chain management can yield beneficial outcomes for the economic, environmental, and social performance of organizations, thereby enhancing overall sustainability performance. The relationship between lean supply chain management and sustainability is evolving with ongoing research advancements, particularly concerning the influence of lean supply chain management on sustainability. The article also focuses on future research gaps, showing that limited research has been conducted on the relationship between lean supply chain management practices and achieving sustainability across different sectors. Research in this field is still in its early stages, with few studies addressing the synergies between lean supply chain management strategies, indicating a need for further exploration and empirical evidence on the adoption of these strategies for sustainable outcomes.

Keywords: Future research avenues, lean supply chain management, prisma, methodology, sustainability

CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE PLASTIC PACKAGING IN FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS MARKET IN KURUNEGALA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AREA

W.M.S.A. Jayawardhana^{1,*} and W.M.P.G.R. Pushpakumara²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Department of Business Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale*

*Corresponding author (Email: schiniamasha200@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry relies extensively on plastic packaging to enhance convenience and product protection, particularly in urban areas such as Kurunegala Municipal Council Area. Although plastic packaging provides functional benefits, its non-biodegradable nature raises critical environmental concerns. Increasing environmental awareness among consumers makes it essential to understand their perception of plastic packaging and its impact. This study addresses the gap between widespread plastic packaging usage and the rising environmental consciousness in the FMCG market. This study aimed to examine consumer perceptions of plastic packaging in terms of functionality, environmental impact, and sustainability, focusing on how packaging form, color, and material alignment influence these perceptions. Using a mixed-method approach, a pilot study with 20 participants refined the research tools, followed by data collection from 156 respondents within the Kurunegala Municipal Council Area. A convenience sampling technique was used to select participants across 13 wards, and structured questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data on consumer attitudes. Reliability and validity tests ensured the robustness of the data. Key findings reveal that, while plastic packaging is universally used, only 45% of respondents express environmental concerns, 65% regularly purchase fast food in plastic packaging, and 40% are satisfied with current packaging practices. These findings indicate the need for sustainable packaging innovations and targeted consumer education regarding environmental impact. The study suggests that harmonizing packaging form, color, and material with consumer expectations could promote sustainable consumption within the FMCG sector. These findings underscore the significant role of packaging attributes in shaping consumer perceptions of functionality, environmental responsibility, and sustainability. Insights from this study can inform FMCG companies and policymakers in developing packaging strategies aligned with consumer demands for eco-friendly practices.

Keywords: Consumer perception, environmental impact, plastic packaging, packaging design, sustainability

ROLE OF BRAND LOVE IN DEVELOPING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT EXAMINING THE MEDIATION OF BRAND JEALOUSY AMONG GENERATION Y WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LIQUOR INDUSTRY IN NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA.

A.M.S.I. Adhikari^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Corresponding author (Email: savindyaadhikari@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The literature on interpersonal love indicates that love begets jealousy. The scope of this study is Brand Love and its impact on Customer Engagement within the highly distinctive liquor industry setting in Sri Lanka's North Central Province, targeting consumers from Generation Y and focusing on the mediating factor of Brand Jealousy within the process. This study has profoundly highlighted the importance of understanding the emotional dynamics of consumer behavior, as intense emotional attachment towards brands significantly influences purchasing decisions. The direct and indirect influences of Brand Love on Customer Engagement form the major focus of the study, while Brand Jealousy, a relatively under-researched concept in the liquor industry, is examined as a mediating variable. A quantitative research design was employed with data gathered from a sample of 384 respondents using a judgmental sampling technique. To ensure robust results, the authors used structural equation modelling to analyze the relationships between Brand Love, Brand Jealousy, and Customer Engagement. The results showed that Brand Passion and Brand Emotion significantly affect Customer Engagement, underpinning the depth of emotional attachments that Generation Y consumers create with their favorite liquor brands. More importantly, Brand Jealousy partially mediated the relationship between Brand Love and Customer Engagement, suggesting that higher levels of Brand Love invoke possessive feelings when others use the same brand, which, in turn, positively influences consumer behavior. This study provides empirical evidence that supports the mediating role of Brand Jealousy in the relationship between Brand Love and Customer Engagement. The findings contribute new knowledge to the understanding of emotional dynamics in the liquor industry while also helping marketers design appropriate strategies aimed at influencing consumer engagement and loyalty regarding a specific brand. This paves the way for further investigation of the emotional and psychosocial drivers of consumption across various industries and regions.

Keywords: Brand jealousy, brand love, customer engagement, liquor industry

THE IMPACT OF BRAND AUTHENTICITY ON BRAND PREFERENCE WITH THE MEDIATION OF BRAND IMAGE: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TEXTILE MARKET IN WESTERN PROVINCE SRI LANKA

M.A.D.T. Manorathna^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dasunithakshika96@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The textile market integrates the core activities of production, distribution, and consumption of textiles that are primarily used in the clothing sector. This study investigates the impact of brand authenticity on brand preference within the unique context of Sri Lanka's Western textile market. Despite extensive research on brand authenticity, brand preference, and brand image in diverse contexts, a significant gap remains in understanding the interplay within the Sri Lankan textile market, particularly in Western Province. This research addresses both the literature and practical gaps. While existing studies have explored aspects of brand authenticity and its influence, none have comprehensively examined how brand authenticity specifically impacts brand preference mediated by brand image in this regional context. This practical gap underscores the prevalence of misleading marketing practices in the textile sector, where discrepancies between advertised and actual product attributes often lead to diminished brand preference and brand image. This study investigates this impact using a cross-sectional survey design, sampling 384 consumers using convenience sampling. The Western Province of Sri Lanka, which is a densely populated and commercially active region, provides a large pool of potential respondents, making convenience sampling a practical choice for data collection. Data analysis, conducted using SPSS, confirmed that dimensions such as originality, logo, integrity, brand signature, and brand heritage significantly influence brand preference, whereas continuity, perceived value, and genuineness do not have a significant impact. The mediation analysis further reveals that brand image partially mediates the impact between brand authenticity and brand preference, highlighting its pivotal role in consumer decision-making processes. The key findings emphasize the critical importance of aligning brand communication with product reality to foster brand authenticity and enhance brand preference. Originality emerged as a particularly influential factor, indicating a preference for unique and innovative offerings in the textile market. The limitations of this research include the use of convenience sampling, which restricts the generalizability to the entire Western Province textile market. Future research should expand geographically to include other provinces in Sri Lanka in order to explore regional variations and provide more comprehensive and generalizable findings. The study concludes by advocating transparent marketing practices that accurately reflect brand values, thereby enhancing brand image and, consequently, brand preference in the competitive textile market of Sri Lanka's Western Province.

Keywords: Brand authenticity, brand preference, brand image, textile market

FROM TRADITIONAL TO DIGITAL: EMPOWERING SUN MIXTURE THROUGH UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

A. D. A. Lambert¹, A.D.A. Uthayakumar², A.M.S.L. Bandara³, B.A.I.K. Bamunusinghe⁴, B. Geerththana⁵, C.N. Wijerathna⁶, D.P.A.M. Wickramasinghe⁷, D.O. Dissanayake⁸, H.K.W.T. Kodithuwakku⁹ and S. Dilogini¹⁰

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10}*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Sun Mixture, a Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME), faces significant challenges due to its limited digital presence and reliance on traditional sales methods. This has resulted in a restricted market reach, diminished brand visibility, and missed growth opportunities. The lack of technology integration further hinders competitiveness in the modern marketplace. To address these challenges, marketing specialization students from the University of Jaffna conducted participatory action research with the objective of improving sales through online channels, enhancing customer engagement both locally and internationally, and increasing brand awareness. This research employed narrative inquiry to gather personal stories and insights that highlight the transformation of traditional marketing-based MSMEs towards a digital ecosystem. Photovoice allowed participants to visually document community strengths and challenges through photography, fostering in-depth discussions. Additionally, focus group discussions facilitated collective insights among stakeholders, whereas participatory mapping created visual representations of the spatial and social aspects of the environment. Researchers have identified critical issues, such as the lack of accessible online product details (ingredients and pricing), which are essential for customer decision-making, as well as the absence of customer reviews and online payment options, limiting transaction flexibility. The findings underscore the need for enhanced staff awareness of digital marketing techniques, overcoming resistance to digital business practices, and developing infrastructure to support online sales and engagement. The research also identified the importance of active social media engagement, effective content strategies to improve customer interaction, and the necessity of a fully optimized website for facilitating transactions. Practical implications include ongoing improvements to websites and social media content to maintain relevance, leveraging interactive features for customer feedback and loyalty-building, and forging partnerships with local delivery services to streamline online orders. In conclusion, researchers have established social media platforms for Sun Mixture, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. These initiatives significantly improved sales and enhanced brand awareness, demonstrating the effectiveness of digital solutions in fostering the growth of sun mixtures in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital transformation, micro small and medium enterprises, narrative inquiry, participatory action research, photo voice

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF TRADITIONAL RESTAURANT MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES) IN SRI LANKA: UNIVERSITY - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

H.L.M.K. Liyanage¹, H.P.G. Kanchana², I. G.T.S. Prabhashana³, J.T.S. Fernando⁴,
K. Pirashanthiny⁵, K.M.T.N Dulanjana⁶, K.M.C.S. Dasanayaka⁷,
K.M.P.R. Madhusanka⁸, K.A.S.P. Jayathilaka⁹, K.A.U.D. Jayalath¹⁰
and S. Dilogini¹¹

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11} *Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This Participatory Action Research investigates the digital transformation of Fluffy Ice Bar, a startup restaurant in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, which primarily relies on word-of-mouth marketing and lacks social media presence. The objective was to establish and manage social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp, to enhance brand visibility, customer engagement, and market differentiation. By creating a unique digital identity, researchers aim to attract more customers and improve the market positioning. The study employs PAR, involving marketing students from the University of Jaffna, chosen because it allows direct interaction with the subject matter, making the research realistic and applicable to solving real-life problems faced by MSMEs as part of university community development. Data were collected through interviews with restaurant owners, employees, and customers to identify the challenges in adopting digital marketing strategies. Key obstacles include the absence of online payment features, a lack of digital marketing proficiency, and the need for an online menu system that hinders restaurants' reach and growth. These findings underscore the owner's limited technical knowledge as a significant barrier to business expansion. To address these challenges, a structured digital marketing approach was developed, comprising content creation, marketing strategies, targeted ad campaigns, and online payment solutions (e.g., Lanka Pay). We introduced an online menu system accessible via QR codes to streamline the customer experience and enhance operational efficiency. Additionally, social media analytics was employed to further optimize efforts. Efforts have focused on building brand recognition by engaging content and influencer collaborations on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, aimed at driving customer acquisition and sales growth. Practical implications include establishing a distinctive Facebook page, leveraging content marketing, integrating traditional marketing methods such as posters, and incorporating a QR code-based online menu system to build customer trust and engagement. These strategies collectively aim to optimize marketing efforts, maximize reach, and improve customer satisfaction, supporting Fluffy Ice Bar's digital transformation and growth objectives.

Keywords: Digital transformation, marketing challenges, participatory action research, restaurant micro, small, and medium enterprises, Sri Lanka.

UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH ON DIGITAL MARKETING ADOPTION BY ROYAL ANIMAL HOSPITAL

M. Danuya¹, M. Ramyah², M. Karunarathna³, N.A.S.L. Senadeera⁴, N.E.P.N Sandunika⁵, N.G.K.G.N. Dasanayaka⁶, P.A.U.C. Prathapasinghe⁷, R.G.I.S. Ranmohotti⁸, R.M.M.L. Karunarathna⁹, R.M.S.I.D. Thilakarathne¹⁰ and S. Dilogini¹¹

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11} *Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the adoption and preference of digital marketing tools by animal hospitals in Jaffna with the aim of enhancing awareness and utilization of digital marketing strategies among Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Marketing specialization students from the University of Jaffna conducted participatory action research using narrative inquiry to gather personal stories and insights, providing qualitative data on the transformation of traditional marketing-based MSMEs into digital ecosystems. Photovoice empowered participants to capture community strengths and challenges through photography, encouraging richer discussions. Focus group discussions provide a platform for collective insights and collaborative reflection, whereas participatory mapping offers a visual representation of the spatial and social dimensions of the environment. These methodologies ensured a comprehensive, inclusive, and action-oriented research process. The findings highlight the significant challenges faced by Sri Lankan MSMEs, including competitiveness, customer engagement, cost efficiency, and market access, exacerbated by limited knowledge of digital marketing tools. Particularly for service providers such as animal hospitals, meeting customer expectations without digital proficiency remains a hurdle. The objectives of this study are to improve MSMEs' knowledge of digital aspects, enhance digital presence, and manage costs effectively through a booking system. This study contributes uniquely to the literature by focusing on animal hospitals and digital marketing, offering insights to enhance their digital presence through integrated traditional and digital approaches, such as zoom meetings and face-to-face awareness sessions, thereby supporting academic exploration and practical application of digitalization in the sector. Practical implications include creating and updating social media accounts, such as Facebook and TikTok, developing video content and sharing it through social media, promoting customer service and feedback through social media, implementing a personalized booking system, and creating a personalized website. These strategies aim to enhance customer acquisition, retention, and overall service quality at Royal Animal Hospital, facilitating their adaptation and growth in the digital age.

Keywords: Digital ecosystems, digital marketing adoption, e-marketing tools, micro small and medium enterprises, participatory action research.

A ROADMAP IN ENHANCING DIGITAL MARKETING CAPABILITIES AT SAIDIHA MULTI PRODUCTS: UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

S. Rosangelina¹, S. Vithursiya², T. Neojetha³, S. Niranchana⁴, R. Wimash⁵,
T.G.R.M. Lasindu⁶, S. Jeethusha⁷, S. Kiritharan⁸ and S. Dilogini⁹

*^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9}Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the adoption of digital marketing solutions by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sri Lanka, focusing specifically on Saidiha Multi Products in Nallur, Northern Province. The primary objectives are to identify the barriers MSMEs face in adopting digital marketing technologies and propose effective strategies for enhancing their digital marketing capabilities. The research reveals that Saidiha Multi Products, like many MSMEs in developing countries, encounter significant challenges, such as limited resources, financial constraints, and competition from larger enterprises. Additionally, the enterprise lacks adequate knowledge of digital marketing, compounded by a small workforce of just five employees. Using a qualitative approach, marketing specialization students from the University of Jaffna conducted participatory action research employing narrative inquiry to gather personal stories and insights from stakeholders. This method provides rich qualitative data on the transition from traditional marketing to digital platforms. Tools, such as photovoice, allowed participants to document community strengths and challenges through photography, fostering insightful discussions. Focus group discussions facilitated collective insights and collaborative reflection, whereas participatory mapping visually depicted the spatial and social aspects of the business environment. The findings suggest that Saidiha Multi Products can enhance its online presence by leveraging tailored, cost-effective digital tools, and integrating traditional and online marketing channels. Recommended strategies through PAR include conducting awareness sessions for employees and owners on effective digital marketing techniques, implementing automated communications through email and SMS notifications, and developing a personalized website. Strengthening their social media presence and receiving ongoing consultation on emerging digital marketing techniques will further enhance their market expansion and customer engagement efforts. In conclusion, this research lays a solid foundation for enhancing digital marketing strategies among similar MSMEs in Sri Lanka. By addressing the identified barriers and implementing the proposed strategies, MSMEs can improve their sustainability and competitiveness in an increasingly digital market landscape.

Keywords: Digital marketing adoption, digital transformation strategies, marketing capability enhancement, MSMEs in Sri Lanka, participatory action research.

EXPLORING THE PATH TO DIGITAL MARKETING IN MSMEs: UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

W.M.S. Erandathi¹, W.M.I.W. Wijerathna², W.N. Piyumal³, W.M.U.D. Wijekoon⁴,
W.A.C.H. Wijewardhana⁵, M.S.P. Perera⁶, N. Sumalini⁷, A.H.M.R.M. Bandara⁸
and S. Dilogini⁹

^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9}*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the traditional marketing strategies used by Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Sri Lanka, focusing specifically on T.D.V. Tailoring in Jaffna and exploring proactive involvement in digital marketing. It also proposes improvements through an awareness campaign to boost digital marketing proficiency. Marketing students from the University of Jaffna conducted Participatory Action Research using focus groups, participant observation, and interviews to gather insights. The SWOT analysis revealed that T.D.V. Tailoring had strengths, such as a strong market presence and traditional marketing experience, but faced weaknesses, such as limited digital marketing knowledge and resource constraints. Opportunities were identified in digital marketing, social media engagement, online sales, and partnerships, whereas threats included competition, economic challenges, and shifting customer preferences. Despite its potential, barriers such as limited digital literacy, financial constraints, and reluctance to adopt new technologies hindered the business's digital transformation. However, PAR noted that the business owner was open to embracing digital strategies if provided with adequate support. Practical recommendations include offering foundational digital marketing knowledge through hands-on engagement, creating engaging online content, optimizing social media profiles, and educating business owners on accessing financial and technological resources. The study highlighted the potential of MSMEs, such as T.D.V. Tailoring to grow through digital platforms and emphasizing the importance of community-driven initiatives in fostering digital marketing competence among local businesses in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the study assumed access to the necessary technologies and infrastructure, which may not be available to all MSMEs, particularly in remote areas. Future research could address infrastructure issues and explore the role of training initiatives, possibly in collaboration with universities, tech companies, or government bodies, to enhance digital literacy and facilitate MSMEs' digital transformation of MSMEs. This research acknowledged several limitations, including its focus on a single business type in Jaffna, which reduces the generalizability of the findings to other MSMEs globally.

Keywords: Local business growth, marketing strategy transition, micro, small, and medium enterprises, participatory action research, SWOT analysis.

PRACTICAL EXECUTION OF DIGITAL MARKETING FOR NATURAL BEAUTY: UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

**T. Sriragabairavi¹, U.G.D.G. Karunaratne², U.G.S.N. Bandara³, W.S. Prabhath⁴,
W.P.G.V. Devindika⁵, W.G.I.H. Waththegedara⁶,
T. Thiluxkanth⁷, T. Poulsiyam⁸, U. Linojan⁹ and S. Dilogini¹⁰**

*^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10}Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the digital marketing involvement of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Sri Lanka, focusing on Kurunagala that specializes in natural beauty products. This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the business's current operations, marketing strategies, target customer base, production methods, and the challenges it faces in digital marketing. Using Participatory Action Research (PAR) conducted by marketing specialization students from the University of Jaffna, this study employs narrative inquiry to gather qualitative data on the transition from traditional to digital marketing. Photovoice enables participants to visually document community strengths and challenges, fostering insightful discussion. Focus group discussions and participatory mapping facilitate collaborative reflections on the spatial and social aspects of the business environment. Initial findings reveal significant barriers to digital marketing for Natural Beauty, including limited knowledge, insufficient time for social media marketing, budget constraints, and difficulties in producing high-quality digital content. The business relies heavily on minimal advertising strategies, particularly word-of-mouth marketing, maintaining customer relationships through personalized services, and producing a limited range of high-quality products. This study introduces novel digital tools and creative strategies to enhance the digital marketing practices of Natural Beauty products, addressing unique challenges and opportunities through PAR. These recommendations aim to significantly improve the digital presence of Natural Beauty, promoting and selling its products in a cost-effective and measurable way, thereby fostering growth and competitiveness in the digital era. This study also provides a valuable framework for similar MSMEs seeking to enhance their digital marketing strategy.

Keywords: Digital marketing, MSMEs, natural beauty, participatory action research

THE IMPACT OF OMNICHANNEL RETAILING ON CONSUMER DWELL TIME WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FASHION INDUSTRY IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA.

B.W.S. Madhushani^{1,*} and D.M.D. Chathurika²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: madhushanishiromani57@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The omni-channel approach is a novel strategy that aims to deliver seamless experience to customers across both online and physical channels. In omnichannel retailing, all customer touchpoints are integrated to ensure consistency. When companies implement an omni-channel strategy, they aim to engage the same customers across different channels by delivering a unique and cohesive experience. The purpose of this research study is to explore the impact of omni-channel retailing on consumer dwell time, with particular reference to the fashion industry in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 384 respondents in the fashion sector. This study focuses on the dimensions of omni-channel integration, seamlessness, Fulfilment, and usability. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to fulfil the research objectives and test the hypotheses. The majority of respondents were female, aged 26–35, held diplomas or bachelor's degrees, and were employed in the private sector. Descriptive analysis indicated high favorability towards omnichannel retailing dimensions. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive correlations between omni-channel integration, seamlessness, and usability and consumer dwell time. However, omni-channel fulfilment showed a non-significant correlation, suggesting that the speed or accuracy of fulfilment may not directly influence dwell time. The reason for this non-significant finding may be that consumers prioritize synchronization and ease of transitioning between online and in-store channels over quick or accurate order fulfilment when it comes to dwell time. Although fulfilment is essential to customer satisfaction, it may not directly contribute to extended engagement within a store. Regression analysis shows that 85% of the variation in customer dwell time is explained by the level of omni-channel retailing, with the model being statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that omni-channel retailing has a strong impact on consumer dwell time within stores. The study's generalizability is limited by its focus on the Western Province and the fashion industry. Additionally, the data collection method, primarily using self-reported questionnaires, may have introduced a response bias. Future research should expand to other regions and industries, consider additional variables, such as customer satisfaction and loyalty, and incorporate more diverse data collection methods, including observational data and qualitative interviews, to capture a broader view of consumer behavior.

Keywords: Consumer dwell time, Omni-channel fulfilment, Omni-channel integration, Omni-channel retailing, Omni-channel seamlessness, Omni-channel usability.

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN THE FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY: A STUDY FROM WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

S. Rathnayake^{1,*} and S.M.B.L. Suraweera²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: sarangarathnayake66@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The fast-food industry significantly influences food choices driven by busy lifestyles and demand for convenience. Existing research predominantly focuses on customer satisfaction in fine- and casual-dining settings, leaving a notable gap concerning the specific factors driving customer satisfaction in the fast-food sector. Given the industry's high failure rate, fueled by intense competition and rapidly changing consumer preferences, attracting and retaining customers is crucial for survival. A pilot study indicated that fast-food consumers consider factors such as food quality, service, pricing, and promotions to influence their satisfaction, with preferences varying among customers. Thus, this study aimed to identify the key factors affecting customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry. Following a pilot study with twenty (20) consumers conveniently selected from Western Province, a quantitative approach was employed using a self-administered questionnaire based on established measures from the existing literature. The sample comprised fast-food patrons in Sri Lanka's Western Province, selected for their demographic diversity, high concentration of fast-food outlets, and the highest population density in the country. Respondents were chosen through simple random sampling to ensure broad demographic representation, with frequent follow-up procedures to enhance response rates. Out of 384 responses received, 306 complete surveys were analyzed using SPSS after excluding missing data and outliers. Significant positive relationships were identified between customer satisfaction and perceived price, food quality, service quality, and the physical environment through both correlation and regression analyses. These findings align with those of previous research, highlighting the significant impact of these factors on customer satisfaction in the fast-food sector. The findings suggest that prioritizing taste, freshness, and high food quality, along with maintaining competitive pricing and ensuring efficient and friendly services, is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction. Moreover, upholding high standards of cleanliness, choosing strategic locations with ample parking, and creating a pleasant ambiance further contribute to positive customer experiences. Offering attractive discounts and value-for-money deals can increase customer loyalty and encourage repeat visits. Thus, the findings of this study contribute to the existing literature and provide practical recommendations for fast food sellers to enhance customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, fast food, food quality, perceived price, service quality

THE IMPACT OF PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF INSTAGRAM USER-GENERATED CONTENTS TOWARDS PURCHASE INTENTION WITH THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER ATTITUDE: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COSMETIC INDUSTRY IN WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

W.D.H.N. Jayasinghe^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: mk2020448@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The cosmetic industry is a versatile and rapidly growing sector that encompasses the creation, manufacturing, advertisement, and sale of cosmetic products. Therefore, it can be concluded that the cosmetic industry is ever-evolving, both globally and in Sri Lanka. The purpose of this study is to identify the impact of perceived credibility of Instagram user-generated content on purchase intention, with customer attitude as the mediating variable. The influence of the perceived credibility of Instagram user-generated content on purchase intention, incorporating customer attitude as a mediating factor, represents an empirical gap across different market contexts. This study investigated the impact of perceived credibility on purchase intention through three dimensions: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness, each containing five indicators. This study was conducted as a quantitative method for deductive investigation. The sample was limited to 384 respondents, focusing solely on the cosmetic industry within the Western Province of Sri Lanka; therefore, the findings are unlikely to have broader implications for other regions, countries, or industries. A cross-sectional survey was conducted using a structured questionnaire administered through convenience sampling. Questionnaires were distributed to consumers of cosmetics who use Instagram in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The findings indicate that the three main dimensions of perceived credibility have a significantly positive impact on purchase intention. Furthermore, customer attitude partially mediated the relationship between perceived credibility and purchase intention. Based on these findings, it is recommended to ensure the authenticity and quality of user-generated content, actively engage with the audience, and consistently maintain a reliable brand image. Additionally, future research could expand beyond the cosmetic industry, extend the geographical scope beyond Western Province, and incorporate other social media platforms, such as Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, for comparative analysis.

Keywords: Customer attitude, instagram, perceived credibility, purchase intention, user-generated contents

THE IMPACT OF UNETHICAL ADVERTISING ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY WITH THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF CONSUMER TRUST: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SKIN CARE INDUSTRY IN CENTRAL PROVINCE, SRI LANKA.

D.M.T.S.B. Dissanayaka^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sureshdissanayaka55@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of unethical advertising on customer loyalty, with an emphasis on the mediating effect of consumer trust in the skincare industry in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Unethical advertising practices, including false claims, exaggerated benefits, and omission of potential side effects, have raised significant ethical concerns within the industry. Such practices are often employed to manipulate consumer perceptions and behaviors, potentially leading to immediate gains but at the risk of undermining long-term consumer trust and loyalty. This study seeks to understand how these unethical practices affect consumer trust and, consequently, their loyalty to brands. A quantitative research approach was adopted with data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 384 consumers in the Central Province. The sample was selected by stratified random sampling to ensure diversity and representation. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to test the hypothesized impact of unethical advertising on consumer trust and loyalty. The findings reveal that unethical advertising significantly negatively affects consumer trust. When consumers perceive advertisements as misleading or deceptive, their trust in the brand erodes, leading to a decline in loyalty. This study confirms that consumer trust acts as a crucial mediator in the relationship between unethical advertising and customer loyalty. Brands that engage in ethical advertising are more likely to cultivate and maintain consumer trust, which is essential for sustaining customer loyalty over time. The study was limited by a small, region-specific sample from Sri Lanka's Central Province, with data collected online due to logistical and health challenges. Additionally, the findings are time-bound to 2022 and focus solely on the skincare industry, limiting their generalizability to other sectors. These insights highlight the importance of ethical advertising to companies in the skincare industry. This study recommends that businesses prioritize honesty and transparency in their marketing efforts to foster consumer trust. This strategy not only promotes long-term customer loyalty, but also contributes to a more ethical and trustworthy market environment.

Keywords: Consumer trust, customer loyalty, skin care industry, unethical advertising

BUILDING BRAND TRUST AND SUSTAINABILITY OF MSMEs THROUGH STORYTELLING: STRATEGIES FOR MARKETING ECO-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

K. Jegashini^{1,*} and S. Shivany²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of
Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: Jega2709@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In a competitive market for eco-friendly products, MSMEs need effective marketing strategies to build brand trust and sustainability. Research shows that consumers increasingly prioritize sustainability in their purchasing decisions. Storytelling is a powerful tool for achieving these goals. The objective of this study is to analyze how storytelling serves as an effective marketing tool for MSMEs to enhance brand trust and promote sustainability in eco-friendly products. To develop brand trust and sustainability for MSMEs that specialize in eco-friendly products, this study examined the critical role played by storytelling. This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the impact of narrative-driven marketing on consumer perceptions and behaviors. Surveys were conducted with 65 customers using convenience sampling, and participants were selected based on their availability and willingness. Focus group discussions were held with 18 MSMEs, chosen through purposive sampling to ensure relevant insights on narrative-driven marketing. This combined approach provided a well-rounded understanding of the topic from both consumer and MSME perspectives. The findings show that a strong narrative builds a stronger emotional bond between consumers and environmentally friendly products in addition to improving brand trust. Furthermore, the research delineates the pivotal tactics that MSMEs might employ to effectively convey their endeavors toward sustainability and ethical conduct, thereby fostering enduring patronage. This study advances the knowledge of environmentally concerned consumers' perceptions of sustainable marketing strategies and emphasizes the use of storytelling to elevate brand trust. MSME owners indicated that authentic narratives about sustainability practices foster transparency and increase consumer trust. Customers felt a stronger connection with brands that shared personal stories with founders and employees. The narratives highlight sustainability journeys, such as ethical sourcing and reducing environmental impact, appealing to eco-conscious consumers. Storytelling cultivates emotional connections by illustrating real-life impacts and encouraging customer loyalty and advocacy. This research provides actionable insights for MSMEs to enhance marketing strategies through storytelling focused on sustainability and strengthening brand identity and consumer trust. Policymakers can support these efforts by offering resources and training in effective storytelling and sustainable marketing practices, highlighting the potential of storytelling to engage consumers and promote sustainable practices in eco-friendly product marketing for MSMEs in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Eco-friendly, Storytelling Marketing, Sustainability, SMEs, Strategies

IMPACT OF STEALTH MARKETING ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORD OF MOUTH: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FOOD AND BEVERAGES INDUSTRY IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA.

M.D.R. Thushan^{1,*} and J.D.T. Madhusanka²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: romeshthushan@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of Stealth Marketing (SM) on Customer Engagement (CE) in the Food and Beverage Industry in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, focusing on the mediating role of Word of Mouth (WOM). The decline in the effectiveness of traditional marketing methods has driven businesses to adopt innovative approaches such as SM, which includes Viral Marketing, Celebrity Marketing, Brand Pushers, Bait-and-Tease Marketing, and Marketing through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The primary objective was to examine how SM techniques influence CE and how WOM acts as a mediator in this relationship. A deductive research approach was adopted with a quantitative methodology based on structured questionnaires administered to a sample of 384 customers in the food and beverage sector. The data were analyzed using regression, correlation, and mediation analyses to test the hypotheses related to SM, WOM, and CE. Key findings from the regression analysis indicate that Brand Pushers had a B value of 0.22, showing a strong positive effect on CE, whereas viral marketing had a B value of 0.15, demonstrating a significant impact on CE. WOM had a mediating effect with a value of 0.099, amplifying the influence of SM on CE. These values demonstrate that Viral Marketing and Brand Pushers are particularly effective in driving CE, while WOM plays a crucial role as a mediator, enhancing the overall impact of SM strategies. The study recommends that businesses in the food and beverage industry leverage SM strategies, particularly Viral Marketing and Brand Pushers, to effectively engage customers. Furthermore, efforts to encourage positive WOM should be prioritized to maximize the benefits of SM campaigns. The findings derived from customer satisfaction and perceived value amplify the impact of stealth marketing on customer engagement. Future research should explore the applicability of these findings to other industries and regions.

Keywords: Stealth marketing, customer engagement, word of mouth, food and beverages industry, western province in Sri Lanka

IMPACT OF AGILE MARKETING ON BRAND ATTACHMENT WITH THE MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COSMETIC INDUSTRY IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

K.M.L.K. Wasana^{1,*} and J.D.T. Madhusanka²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: kalaniwasana.kml@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Agile marketing is essential for brands to navigate the rapidly changing consumer landscapes. Despite the growing recognition of agile marketing, its specific effects on brand attachment within the cosmetic sector remain underexplored in emerging markets, such as Sri Lanka. The cosmetic industry in Western Province has seen significant growth, characterized by a surge in local brands competing for consumer attention, with many brands struggling to establish strong emotional connections with consumers, which is crucial for developing brand trust. This study examines the impact of agile marketing on brand attachment, with the mediating role of brand trust, focusing on the cosmetic industry in Sri Lanka's Western Province. A quantitative survey of 384 male and female consumers across various income levels and ages was conducted using nonprobability sampling. The questionnaire used as the survey instrument showed good reliability and excellent validity, and the data were analyzed using SEM and IBM SPSS software, revealing a significant positive correlation between agile marketing and brand attachment. Brands that use agile marketing strategies can effectively build stronger emotional connections with consumers. The findings displayed high path coefficients (0.75 from agile marketing to brand trust and 0.73 from brand trust to brand attachment), emphasizing the critical role of brand trust as a partial mediator in enhancing brand attachment. This study contributes to the literature by highlighting brand trust's crucial role in mediating the impact of agile marketing on brand attachment. This suggests that future research should explore consumers' emotional experiences with brands to gain insight into the factors that drive brand loyalty and satisfaction. This study offers practical insights for marketers in the cosmetic industry, recommending that agile marketing strategies focus on trust-building to strengthen brand loyalty and attachment. This emphasizes the importance of agility in marketing, especially in industries with rapid changes and high consumer expectations.

Keywords: Agile marketing, brand attachment, brand trust, cosmetic industry, Sri Lanka

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND ENGAGEMENT ON DESTINATION
BRAND VALUE CO-CREATION AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF
DESTINATION BRAND PATRIOTISM: LOCAL RESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE IN
THE TOURISM INDUSTRY IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA**

W.M.A.M. Jayaweera^{1,*} and J.D.T. Madhusanka²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: apsara.infogate761@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the impact of social media brand engagement on destination brand value co-creation, while considering destination brand patriotism as a mediating variable from the local residents' perspective in the tourism industry of the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. The conceptual model proposed in this study is based on the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) model. A quantitative research design was used, and data were collected using closed-ended questionnaires. The population of the study consists of local residents of the Southern Province in Sri Lanka who are actively engaged with social media and are connected to the tourism industry in the region, employees of Sri Lankan tourism companies, and social media users who interact with brand content related to the positioning of the destination. The sample size of the study was 384 respondents, and convenience sampling was used for this research study. Close-ended structured questionnaires were used as the primary data collection method. The numerically measured data were coded using SPSS 26 to analyze the data and present them via charts, graphs, tables, and diagrams. The findings reveal a significant and positive impact of social media brand engagement on destination brand value co-creation, with destination brand patriotism as a mediating effect. Dimensions such as attention, absorption, interaction, and identification showed a positive influence, except for enthusiasm. Notably, this study also identified a significant positive impact of social media brand engagement on destination brand value co-creation, and destination brand value which was found to have a significant and positive impact on destination brand patriotism. Additionally, this study uncovered the partial mediating role of destination brand patriotism between social media brand engagement and destination brand value co-creation. Therefore, the findings suggest that destinations can use social media to engage local residents in destination brand value co-creation as brand value co-creators, which in turn positively impacts destination brand value co-creation for destinations in the Southern Province.

Keywords: Destination branding, destination brand patriotism, social media brand engagement, destination brand value co-creation, local residents

DETERMINANTS OF INSTAGRAM INFLUENCERS' IMPACT ON YOUTH'S BRAND ENGAGEMENT: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CLOTHING BRANDS IN WESTERN PROVINCE

W.M.R. Thathsarani^{1,*} and Y.M.W.G.P.K. Udurawana²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ravindyathathsarani99@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In the digital age, Instagram has emerged as a powerful platform for influencer marketing, particularly among young people. This study investigates the determinants of Instagram influencers' impact on brand engagement among youth, specifically focusing on clothing brands in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This study aims to identify the main determinants affecting the effectiveness of Instagram influencers and how they influence contemporary consumer trends. A quantitative research approach examines variables, such as influencer credibility, interactivity, fairness, and reputation. Data were collected from 384 respondents through online and offline surveys and analyzed using SPSS software. According to the findings, influencer reputation ($\beta = 0.301$, $p < 0.001$) is the strongest determinant of brand engagement, followed by influencer fairness ($\beta = 0.160$) and interactivity ($\beta = 0.126$), whereas credibility showed no significant effect. These results offer valuable implications for both theoretical understanding and practical application in influencer marketing. Although the findings provide valuable insights for clothing brands to enhance their Instagram engagement strategies, the scope is limited to the Western Province. Future research could explore other regions and industries to generalize the results and provide a broader understanding of influencer marketing dynamics.

Keywords: Brand engagement, instagram, instagram influencers, influencer marketing, social media

**THE IMPACT OF SPOKESMAN CREDIBILITY ON PURCHASE INTENTION:
THE MEDIATING ROLE OF HERD BEHAVIOUR IN THE BEAUTY CARE
INDUSTRY OF WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA**

S.P. Wilwaraarachchi^{1,*} and J.D.T. Madushanka²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: mk2020434@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The Western Province of Sri Lanka has a highly competitive beauty care sector, where trends and influencer-driven marketing constantly change customer preferences. Within this context, spokesperson credibility and herd behavior have become critical factors shaping purchase intentions, particularly because brands increasingly rely on credible influencers to enhance consumer trust. However, limited research has addressed how these factors interact in the beauty care sector of emerging markets, such as Sri Lanka, where consumers may exhibit a heightened susceptibility to social influence. This study examines the impact of spokesperson credibility on purchase intention, with herd behavior acting as a mediating factor. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a cross-sectional survey of 384 beauty care product users in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Convenience sampling was chosen because of accessibility constraints, although this poses a limitation for generalizability. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that measured three key variables: spokesperson credibility, herd behavior, and purchase intention. The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), applied regression, and mediation analysis to test the six primary hypotheses. The results provided strong statistical support for all hypotheses, demonstrating a significant positive relationship between spokesperson credibility and purchase intention, with herd behavior mediating this relationship. Mediation analysis confirmed that herd behavior plays a crucial role in increasing the impact of spokesperson credibility on consumer purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that consumers in the Western Province are not only influenced by the credibility of spokespersons, but also tend to align their decisions with the behaviors of others, reflecting a reliance on social validation in beauty care product choices. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by expanding the understanding of how spokesperson credibility and herd behavior interact to influence purchase intention within an emerging market context. Theoretical implications include extending consumer behavior and influencer marketing models by demonstrating how these dynamics operate in the beauty care sector. Practically, this research highlights the importance of marketers focusing on credible spokespersons and leveraging word-of-mouth and influencer-driven campaigns to build stronger brand relationships.

Keywords: Beauty care industry, herd behaviour, influencer marketing, purchase intention, spokesman credibility

SUPERMARKET SERVICE QUALITY AND ITS IMPACT ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: A STUDY IN THE BADULLA DISTRICT

S.S.N.A. Subasingha^{1,*} and W.M.P.G.R. Pushpakumara²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Department of Business Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale,

**Corresponding author (Email: nirmalaamarathunga614@gmail.com)*

ABSTRACT

In recent years, global concerns regarding the retail industry have increased, with researchers primarily focusing on supermarkets. This study seeks to determine whether service quality is the reason why many consumers choose supermarkets despite higher prices. This study investigates supermarket service quality and its impact on customer loyalty in Badulla district. Previous studies have demonstrated that service quality attracts customers and significantly influences customer loyalty, although other factors also contribute. This study examined the extent to which service quality affects customer loyalty in the supermarket industry. The independent variables included physical aspects, reliability, personal interaction, problem solving, and shopping policy, with customer loyalty as the dependent variable. The study adopts an explanatory research design, with a sample of 384 supermarket consumers used to collect data from the respondents. The respondents rated their agreement on a five-point Likert scale. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The hypotheses were tested using Pearson's correlation coefficient and regression analysis. The results of the correlation and multiple regression analyses indicate that service quality is moderately, positively, and significantly correlated with customer loyalty. This study provides theoretical and practical implications, as well as suggestions for future research in different industries.

Keywords: Customer behaviour, customer loyalty, retail industry, service quality

**THE IMPACT OF CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF SPONSORSHIP ON
SPONSORSHIP RESPONSE WITH THE MEDIATION ROLE OF BRAND
ATTITUDE: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKAN TELECOMMUNICATION
INDUSTRY FOR SPORT SPONSORSHIP**

W.P.K. Thaksala¹ and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: kavindi2thakshila@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The Sri Lankan telecommunications industry plays a significant role in sports sponsorships. With the growing competition in Sri Lanka, telecommunications companies are increasingly engaging in sponsorships to enhance brand visibility and reach a wider audience. The objective of this study is to investigate the relatively unexplored domain of customer perception of sponsorship's impact on sponsorship response within the unique context of Sri Lanka's telecommunications industry. The key dimensions considered include event status, personal liking for the event, sponsor-event fit, attitude towards the sponsor, sponsor sincerity, and sponsor ubiquity, which are critical in building sponsorship responses and preferences. While earlier studies have explored customer perceptions of sponsorship and brand attitude across various sectors, a gap remains in understanding these factors' interactions in Sri Lanka's telecommunications industry, particularly in regional contexts such as North Central Province. Prior studies on customer perceptions of sponsorship's impact on sponsorship response, mediated by brand attitude, have not comprehensively investigated this regional context. This practical gap highlights that some companies in Sri Lanka view sponsorships as expenses rather than effective long-term investments. Using a cross-sectional survey design in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, this study examined the impact of sponsorship on 384 consumers using convenience sampling. SPSS analysis revealed that factors such as event status, sponsor-event fit, attitude towards the sponsor, sponsor sincerity, and sponsor ubiquity significantly influenced sponsorship response, whereas personal liking for the event did not have a significant impact. The mediation analysis indicates that brand attitude partially mediates the connection between customer perceptions of sponsorship and sponsorship responses. Key findings emphasize the critical importance of aligning brand communication with product reality to foster customer perceptions of sponsorship and sponsorship response. The limitations of this research include the use of convenience sampling, which restricts generalizability to the entire telecommunications industry in the North Central Province. Future research in Sri Lanka should include more provinces to obtain more comprehensive results. The study concludes that non-deceptive marketing practices that reflect genuine brand values can enhance brand attitude, ultimately boosting sponsorship responses in Sri Lanka's competitive telecommunications industry.

Keywords: Brand attitude, customer perception of sponsorship, telecommunication industry, sponsorship response, sport sponsorship

**THE INFLUENCE OF B2C E-COMMERCE WEBSITE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH MEDIATING EFFECT ON PERCEIVED PLAYFULNESS
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MILLENNIALS GENERATION IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA.**

G.G.S.S. Lakmali^{1,*} and Y.A.N.K. Kularathne²

^{1,2}Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

**Corresponding author (Email: ggssandeepa@gmail.com)*

ABSTRACT

Understanding the factors driving customer satisfaction in the rapidly evolving e-commerce field is crucial for the success and competitiveness of online platforms. This study investigates the influence of key website quality elements—design, information quality, security and privacy, transaction and payment capabilities, and service quality—on customer satisfaction, focusing on the mediating role of perceived playfulness, which enhances user experience and satisfaction. It identifies the website elements that most significantly impact customer satisfaction and explores how perceived playfulness mediates this relationship. The relevance of this study lies in its potential contributions to the academic literature and practical applications in e-commerce, providing insights to help businesses optimize platforms for enhanced user engagement. Using quantitative methodology, data were collected from 100 active online shoppers via a structured survey. Measurement reliability and validity were confirmed by the high Cronbach's alpha values. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analyses were used to examine the relationships between variables; however, certain limitations exist. A sample size of 100 may affect generalizability, and self-reported data may introduce a response bias. Despite these limitations, the results indicate that all examined factors—website design, information quality, security and privacy, transaction/payment capability, and service quality—positively impact customer satisfaction, with perceived playfulness enhancing overall satisfaction, suggesting that e-commerce platforms should focus on design improvements, quality information, robust security, and optimized transaction processes. Integrating playful and interactive features can further increase satisfaction and make shopping more enjoyable. These findings can guide businesses in refining their online offerings to better meet customer expectations. Future research could explore personalized marketing, gamification in user engagement, diverse payment methods, and cultural factors in customer preference. This study contributes significantly to the e-commerce literature by providing practical recommendations for enhancing online customer satisfaction and advancing the understanding of e-commerce dynamics. The findings reveal that all the examined factors—website design, information quality, security and privacy, transaction and payment capability, and service quality—significantly and positively impact customer satisfaction. Notably, perceived playfulness was identified as a mediating variable, suggesting that engaging in and enjoyable online experiences enhance overall satisfaction. This highlights the importance of not only the functional aspects of e-commerce platforms but also experiential elements that contribute to a pleasurable shopping journey.

Keywords: B2C e-commerce, customer satisfaction, information quality, perceived playfulness, website quality

**IMPACT OF WARNING LABELS IN TOBACCO INDUSTRY ON CONSUMERS'
PURCHASE INTENTION
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GAMPAHA DISTRICT OF SRI LANKA)**

P. G. D. S. Premalal^{1,*} and D.M.D. Chathurika ²

¹ *Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale.*

² *Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa
University of Sri Lanka, Belihul Oya.*

*Corresponding author (Email: sisarapremalal@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The tobacco industry has faced increasing regulatory pressure to incorporate warning labels into cigarette packaging to reduce smoking rates and promote public health. This study examined the impact of warning labels on consumers' purchase intentions, focusing specifically on the Gampaha District of Sri Lanka. The research problem centers on understanding how various factors, such as product knowledge, brand expertise, materialism, and buying impulsiveness influence the effectiveness of warning labels in deterring cigarette purchases. The primary purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between consumers' awareness of health warnings on cigarette packages and their subsequent purchase intentions. Additionally, this study investigates how consumers' knowledge of smoking's harmful effects, expertise in cigarette brands, materialistic values, and impulsive buying tendencies affect their responsiveness to these warning labels. A quantitative research methodology was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather primary data from male cigarette consumers in the Gampaha District. Using snowball sampling, a sample of 352 respondents was collected and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SMART PLS software to test the hypothesized relationships. The major findings indicate that brand expertise, buying impulsiveness, and materialism significantly and positively impact purchase intentions, whereas product knowledge does not show a significant relationship. Specifically, consumers with higher brand expertise and impulsiveness are more likely to overlook warning labels and continue purchasing cigarettes. Conversely, materialistic values correlate with a stronger intention to purchase, suggesting that materialism may counteract the deterrent effect of warning labels, highlighting the need for targeted public health campaigns that consider these behavioral factors. Regulatory bodies should adopt comprehensive strategies that not only focus on warning labels, but also address underlying consumer behaviors that diminish label effectiveness. The limitations of this study include the use of self-reported data and limited generalizability beyond Gampaha District. Future research should explore a broader range of demographics. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, health advocates, and marketers in designing interventions to reduce smoking rates and improve public health outcomes in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Cigarette purchase, Gampaha district, partial least squares (pls), smoking behavior, snowball sampling

THE EFFECT OF NUTRITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ON CONSUMER EATING MOTIVATION AND THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF INTENTION TO DISCARD FAST FOODS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FAST FOOD CONSUMERS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

W.P.S. Kaluwila^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2} *Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale., , 0762137106*

*Corresponding authors (Email: praneethseranga7@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of nutritional knowledge on consumer eating motivation in the fast food industry, with a focus on the mediating role of the intention to discard fast foods. Despite growing awareness of the adverse health effects associated with fast-food consumption, the prevalence of unhealthy dietary habits remains high, highlighting a disconnect between nutritional awareness and actual consumer behavior. This gap underscores the need for a deeper understanding of how nutritional knowledge influences consumer motivation and decision-making, particularly within the context of fast-food consumption in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between nutritional knowledge and consumer motivation to consume fast food in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Understanding this link is crucial, as it sheds light on the extent to which informed consumers make healthier eating choices, contributing to public health initiatives. Utilizing a deductive approach grounded in positivist philosophy, this research tests specific hypotheses derived from the existing literature. Data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed to a sample of 390 respondents selected using convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to assess the hypothesized relationships and explore the effects of nutritional knowledge on consumer behavior. The findings revealed that higher levels of nutritional knowledge are significantly correlated with a reduced intention to consume fast foods and an increased motivation to pursue healthier eating options. The intention to discard fast food was found to mediate the relationship between nutritional knowledge and eating motivation, suggesting that better-informed consumers are more likely to consider healthier dietary choices. These results highlight the importance of nutritional education in shaping consumer behavior and promoting healthier eating habits. The implications of this study are far from clear. For policymakers and health educators, the findings emphasize the need for targeted public awareness campaigns and educational interventions that address the gap between knowledge and behavior. Such initiatives could help reduce fast-food consumption and encourage healthier eating patterns. Additionally, this research provides valuable insights for stakeholders in the fast-food industry, suggesting that transparent and informative food labeling can be an effective tool for guiding consumer choices.

Keywords: Eating motivation, fast food consumption, intention to discard fast foods, nutritional knowledge, structural equation modeling (SEM)

THE IMPACT OF SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON SUPPLY CHAIN PERFORMANCE IN APPAREL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WESTERN PROVINCE)

W.A.A. Welagedara^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019398@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The apparel industry in Sri Lanka is crucial for export and employment. Effective supply chain operations, particularly through Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), are crucial to competitiveness. This study examines the impact of SRM strategies on supply chain performance in Western Province, with the aim of improving efficiency and resilience in the market, focusing on the apparel sector's role in economic development. Dynamic capability and contingency theories were used to explain the theoretical aspects of this study. Based on the empirical findings, the researcher selected supplier collaboration, supplier performance, supplier risk management, and supplier communication as independent variables. Hypotheses were developed to test whether these independent variables have a significant impact on supply chain performance in the apparel sector in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This quantitative study is exploratory. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 302 management and executive-level employees to collect data. The sample was selected using the systematic sampling method. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS package, and reliability, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. According to the reliability analysis, all variables were reliable ($P > 0.7$), and the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated a positive relationship between all independent and dependent variables. The R^2 value of the model summary indicated that 67.4% of the independent variables explained the dependent variable. In the regression analysis, all the hypotheses were accepted based on the decision rule, where the significance value (P) was < 0.05 . Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends direct engagement with stakeholders involved in SRM practices as crucial. Future research could expand the scope to include additional industries or regions, and consider qualitative approaches for a deeper understanding of SRM practices.

Keywords: Supplier collaboration, supplier communication, supplier performance, supplier risk management, supply chain performance

FACTORS INFLUENCING ON SUPPLY CHAIN RESPONSIVENESS IN CLASSIFIED TOURIST HOTELS IN SRI LANKA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CENTRAL PROVINCE)

W.M.P.D. Weerasinghe^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}, *Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2019396@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry in Sri Lanka has had a significant impact on the country's economy for decades. Enhancing supply chain-related factors enables better customer service and cost efficiency and improves overall performance. Achieving high responsiveness in the supply chain can also provide organizations with a competitive edge. This study examines how key factors such as technology, decision-making, and supply chain agility impact supply chain responsiveness in Sri Lanka's classified tourist hotel industry. Organizational Information Processing Theory, Dynamic Capability Theory, and Resource-Based View were employed by the researcher to explain the theoretical aspects of this study. This quantitative study is exploratory. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, and the sample consisted of 163 management- and executive-level employees from classified tourist hotels in the Central Province, selected through systematic sampling. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Reliability, correlation, and multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the three hypotheses: that there is a positive impact of individual variables (supply chain agility, decision-making, and technology) on supply chain responsiveness in classified tourist hotels in Sri Lanka. According to the analysis, all variables showed acceptable significance ($p > 0.7$) in the reliability test. The relationships between variables were tested using Pearson's correlation coefficients, with all indicating a significant positive relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses, and all results were accepted based on the decision rule ($p < 0.05$). The R^2 value of the model summary is 0.675, indicating that the independent variables explain 67.5% of the dependent variable. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends improving knowledge of supply chain responsiveness. In addition, future research could explore a wider range of internal and external variables beyond the three factors focused on in this study.

Keywords: Decision making, technology, supply chain agility, supply chain responsiveness

DRIVERS OF REVERSE LOGISTICS AND CAPABILITIES ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

P.A.S.P. Pananwala^{1,*}, N.W. Galahitiyaw², D.D.I. Chamara³ and H.M.D.S. Abeywardhana⁴

¹SLIIT Kandy UNI, ²Heriot Watt University, Scotland, ³IFS R&D International, ⁴NIBM Kandy

*Corresponding author (Email: Shashini.p@slit.lk)

ABSTRACT

Reverse logistics has seen rapid growth owing to an increase in production and consumption activities. This practice plays a crucial role, particularly when products remain on the market beyond their expiration date, which can lead to significant issues. The pharmaceutical industry is one such industry in which it is important to properly dispose of recalled and expired drugs. Consequently, there is increasing concern regarding how pharmaceutical products are managed in the market when they are damaged or reach the end of their lives. Reverse logistics, sometimes referred to as “product-take-back,” is viewed as one of the concepts within the broader framework of green supply chain management that can address this problem. Moreover, regulatory bodies are increasingly pressurizing companies to become more environmentally responsible for producing and managing their products. Hence, businesses have begun to recognize the need to incorporate environmental responsibility into their activities. Reverse logistics is a sustainable supply chain strategy that allows firms to manage waste efficiently, while enhancing their operational performance by integrating sustainability. This study examines the influence of reverse logistics drivers on operational performance through the development of reverse logistics capabilities with a focus on pharmaceutical companies. This research was conducted among a population of 20 pharmaceutical companies approved by the National Medical Regulatory Authority in Sri Lanka, from which a sample of 254 executive-level employees was selected through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a pre-tested questionnaire, and the analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling with AMOS 20.0, and SPSS version 20.0. The findings revealed that reverse logistics drivers alone do not have a significant direct impact on operational performance according to the structural model. However, when reverse logistics capabilities serve as mediators, the relationship between drivers and performance becomes significant. This suggests that building strong reverse logistics capabilities is essential to maximize the positive impact of reverse logistics drivers on operational performance. It is recommended that top management focus on increasing awareness of the importance of these capabilities to harness reverse logistics drivers and improve organizational performance.

Keywords: Green supply chain management, operational performance, reverse logistics, reverse logistics capabilities, reverse logistics drivers

IMPACT OF E-COMMERCE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION; GENERATION Y PERSPECTIVE ON FASHION BRANDS (REFERENCE TO WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA)

D.A.A.T. Somasiri^{1,*} and S.M.B.L. Suraweera²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: amalitharangani54@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Consumer interactions and purchasing patterns have been significantly transformed by digital technology and the rise of the internet. In the competitive fashion e-commerce landscape, retaining existing customers is especially crucial for fashion brands, particularly Generation Y, which strongly prefer online shopping. E-commerce quality, which includes dimensions such as responsiveness, reliability, user-friendliness, personalization, and website design, is a multifaceted aspect with limited theoretical and empirical research on Generation Y's online shopping habits for fashion brands. In Sri Lanka, the fashion e-commerce market is projected to grow at a CAGR of 1.5% between 2024 and 2028. However, despite this expected growth, income disparities and challenges persist for local fashion brands compared with global players. Additionally, the pilot study revealed that 90% of users engaged with fashion brands online, over 50% expressed negative feedback, and 75% were concerned about platform quality. Therefore, this study aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the impact of fashion e-commerce quality on customer satisfaction among Generation Y in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. A quantitative research approach was used, targeting Generation Y consumers in Western Province, an area with the highest Internet penetration. A sample size of 384 was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's formula with simple random sampling. Data were gathered through a questionnaire based on established scales with screening questions to address non-response bias and appropriate respondents. SPSS was used for the data analysis. The findings revealed that most respondents were women aged 27-30, with a bachelor's degree. This emphasizes the need for fashion brands to focus on female customers and on age-specific designs. Furthermore, the results showed a significant positive relationship between customer satisfaction and website quality, privacy and security, and order fulfillment. Usability, while positively related to satisfaction, had no significant impact, contrary to prior research recommending user testing and feedback to identify specific usability issues that hinder satisfaction. Overall, improving order fulfillment, user-friendly interfaces, and privacy and security measures are the key recommendations for enhancing customer satisfaction. However, this study is limited in its regional applicability and recommends a broader scope for future research.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, e-commerce, e-commerce quality, fashion brands, generation Y

THE IMPACT OF GUERRILLA MARKETING ON PURCHASE INTENTION: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF BRAND IMAGE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FAST-FOOD INDUSTRY IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE SRI LANKA.

S.A.S. Lakshan^{1,*} and J.D.T. Madhusanka²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sadithalakshan310@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Guerrilla marketing is a creative and unconventional approach that aims to memorably promote products or services, often utilizing surprise and engagement to capture consumer attention. The effectiveness of guerrilla marketing in influencing purchase intention can be attributed to several key factors including novelty, relevance, clarity, humor, emotional arousal, surprise, and aesthetic appeal. The use of quantitative methods, path analysis, and SPSS software in this study serves distinct purposes aligned with the research objectives. Quantitative methods allow for statistical analysis and generalization of findings across a larger population. Path analysis is particularly useful for evaluating causal relationships and the direct and indirect effects of guerrilla marketing on purchase intentions, including the moderating effect of brand image. By using path analysis, this study can clearly identify and quantify the connections between variables, thereby enhancing the validity of the conclusions. SPSS software aids in efficiently managing data and performing complex analyses, such as multiple regression and confirmatory factor analysis, to test the hypotheses and measure data reliability. The study's sample size of 384 respondents was determined using non-probability convenience sampling, chosen due to practical accessibility to participants within the Western Province's fast-food consumer population. This study's findings show that guerrilla marketing significantly impacts purchase intention, with brand image moderating this effect. Specifically, the positive impact of guerrilla marketing on purchase intention is stronger when brand image is lower. This study enriches marketing theory by illustrating how guerrilla marketing impacts consumer purchase intention, particularly in the fast-food industry. By identifying brand image as a moderating factor, this study offers a nuanced understanding of how brand perception influences consumers' reactions to unconventional marketing strategies. This finding is valuable because it suggests that brand image can either enhance or mitigate the effectiveness of guerrilla marketing campaigns, which is essential for marketers seeking to design effective strategies.

Keywords: Brand image, clarity, guerrilla marketing, novelty, purchase intention

EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL STORYTELLING IN ADVERTISING ON BRAND LOYALTY WITH THE MEDIATION OF BRAND LOVE: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CARBONATED SOFT DRINK MARKET IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

H.G.S. Deshanjana^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: mk2020073@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of emotional storytelling in advertising on brand loyalty through the mediation of brand love. This study primarily focuses on how brands, through emotional messages, create space in the minds and lives of consumers, impacting them emotionally by crafting stories that are not only attractive but also relatable, thereby fostering long-lasting customer loyalty. In an era where consumers are increasingly driven by emotional connections, this study explores how emotional storytelling in advertisements can strengthen brand loyalty by cultivating a sense of brand love among consumers. This study adopts a quantitative research approach, collecting data from 388 individual respondents within the Western Province of Sri Lanka who regularly consume carbonated soft drinks. The collected data underwent a rigorous screening and sorting process to prepare for analysis. Several key tests were conducted using analytical tools, such as the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Andrews F-test, to derive the findings, which revealed that emotions such as love, humor, happiness, and excitement in ads significantly affect brand loyalty. This study confirms the notable impact of emotional storytelling in advertising on brand loyalty in the carbonated soft drink market. Brand love is the primary mechanism for developing customer loyalty, mediating the relationship between emotional storytelling in advertising and brand loyalty. This study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge on emotional storytelling in advertising, brand love, and brand loyalty, particularly in the carbonated soft drink market. However, this research is limited to the carbonated soft drink market in Sri Lanka, and it may be challenging to quantify consumer emotions as they are perceived individually and influenced by various factors. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the influence of emotional storytelling on brand loyalty mediated by brand love among consumers in the carbonated soft drink market. By identifying the most effective emotional storytelling tactics for building brand loyalty, this study will assist carbonated soft drink brands in developing more impactful marketing campaigns that engage consumers and create enduring emotional connections with them.

Keywords: Brand love, brand loyalty, brand resonance model, carbonated soft drink market, emotional storytelling in advertising

THE IMPACT OF THE YOUTUBE BEAUTY VLOGGERS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COSMETIC PRODUCT INDUSTRY IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

L.G.S.I. Weerasinghe^{1,*} and Y.A.N.K. Kularathna²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: mk2020408@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Technological advancements have transformed various aspects of life significantly. Today, beauty vloggers on YouTube share videos demonstrating cosmetic application techniques and providing information on beauty products through tutorials and reviews that feature engaging visuals and well-organized presentations to spark women's interest in using these products. Undoubtedly, many businesses have benefited from this trend. The goal of this study is to examine how the three factors of attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, embodied by YouTube beauty vloggers, influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Using random sampling for data collection, information from beauty enthusiasts was gathered. Questionnaires were distributed across various social media channels, resulting in 384 responses. SPSS was used for data analysis. These findings indicate that YouTube beauty vloggers significantly influence consumer purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry. This study highlights the importance of vloggers' attractiveness, perceived expertise, and trustworthiness in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions regarding cosmetic products. These insights are especially relevant for cosmetic brands that aim to refine their marketing strategies and engage more effectively with their target audience. This study has several limitations. First, its geographic scope limits the generalizability of the findings beyond this region. Reliance on YouTube also excludes insights from other platforms, such as Instagram or TikTok, which may utilize different persuasive tactics. Moreover, sample representativeness and external factors affecting purchase intentions, such as economic trends or competing brands, add complexity to the findings. Future research should expand the geographic and demographic scope, consider cross-cultural analyses, and explore qualitative methods to capture more nuanced consumer motivations and attitudes. By providing a comprehensive analysis of the impact of beauty vloggers on consumer behavior, this study contributes valuable knowledge to the fields of marketing and consumer psychology and offers practical implications for both marketers and influencers in Sri Lanka's cosmetics industry.

Keywords: Attractiveness, expertise, purchase intention, trustworthiness, youtube beauty vlogger

IMPACT OF A SUPERMARKET WEBSITE'S QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UNDERGRADUATES AT THE RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

T.G.M. Chandrasiri^{1, *} and Y.A.N.K. Kularathna²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author (Email: chandrasiritgm@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of e-commerce websites is critical for shaping consumer satisfaction and influencing purchasing behavior in an increasingly digital world. This study focuses on undergraduate students at Rajarata University in Sri Lanka to examine the impact of supermarket website quality on customer satisfaction. A quantitative research approach was adopted to gather both primary and secondary data. A pre-tested structured questionnaire was distributed among the sample respondents to collect primary data. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to meet the research objectives and test the hypotheses using the SPSS software package. The study population comprised 7,814 undergraduate students at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, who were selected for their diverse backgrounds and demographic relevance to online consumers. The Morgan table was used to determine the sample size of 367. Preliminary research findings indicate that undergraduate students' satisfaction with supermarket websites is significantly influenced by factors such as website design, information quality, transaction and payment capabilities, and service quality. This study also underscores the importance of convenient online shopping for undergraduates. This study provides insights into the preferences and expectations of undergraduates as online consumers, contributing to a better understanding of the e-commerce landscape in Sri Lanka. These findings have practical applications for supermarket store owners and e-commerce platforms seeking to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Overall, this study highlights the importance of continuous improvements to supermarket website quality to meet the evolving needs and expectations of the digitally engaged consumer base. However, convenience sampling may introduce a sample bias, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Self-reported questionnaires may introduce social desirability bias, affecting response accuracy, and the focus on Rajarata University students limits the applicability of the findings to other populations. Future research should explore additional aspects of website quality, employ a broader sample for wider generalizability, and address the social desirability bias in self-reporting to improve accuracy. Combining qualitative approaches with quantitative data can provide nuanced insights.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, e-commerce, information quality, service quality, transaction and payment capability, undergraduates, website quality, web design

THE IMPACT OF TIKTOK INFLUENCERS' ATTRIBUTES ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COSMETIC PRODUCTS IN SRI LANKA.

A.M.G.I.A. Pooliyadda^{1,*} and T.M.O.K.K. Bandara²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: ishiapsara20@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

TikTok influencers are increasingly focused on creating high-quality content to develop a significant fan base, thereby generating income. It appears that the TikTok platform is now heavily focused on marketing. Many cosmetic products are promoted by TikTok influencers. People influenced by TikTok influencers often make purchasing decisions based solely on their recommendations. The cosmetic products purchased through advertisements by TikTok influencers have mostly yielded negative or unsuccessful results for customers. That is, many users have not received the same benefits from buying those products, as TikTok influencers claim to get from cosmetic products. This was discovered through a pilot study conducted by the researchers. Thus, to address the problem of why consumers intend to purchase based solely on the influence of TikTok influencers, this investigation, titled "The Impact of TikTok Influencers' Attributes on Consumer Purchase Intention: With Special Reference to Cosmetic Products in Sri Lanka," has been conducted. Employing a quantitative approach, this study falls under fundamental research. It seeks to contribute to the knowledge on consumer behavior, social media marketing, and the influence of influencers' attributes on purchase decisions. This study explores the impact of TikTok influencers' attributes such as credibility, expertise, likability, similarity, and familiarity on consumer purchase intention. The population of this study consists of approximately 7.5 million social media users in Sri Lanka, with a sample size of 384 participants. A significant proportion of each province was included in the sample using stratified random sampling. Data were collected via online surveys using Google Forms. Subsequent data analysis utilized SPSS software, offering a comprehensive examination of the relationships between identified independent variables and purchase intention for cosmetic products in Sri Lanka. The research found that TikTok influencers' credibility, expertise, likability, similarity, and familiarity significantly impact consumer purchase intention. Notably, the researcher found that TikTok influencers' likability was the most significant variable affecting consumer purchase intention. This study offers recommendations for cosmetic brand owners, TikTok influencers, and consumers. To address the problem of unsuccessful results from cosmetic products purchased through TikTok influencers' attributes, brands should focus on improving influencer selection and training. Brands should select influencers who are credible and have a genuine understanding of cosmetic products.

Keywords: Cosmetic Products, TikTok Influencers, TikTok influences likability and Purchase Intentions.

YOUTH BUYING BEHAVIOR IN ONLINE SHOPPING: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CLOTHING CONSUMERS IN SRI LANKA

D.L.A. Wickramaarachchi^{1,*} and G.S.R. Gunathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: layanianuththara20@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Ever wonder why you click "buy" on one dress and scroll past another? This study examines the online fashion world and explores the factors that influence youth purchasing decisions. As online clothing retailers expand and competition intensifies, understanding these factors becomes essential for both businesses and consumers. This study specifically focuses on the impact of product price, online customer service, social media influence, and online clothing reviews on youth satisfaction and loyalty. Data were collected through an online structured survey of 384 consumers aged 15–29 years. The analysis, conducted using SPSS, revealed that product price plays a pivotal role in purchasing decisions, with young shoppers showing high sensitivity to cost and value for money. Online customer service, particularly in terms of prompt response and problem resolution, significantly enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, the study underscores the influence of social media and online clothing reviews, advertisements, influencer endorsements, and peer recommendations on buying intentions. The findings suggest that online clothing retailers must adopt competitive pricing strategies, ensure robust customer service, and engage in targeted social media marketing and the active management of online reviews to attract and retain young consumers. Retailers can increase customer satisfaction, foster loyalty, and improve sales by focusing on these areas. This study fills a gap in the literature on Sri Lankan youth's online shopping behavior, offering practical insights for succeeding in a competitive digital marketplace.

Keywords: Online customer service, online clothing reviews, product price, social media influence, youth buying behavior.

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RETAIL CUSTOMERS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

R.G.D. Shashikala¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the impact of social media on consumer engagement, with special reference to the retail sector in Colombo District. As social media reshapes customers' shopping behavior, retailers face challenges in adapting to new consumer expectations for real-time, customized interactions. This study aims to understand the influence of social media platforms on customer engagement among retail customers in Colombo District, Sri Lanka. This highlights the challenges retailers encounter in adapting to digital interactions and transforming customer behavior. The impacts of various factors, including customer awareness, social media usage, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, and customer experience, on overall customer engagement with retail businesses were examined. Using quantitative methodology, data were collected from 384 respondents through surveys using a cross-sectional approach, and the results were analyzed using SPSS. The findings indicate a strong positive relationship between social media use and customer engagement, providing insights into enhancing brand loyalty and customer experience. This study concludes that social media platforms have a significant impact on customer engagement in the retail sector of Colombo District, with five key factors: customer awareness, social media usage, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, and customer experience. Managers and retail outlet owners can focus on these areas to align better with customer attitudes and perceptions in decision-making. Recommended strategies include enhancing customer trust, providing memorable experiences, and utilizing multiple social media platforms with diverse content formats. Future research can expand this study to other districts in Sri Lanka and to other industries, such as banking, hospitality, and fashion. Additionally, future research could include larger and more diverse samples and consider various moderating variables. Incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods is also recommended to gain deeper insight into customer engagement dynamics.

Keywords: Customer awareness, customer satisfaction, customer feedback, customer experience, customer engagement, social media usage

ANALYZING FACTORS AFFECTING ON ONLINE PURCHASING INTENTION OF MILLENNIALS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO EXECUTIVE LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

M.S.N. Wimaladasa¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

* Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

E-commerce has been acknowledged as a major source of all business transactions performed by consumers who prefer to use the internet. There is a new trend among both the young and old generations to use e-commerce for their day-to-day purchasing activities. However, the use of the Internet for purchasing is still in its initial stages among millennials. This study addresses the issue of limited online purchasing behavior among millennials in Anuradhapura despite growing trends in e-commerce. Understanding the factors affecting online purchasing intention, particularly among executive-level employees, is essential to bridge this gap and enhance e-commerce engagement. The framework of the study includes trust, perceived usefulness, website design, perceived risk, and attitude as independent variables that influence online purchasing intention among millennials. Thus, this study is classified as a basic research with an explanatory nature. It follows a deductive approach with positivist philosophy. In addition, this is a quantitative research that uses individual units of analysis with a cross-sectional time horizon and a convenience sampling method. The respondents were executive-level employees in Anuradhapura district. The sample size was 250 executive-level employees and the population was millennials in the Anuradhapura district. The study concluded that trust, perceived usefulness, website design, and attitude have a direct influence on online purchasing intention, whereas perceived risk is identified as an insignificant factor in influencing online purchasing intention.

The findings suggest that businesses targeting millennials in Anuradhapura should focus on building trust, improving website design, and promoting positive attitudes to boost online purchasing, while addressing concerns about perceived risks. Further studies should explore other factors that influence online purchasing intention using a broader population range and a more representative sampling method.

Keywords: Executive-level employees, online purchasing intention, trust, perceived usefulness, website design

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER PERCEPTION OF DIGITAL BANKING SERVICES: A STUDY OF BANKING CUSTOMERS IN THE ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

A.M.A. Diwyanjalee¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Banking practices have changed significantly over time. Initially, customers had to visit physical bank branches, wait in long queues, and conduct transactions in person. However, with the advancement of technology, traditional banking methods have transformed into more digital and convenient approaches. Digital banking enables customers to manage accounts, conduct transactions, and access online financial services. Despite the advantages of digital banking, its adoption in some regions of Sri Lanka has remained limited. Although the banking sector in Sri Lanka was one of the first to adopt information and communication technology, the use of digital banking services remains relatively low. In Sri Lanka, particularly in the Anuradhapura District, digital banking adoption is hindered by low computer literacy rates and a lack of awareness among customers. This reluctance to embrace digital banking highlights a gap in understanding the factors that affect customer perceptions and slow adoption of digital banking services. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the factors influencing customer perceptions of digital banking services, specifically focusing on banking customers in the Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka. The study employed a quantitative research approach with a sample size of 384 banking customers from the Anuradhapura District. Primary data were gathered using a structured questionnaire distributed via convenience sampling. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, focusing on descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses to identify the factors influencing customer perceptions of digital banking. The findings indicate that security and privacy, website design, trust, transaction speed, and connectivity significantly influence customers' perceptions of digital banking. Key suggestions for this study include expanding the sample size, incorporating qualitative methods, considering regional variations, and extending the research timeframe.

Keywords: Banking sector, customer perception, digital banking

IMPACT OF SUPERMARKET SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA.

T.A.T. Deshanjalee¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of service quality on customer loyalty in Sri Lanka's supermarket industry. With intense competition among major supermarket chains, this research employed the SERVQUAL model to assess how service quality influences customer satisfaction and loyalty in this rapidly growing sector. This study specifically focuses on the dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. This research problem stems from the need to understand how service quality drives customer loyalty in this expanding sector. Following an extensive literature review, a theoretical framework is developed based on the SERVQUAL model and applied to the supermarket sector to explore these effects. This study adopts a quantitative deductive approach, employing a survey strategy with a cross-sectional time horizon. The study population consisted of all supermarket customers in Puttlam district, and a sample of 200 respondents was selected using convenience sampling. A structured questionnaire was distributed to the target population to collect the data. The findings revealed a significant impact of reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility on customer loyalty, whereas assurance had an insignificant impact. This study provides valuable insights into how service quality dimensions affect customer loyalty in Sri Lankan supermarkets and offers practical recommendations for managers seeking to enhance service quality and improve customer retention. Managers should prioritize reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibility to boost customer loyalty in the Sri Lankan supermarket sector.

Keywords: Customer loyalty, service quality, supermarket industry

FACTORS AFFECTING ADOPTION OF DIGITAL BANKING SERVICES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO YOUTH CONSUMERS IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

K.H.S.P. Dharmarathna¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The banking industry plays a pivotal role in modern economies by overseeing financial assets and by offering digital banking services to customers. Technological developments have significantly transformed banking with the advent of the Internet, leading to the emergence of online banking in the 1990s. In Sri Lanka, digital banking has become highly popular, particularly among youth, who are the key drivers of technological adoption. Despite the growing use of digital banking services by Sri Lankan youth, there is a limited understanding of the factors influencing their adoption. This study aims to address this knowledge gap by identifying the key factors affecting the adoption of digital banking services among young people in the Western Province of Sri Lanka and providing strategic insights for service providers. This is an explanatory research with a deductive approach and a quantitative nature. The study population comprised 1,244,638 youth, with a sample size of 384, determined through convenience sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS, employing both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study highlighted that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, and awareness significantly impact digital banking adoption among youth in Western Province, with trust emerging as the most influential factor. Despite the comprehensive analysis, limitations, such as sample size and data collection methods, were noted. This study recommends targeted strategies to boost digital banking adoption rates among youth in the Western Province of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Awareness, digital banking adoption, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, youth

THE IMPACT OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF FOOD MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

K.D.P. Perera^{1,*} and U.W.M.R.S. Kappagoda²

¹*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

²*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dismipabodha@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

In today's highly competitive business world, many companies have started adopting green supply chain practices and the demand for these practices is high. Among the manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka, food manufacturing companies hold a special place because of their high levels of resource consumption and waste production. These companies play a significant role in environmental impact by sourcing raw materials for production processes and distribution. The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of green supply chain management practices on the performance of food manufacturing companies in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Specifically, this study aimed to evaluate the impact of green purchasing, green manufacturing, eco-design, and reverse logistics on the performance of food manufacturing companies in this region. Four hypotheses are formulated to achieve these objectives. Data were gathered from 128 individuals across 22 food manufacturing companies in the Western Province using a structured questionnaire. This study examines green supply chain management practices as independent variables, specifically focusing on green purchasing, green manufacturing, eco-design, and reverse logistics. Organizational performance was the dependent variable, with dimensions of environmental performance, operational performance, and financial performance. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 21. The measurement scales were reliable, as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the dependent and independent variables. Pearson's correlation analysis revealed a significant and strong relationship between independent and dependent variables. According to the results of the multiple regression analysis, green purchasing, green manufacturing, and environmental planning had a significant positive effect on organizational performance, indicated by a positive coefficient value and a p-value of less than 0.05. Reverse logistics showed a negative impact, indicated by a negative coefficient value and p-value greater than 0.05. Overall, green supply chain practices significantly affect organizational performance. Future studies could extend this research by examining additional dimensions of green supply chain management, adopting qualitative or mixed methods, and incorporating comprehensive performance metrics across diverse sectors and provinces. This study is limited to food manufacturing companies in Western Province and focuses on environmental, operational, and financial performance.

Keywords: Eco-design, green manufacturing, green purchasing, organizational performance, reverse logistics

FACTORS AFFECTING YOUNG CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION OF GREEN PRODUCTS: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CENTRAL PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

B.G.I.C.D. Senevirathna¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The shift towards sustainable consumption has become increasingly important for addressing environmental challenges. Currently, there is a global increase in environmentally friendly products, with green products occupying a significant place. "By 2030, Sri Lanka aims to create a pollution-free, clean and green environment with a high quality of life and green growth for its citizens." This study contributes towards achieving this goal by examining the factors influencing young consumers' purchasing intentions for green products in Central Province, Sri Lanka. This study employs quantitative, explanatory, and deductive approaches. Young consumers' purchasing intention is analyzed through the lens of environmental attitudes, environmental knowledge, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and environmental concern. The sample size for the study was 312 young consumers in Central Province, with data collected through a structured questionnaire derived from the literature, containing previously tested questions, using the convenience sampling method. The findings indicated a significant positive impact of environmental attitudes, environmental knowledge, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and environmental concern on purchasing intention. This study provides valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, businesses, and other stakeholders to formulate effective strategies for promoting green purchase intentions among young consumers. Regional focus and restricted sample size are noted as major limitations, and future research could expand to include a broader geographic range, integrate more diverse variables, and employ longitudinal studies to capture behavioral changes over time.

Keywords: Environmental attitudes, environmental concern, environmental knowledge green purchasing intention, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF INTERNET BANKING BY WOMEN: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WESTERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

W.D.G.K.D. Karunarathna¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the gender gap in digital literacy and financial behavior in Sri Lanka. Today, women are less likely to use Internet-connected devices such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Despite the worldwide trend towards gender equality, Sri Lankan women remain largely confined to traditional roles, limiting their contribution to the economy. This gender disparity extends to financial literacy, with men scoring higher in knowledge and behavior. The lack of female participation in internet banking is a key concern, as an increase in adoption could enhance economic efficiency and simplify daily tasks. This research seeks to identify the factors influencing women in the Western Province of Sri Lanka to adopt internet banking, with the broader goal of informing policymakers and financial institutions to boost economic growth and innovation. This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional design with a deductive approach using the Onion Model as a framework. A positivist philosophy guides the research, emphasizing hypothesis testing and statistical analysis. The study population comprised women in the Western Province of Sri Lanka, with a sample size of 384, determined through convenience sampling. The data were collected using structured questionnaires. The study found that attitude ($\beta = 0.367$), perceived usefulness ($\beta = 0.356$), and perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.318$) significantly impacted customer perception of digital banking services in Anuradhapura. These factors explain 72.3% of the variation in customer perceptions, with perceived risk having a significantly negative impact on Internet banking adoption. This study recommends increasing digital literacy, enhancing user-friendly interfaces, improving security measures, and offering tailored financial solutions to encourage greater adoption.

Keywords- Attitude, Internet banking adoption, perceived ease of use, Perceived Risk, Perceived Usefulness, Subjective Norms

THE EFFECTS OF PERCEIVED LUXURY VALUE ON PURCHASE INTENTION AND THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ONLINE FASHION RETAILING INDUSTRY IN WESTERN PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA.

N. S. Sanjeeva^{1,*} and J.D.T. Madhusanka²

^{1,2}*Department of Marketing Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: Sachinthasanjeeva21@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of perceived luxury value on purchase intention, with the mediating role of customer engagement, in the online fashion retail industry in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Customers in this industry have not fully identified the perceived luxury value of products, leading to a potential gap in their purchase intentions and engagement with luxury fashion brands. Perceived luxury value, encompassing the financial, functional, individual, and social dimensions, significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions. A deductive research approach was employed, engaging in a quantitative survey of 384 respondents who frequently shop online for fashion items. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire from online fashion retail consumers, using non-probability sampling and cross-sectional data. Data were analyzed using SPSS software, employing techniques such as regression, mediation, and correlation analysis. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between perceived luxury value and purchase intention. Additionally, customer engagement played a crucial mediating role in enhancing the effect of perceived luxury value on purchase intention. The study emphasized the importance of fostering customer engagement as a strategic approach to leverage perceived luxury value to increase purchase intention. Online fashion retailers can apply these insights to strengthen their brand positioning and boost customer loyalty in highly competitive markets.

Keywords: Perceived luxury value, purchase intention, customer engagement, online fashion retailing, western province, Sri Lanka.

EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED VALUE ON PREMIUM EDUCATIONAL AI TOOL ADOPTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CONSUMER ATTITUDES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

M.H.S Silva^{1,*} and H.M.U.S. Hendeniya²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: mk2020362@mgt,rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of perceived value on premium purchase intention of educational AI tools, focusing on the mediating role of customer attitudes among university students in Sri Lanka. Despite the increasing adoption of AI technologies in academic settings, a significant gap persists between the perceived value of these tools and students' intentions to purchase premium versions. This study investigated how different dimensions of perceived value—quality, emotional response, monetary price, behavioral price, and reputation—affect students' decisions to adopt premium AI tools. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), this study explores how perceived value significantly impacts premium purchase intention, with customer attitudes partially mediating this relationship. A quantitative research design was employed, with data collected from a structured survey of 384 university students across Sri Lanka. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesized relationships and evaluate the mediating effects of customer attitudes. The results indicate that quality and reputation are the most influential factors that positively shape consumer attitudes and drive purchase intention. Monetary price plays a nuanced role, acting as both a constraint and marker of quality in decision-making processes. While higher prices may deter some students, they can also enhance perceived value by signaling the superior features and benefits associated with premium versions. It is important to acknowledge that the use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of our findings to the larger university student population in Sri Lanka. Overall, this research presents a well-structured and relevant study that offers valuable practical insights into the factors influencing the purchase intention of premium educational AI tools. These findings suggest that enhancing perceived value and fostering positive customer attitudes are key strategies for increasing premium tool adoption. By focusing on quality, emotional response, and reputation, along with customizing features based on student preferences, businesses can effectively tailor their marketing strategies to meet university students' needs, thereby enhancing the adoption of premium tools and gaining a competitive advantage in the educational technology market.

Keywords: Customer attitudes, educational AI tools, perceived value, premium purchase intention, undergraduates

REVITALIZING TRADITIONAL THEATRES IN SRI LANKA: THE ROLE OF MARKETING MIX ELEMENTS AND COMPETITIVE PRESSURES

A.H.M. De Alwis*

PABM Campus

*Corresponding author (Email: dealwisahm@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Traditional theatres in Sri Lanka have seen a decline due to competition from multiplexes and streaming services. This study examines the factors influencing audience attraction to traditional theatres, focusing on marketing mix elements (product, price, place, and promotion) and competitive pressures from alternative entertainment platforms. The goal is to identify ways traditional theatres can remain competitive in the changing entertainment landscape. A quantitative survey was conducted with 496 respondents, using a structured online questionnaire. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression to understand the influence of marketing mix on cinema attendance. The results show that product quality is the most critical factor driving audience attraction, with promotions playing a significant role, especially in reaching younger audiences. Price and place were found to be less influential but still relevant. The rise of multiplexes and streaming services has added pressure to traditional theatres by offering more convenient and affordable entertainment options. To remain competitive, traditional theatres must focus on improving film quality, adopting digital promotional strategies, and offering flexible pricing. Investments in theatre infrastructure, such as better seating and sound systems, are necessary to provide a superior viewing experience. While this study provides insights for theatre operators and marketers, its focus on Sri Lanka and the use of convenience sampling limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore long-term audience behavior and the impact of new technologies on theatre attendance.

Keywords: Audience attraction, marketing mix, multiplexes, streaming services, traditional theater.

IMPACT OF VISUAL MERCHANDISING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MEDIUM SCALE FASHION STORES IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT.

S.M.U. Dewmini^{1,*} and T.M.E.G.D Bandara²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2020076@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

In an increasingly competitive fashion retail industry, visual merchandising is critical in shaping customer behavior, yet its specific effects on medium-scale fashion retailers remain under-examined. Extensive studies have been conducted on large-scale retailers, and there is a significant gap in the understanding of how visual merchandising affects consumer purchase intention in medium-scale fashion stores. The purpose of this study is to evaluate how the four key dimensions of visual merchandising (window display, store layout, promotional signage, and color and lighting) affect consumer purchase intention. Four hypotheses were tested and a quantitative approach was adopted, with data collected from 384 customers using structured questionnaires. The sample was selected using a stratified sampling technique to ensure diversity in the customer demographics. The data were analyzed using SPSS (version 21), applying correlation and regression analyses to determine the impact of visual merchandising on consumer purchase intention. The findings indicate that all four dimensions significantly and positively influence customers' purchase intentions. Window displays attract customers and persuade them to buy them. The store layout increases ease of navigation, promotional signage triggers value-driven purchases, and color and lighting create an inviting and engaging shopping atmosphere, which increases the tendency to make more purchases. However, this study focused on the Kurunegala district, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions. The implications of these findings suggest that medium-scale fashion retailers should strategically invest in enhancing their visual merchandising practices by optimizing window displays, improving store layouts, using clear and prominent promotional signage, and making effective use of color and lighting. Collectively, this study provides a roadmap for medium-scale fashion retailers to enhance customer experience, drive sales, and remain competitive in the fast-evolving retail market.

Keywords: Medium scale fashion stores, purchase intention, visual merchandising



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SUCCESS FACTORS FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN SRI LANKA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CENTRAL PROVINCE)

H.F. Shifna^{1,*} and S.M.D.N. Jayawardane²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: shifna@shifna.com)

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, entrepreneurship is considered male-dominated, but nowadays, in Sri Lanka, women's interest in business is growing considerably, although their success remains marginal. Therefore, this study aims to provide insights into the success factors of female entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. In the present context, women are recognized as successful entrepreneurs because of their strong desires, qualities, and capabilities for economic development. Several studies have been conducted to determine the factors affecting entrepreneurial success; however, there are limited studies on the factors that specifically affect the success of women entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. This study focuses on four specific variables that contribute to the success of women entrepreneurs: behavioral factors, cultural factors, technological factors, and family background in a positivist, explanatory and quantitative approach. The Central Province of Sri Lanka was selected for the study. The Women's Development Unit of the Central Province Council engages women entrepreneurs in the province directly. A survey technique was used to collect data from female entrepreneurs engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. A total of 352 respondents out of a sample size of 384 were selected from an unknown population equation because there was no exact number of women entrepreneurs mentioned in the registered documents. According to the data analyzed using SPSS, all independent variables had a positive correlation with the dependent variable, with behavioral factors showing the highest correlation. Accordingly, this study's findings are of immense value in formulating government policies to enhance women's entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Behavioral factors, cultural factors, family background, technological factors, women's entrepreneurial success, women entrepreneurs

DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG VOCATIONAL TRAINING STUDENTS: STUDY FROM EASTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

B.A.G.P. Nisansala^{1,*} and S.M.B.L. Suraweera²

¹*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

²*Sri Lanka Institute of Technology*

*Corresponding author (Email: Pawaninisansala1126@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Fostering entrepreneurship is pivotal for economic growth and competitiveness in a globalized world. However, Sri Lanka faces challenges in cultivating successful entrepreneurs among its youth, who often demonstrate risk aversion and lack of entrepreneurial interest. This issue is particularly pronounced within the Vocational Training Authority (VTA) sector, where despite numerous study programs, nurturing entrepreneurs continues to be difficult. While there is existing research on entrepreneurial intention, studies specifically targeting vocational training students in Sri Lanka are limited. This sector is often overlooked despite its focus on practical and skill-based education, which makes these students ideal candidates for entrepreneurship. This study investigated the determinants of entrepreneurial intention among VTA students in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. Notably, the Eastern Province ranks second in the number of vocational training institutes, with 32 out of 213 institutions nationwide. A quantitative approach was utilized, employing a self-administered questionnaire derived from the literature containing previously tested questions. Simple random sampling is a statistical method in which every individual in a population has an equal probability of being chosen as a sample. The study surveyed 924 VTA students, with a sample size of 274, who were selected through simple random sampling. The questionnaire aimed to capture data on educational and family backgrounds, personal attitudes, and innovativeness. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between personal attitudes, innovativeness, and entrepreneurial intention. Although educational and family backgrounds exhibited statistically significant correlations, only personal attitudes ($0.05 > 0.021$) and innovativeness ($0.05 > 0.000$) emerged as significant predictors in the multiple regression analysis. Innovativeness has the strongest influence, followed by personal attitudes. Promoting innovativeness as a crucial component of entrepreneurial motivation can encourage VTA students to embrace creative potential and take risks. Enhancing personal attitudes may significantly improve entrepreneurial mindset, paving the way for successful future entrepreneurs. Furthermore, integrating curriculum elements that promote personal attitudes and innovativeness within VTA education can empower students to drive socioeconomic progress. Future research should expand the investigation to include both internal and external factors influencing entrepreneurial intention using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, students, vocational training, personal attitudes, innovativeness

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT SUCCESS: A STUDY OF SELECTED MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN CENTRAL PROVINCE.

A.R.M.P. Hemasiri¹ and H.I.S. De Zoysa^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Public Administration, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka,*

*Corresponding author (Email: imeshasathsara@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Innovation is the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for different businesses or services. Today's organizations operate in a rapidly changing, competitive, and quickly adapting to their environment. By observing the fact that, employees are reluctant to engage in innovation activities even if they are hard or technological. Consequently, based on the existing literature, organizational practices (fostering a culture of innovation, providing incentives for innovation, promoting continuous skill development, suggestion boxes, and benchmarking activities) positively influence employee propensity to engage in innovation activities. In addition, organizationally encouraging employees is at a low level. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the human resources sector. The target population of this research was lower-level and managerial-level employees of the selected companies. An empirical survey was conducted using a sample of 180 individuals. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach via focus group interviews. Convenience sampling was used to select the manufacturing companies. The findings indicate that the selected organizational practices, such as fostering a culture of collaboration, providing incentives for innovation, and promoting continuous skill development, had a positive impact on innovation management success. It can be concluded that neglecting these key organizational practices can improve employees' innovative mindsets. Even if the technological aspects are managed effectively, they are a significant factor in the underperformance of innovation management initiatives. This study offers valuable insights for Human Resource professionals by outlining practical guidelines for enhancing the organizational practices that drive innovation management success. As manufacturing evolves with new technologies, it can create new job opportunities, provide infrastructure, reduce costs, prototyping, and test new ideas.

Keywords: Employee performance; human resource strategies; innovation management; manufacturing industry; organizational practice.

FACTORS INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION TOWARD GIG ECONOMY EMPLOYMENT AMONG WOMEN IN SRI LANKA

P.S.M.V. Tharuka^{1,*} and H.K.G.M.N. Karunarathane²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: vishmitharuka195@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's labor force is experiencing a dramatic transformation with technological advancements and the rise of the Gig economy. The labor sector comprises people with different demographics, among which "gender" is a unique factor that shapes job opportunities. Compared to men, women encounter obstacles that impede their ability to engage in economic activities. The global emergence of the Gig economy and its recent adoption in Sri Lanka have begun to dismantle many barriers, offering new opportunities for women's participation. Despite this revolution, unresolved questions remain about how behavioral intention factors influence women's involvement in the Gig economy in Sri Lanka. In response to this problem, this study aims to investigate the factors affecting behavioral intention for Gig economy employment among women in Sri Lanka. A conceptual framework was developed based on established research to explore how attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, hedonic motivation, and trust influence women's behavioral intention to engage in employment in the Gig economy. The study collected data through an online structured questionnaire from a sample of 384 women actively engaged in the Gig platform using a snowball sampling technique in which initial participants referred to others, ensuring a focused sample of women participating in the Gig economy. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, and the researcher tested five hypotheses using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses, which showed a significant positive impact of attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, hedonic motivation, and trust on the behavioral intention toward employing the Gig economy among women in Sri Lanka. This research represents a limited but significant exploration of women's engagement in the Gig economy in Sri Lanka, underscoring the critical role of behavioral factors influencing this involvement. Addressing these factors enables policymakers and stakeholders to create a supportive environment that enhances women's economic participation, drives overall growth, and positions Sri Lanka to maximize the potential of the Gig economy. Future research could expand these findings by examining additional factors and exploring underrepresented contexts to validate and extend these results.

Keywords: Attitude, hedonic motivation, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, trust

AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC DISPARITY ON THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY OF TWO RURAL AND SUBURBAN SCHOOLS IN KANDY DISTRICT

Ven. Polonnaruwe Kashyapa¹ and A.K.M. Shivangi^{2,*}

¹*Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka.*

²*Department of Economics, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: ssh2020441@ssh.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Education is a fundamental factor in a country's development and a well-structured educational system can significantly support national progress. In Sri Lanka, economic disparities between rural and urban areas have led to unequal access to quality education and resources, posing a major challenge that requires immediate intervention. This study provides actionable recommendations for reforming Sri Lanka's education system to mitigate the effects of economic inequality. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research combines quantitative and qualitative interviews involving 20 teachers and 20 parents and interviews with school administrators and education experts. Secondary data sources included government reports, academic literature, and school performance records. Thematic and statistical analyses revealed significant gaps in educational access and quality between urban and rural schools. Schools in low-income areas often lack essential resources, qualified teachers, and adequate facilities, which leads to lower academic achievement and higher dropout rates. Additionally, dependence on private tutoring exacerbates these inequalities, as many rural families cannot afford extra instruction. Interviews with educators and policymakers further highlighted issues such as limited funding, an outdated curriculum, and a competitive educational environment that hampers collaboration. These factors perpetuate a cycle of disadvantages for students from low-income backgrounds. This study underscores the urgent need for substantial educational reform in Sri Lanka. Equitable funding, enhanced teacher training, curriculum updates aligned with job-market needs, and a more collaborative educational environment are recommended to create an inclusive system that supports all students. Addressing these disparities is not merely an educational policy matter; it is essential to foster social equity and drive economic advancement in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Economic disparity, educational access, educational reform, low-income families, quality education

eCOOPROCESSING: AN INTEGRATED SOCIAL ECOSYSTEM APPROACH FOR SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

S.R. Abeyratna*

Green Life Generation (Pvt) Ltd

*Corresponding author (Email: greenlifegene@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Inclusive and Sustainable Businesses (ISBs) are considered crucial for achieving social development and environmental sustainability in Sri Lanka's current path to economic revival. According to the recently published National Strategy, ISBs are defined as "purpose-driven enterprises that use commercially viable models to generate positive social and environmental impact." Sustainable Business Model Innovation (SBMI) is a growing area of research that informs the fundamental processes that start-ups and transitioning organizations can embed in their management systems to become ISBs. This paper presents a case study of SBMI within a start-up in the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sector using an autoethnographic action research methodology. The experiences and iterative decision-making process adopted by the author, who is the CEO of Green Life Generation (Pvt) Ltd.—a grassroots ISB and SME—are presented. Since 2017, the company has engaged in research and development activities aimed at creating sustainable solutions to support the transition to a regenerative and circular economy. This study demonstrates the development of 'eCOOProcessing,' a novel, integrated, community-based waste management model resulting from the company's SBMI process. The model is built on the premise that the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) is fundamental to addressing the root causes of the current polycrisis. This study shows that while ISBs have high impact potential, they face challenges due to the price theory of value, where price, determined by market supply and demand conditions, continues to dictate value. Thus, real value to society and the environment cannot be effectively translated into viable, competitive, and sustainable prices. This makes ISBs exclusive in terms of price and unsustainable in terms of financing. This contradiction, at a critical point in the path to resolving a planetary-level existential crisis, is problematic as it disincentivizes the business shift and weakens the business case needed to create a just and green transition. Given the lack of market-based solutions, regulatory tools such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) can provide alternative financing mechanisms for ISBs in the SME sector.

Keywords: Inclusive and sustainable business (ISB), sustainable business model innovation (SBMI), autoethnographic action research, extended producer responsibility, sustainable development goals

AN INVESTIGATION OF SRI LANKAN BUDDHIST EDUCATION FROM AN ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE AS A MEANS OF INVESTMENT

Ven. Polonnaruwe Kashyapa^{1,*} and A.K.M. Shivangi²

¹*Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Bhiksu University of Sri Lanka.*

²*Department of Economics, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: bs597@busl.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

In today's competitive global economy, knowledge has become a primary factor in national income, with many countries leveraging disciplines such as sociology and humanities as strategic investments. Theravada Buddhism, as an extensive knowledge system in Sri Lanka, holds significant potential as a resource for international investment. This study examines Sri Lankan Buddhist education from an economic perspective and assesses its viability as an investment. The core issue is whether Buddhist higher education institutions in Sri Lanka are sufficiently developed to attract an international audience. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study combined qualitative and quantitative data collected from semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with 10 international Buddhist scholars. The collected information was analyzed using thematic and statistical methods. This study evaluates dimensions such as Buddhist education, foreign exchange, income generation, and international collaborations. The findings reveal a decline in enrolment from both local and international students in Sri Lankan Buddhist graduate programs, primarily due to inadequate English-language resources, limited practical application, and insufficient instructional quality. Addressing these challenges requires scholarships and income opportunities for students, strategic international collaboration, and effective marketing strategies. These reforms could position Buddhist education as a substantial contributor to Sri Lanka's economy while enhancing the nation's cultural and intellectual standing globally. In conclusion, with targeted improvements in academic rigor, interdisciplinary studies, and infrastructure, Sri Lankan Buddhist institutions can meet the rising global demand for knowledge systems that address ethical, psychological, and environmental challenges, establishing themselves as premier centers of learning worldwide.

Keywords: Buddhist education, foreign exchange, income, international collaborations, market economy

POLICE MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY POLICING: A CASE STUDY FROM SCOTLAND

J Moir*

Abertay University, Scotland, UK

*Corresponding author (Email: j.moir@abertay.ac.uk)

ABSTRACT

The present case study is based on police management in Scotland and focuses on orienting the service toward community policing and away from a target-driven approach. Contemporary police report and planning documents are analyzed to chart this shift in orientation towards what is referred to as New Public Governance (NPG). This involves a focus on the public good and represents moving beyond the previous target-driven approach to New Public Management (NPM). New Public Governance emphasizes community involvement and the co-creation of objectives between professionals and the public that they serve. Therefore, an NPG approach to policing is premised on seeking legitimacy for police action through community involvement. This study aimed to identify the presence of NPG and NPM in Scottish police management practices, as outlined through formal reporting structures. A discourse analytic methodology was adopted due to its applicability in examining the rhetorical nature of the documents. The analysis indicates that the Police Scotland documents examined indeed conform to the NPG model, at least on the surface. However, while there is a greater emphasis on public values that align with policing for the good of the communities served, there are still vestiges of the NPM approach in terms of measurable outcomes. While the documents point to a service orientation and a move towards an NPG approach, an alternative interpretation is that the rhetorical style adopted may suggest an exercise in corporate self-presentation given the desire for police legitimacy.

Keywords: New public governance, new public management, police management, discourse analysis, community policing

ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS AMONG MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES: THE MODERATING ROLE OF UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

R. A. Hameed^{1,*} and P.M.B. Jayathilaka²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: rishadhameed6@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurial intentions among university students are becoming increasingly significant for educational institutions and governments, especially in developing countries such as Sri Lanka, where entrepreneurship drives economic growth, innovation, and job creation. Despite the many benefits of entrepreneurship, the majority of graduates still favor traditional employment. While studies of undergraduates' entrepreneurial intentions have identified various push and pull factors, our understanding of these factors and the role of university support remains unclear. Gaining insight into the elements that shape students' entrepreneurial intent can help foster an entrepreneurial mindset among graduates, increasing their likelihood of launching new businesses. This study investigated the moderating role of university support in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among management undergraduates at state universities in Sri Lanka using Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework. The independent variables were attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, while entrepreneurial intention was the dependent variable. A quantitative survey-based approach was used to collect data from 379 management undergraduates across 13 state universities through quota sampling. The main variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). This was followed by descriptive and multiple regression analyses using the SPSS 26. The results revealed that attitudes towards behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly affected Entrepreneurial Intention, with university support moderating these relationships. This finding underscores the influential role of university support in fostering entrepreneurial intention. However, this study's focus on state university management undergraduates excludes respondents from private institutions and other disciplines. Furthermore, only components from the Theory of Planned Behavior were studied, eliminating other potential implications on entrepreneurial determination. This study, which emphasizes the relevance of university-level support, provides insights for educational institutions seeking to build programs to better stimulate entrepreneurship, addressing an essential requirement for economic growth in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial intention, theory of planned behavior, moderating role of university support.

INTENTION TO BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR OF A/L STUDENTS STUDYING COMMERCE STREAM IN PUTTALAM DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

A.M.S Heshani*

Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale

*Corresponding author (Email: sonuadhikari139@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is the backbone of the economy. Entrepreneurial Intention is the intent of an individual to engage in entrepreneurial activity as a future career or to start an entrepreneurial venture. The objective of this study is to identify the factors affecting the Entrepreneurial Intention of A/L students in the commerce stream in Puttalam district and to investigate the effect of these factors on Entrepreneurial Intention. Entrepreneurship Education, Self-Efficacy, Family Background, and Opportunity Recognition were considered as independent variables. The dependent variable in this research was Entrepreneurial Intention. This research is quantitative, explanatory, deductive, and tests four hypotheses. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data were collected from 225 A/L students in the commerce stream in the Puttalam district through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from research papers and articles on Entrepreneurial Intention. The study population was 541, and the sample size according to the Morgan table was 225. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses. According to the results, there was a moderate, significant, and positive impact of Entrepreneurship Education, Family Background, and Opportunity Recognition on the Entrepreneurial Intention of A/L students, while there was a moderate and positive but not significant impact of Self-Efficacy on Entrepreneurial Intention among A/L students in the Puttalam district. This study recommends that more attention be paid to entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, family background, and recognizing opportunities to improve the entrepreneurial intention of A/L students.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, self-efficacy, family background, opportunity recognition, entrepreneurial intention.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA.

A.G.P.U. Wijesinghe^{1,*}, W.P. Wijewardena² and P.R. Weerathunga³

^{1,2,3} *Department of Accountancy and Finance, Faculty of Management of Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: poornimaudyani@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and innovation, particularly in developing nations, such as Sri Lanka. This study investigates the differences in entrepreneurial intentions among undergraduates from government and private universities in Sri Lanka, addressing a critical gap in the literature that often overlooks the influence of different educational environments on entrepreneurial intentions. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the variations in entrepreneurial intentions across different educational settings. This study employed a quantitative methodology utilizing a stratified sampling technique to ensure the representation of both government and private university undergraduates. A structured questionnaire was administered to 150 management undergraduates from both types of universities, and four hypotheses were formulated to conduct the research. According to the descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, independent sample test, regression analysis, and ANOVA analysis, the findings reveal that while social support and exposure to entrepreneurial education significantly affect entrepreneurial intentions and contribute to differences between private and government universities, academic achievement and personality traits do not have a notable impact on these differences. This can be attributed to factors such as enhanced social support networks, greater exposure to entrepreneurial education, and a more supportive entrepreneurial environment at private universities. The study concludes with recommendations for policymakers and educational institutions to develop strategies to enhance entrepreneurial education and support systems. Such efforts are essential for fostering a stronger entrepreneurial culture among Sri Lankan undergraduates, which in turn can help reduce graduate unemployment and drive economic growth in the country.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, government universities, private universities, entrepreneurial intention, academic achievement, social support, personality traits, exposure to entrepreneurial education

**IMPACT OF ECONOMIC CRISIS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
MICROENTERPRISES IN SRI LANKA.
(WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUTTALAM DISTRICT)**

P.F.S.M. Fernando¹ and J.K. Mallika^{2,*}

*^{1,2}Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: krishanthimallika@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka is currently experiencing an economic crisis that began in 2019, marking the nation's largest economic crisis since gaining independence in 1948. The relationship between an economic crisis and microenterprises' performance is typically complex and multifaceted. The micro-enterprise sector, which is crucial for economic growth, has experienced high failure rates, low growth rates, and low survival rates compared to other countries. The ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka created additional risks for the sector, significantly affecting the growth and performance of many microenterprises. This effect can persist over time, significantly hampering a country's economic growth, with the crisis expected to last for an extended period. This study examines the impact of the economic crisis on the performance of microenterprises in Sri Lanka, focusing on the Puttalam district. This study investigated the effects of the inflation rate, financial difficulty, exchange rate, and employee turnover on the performance of microenterprises, supported by a comprehensive literature review. The study population was 5,238, with a sample size of 358. Quantitative methodological approaches were used to achieve the objectives. Primary data were gathered through a questionnaire distributed among 358 respondents in the Puttalam district, using a simple random sampling method, where descriptive and inferential statistics were used to draw the findings. The study finds that inflation has a significant negative effect on SME performance in Sri Lanka. Financial difficulty also has a significantly negative effect on SME performance in Sri Lanka. Additionally, the study discovered that the exchange rate significantly negatively affects the performance of microenterprises in Sri Lanka, while employee turnover has a significantly negative impact as well. This study recommends a crucial role for the government in supporting microenterprises during economic crises, suggesting financial assistance programs and training to promote financial inclusion and credit availability. It also emphasizes the importance of flexibility and diversification in reducing reliance on specific products or markets. Collaboration and networking among micro-enterprises are also essential. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of dynamic capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation, such as environmental awareness, innovative skills, and learning, for the survival of microenterprises during economic crises.

Keywords: Economic crisis, performance of micro enterprises, inflation rate, financial difficulty, exchange rate, and change in employees

AN INVESTIGATION OF OBSTACLES TO THE INTENTION OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SRI LANKA (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COLOMBO DISTRICT)

G.H. Madhuranga¹ and J.K. Mallika^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: krishanthimallika@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Entrepreneurship is crucial for economic development, especially in developing countries such as Sri Lanka, which face high youth unemployment. This study explores the obstacles hindering youth entrepreneurship intention in Sri Lanka, specifically within Colombo District. This study examined how factors such as limited capital, inadequate skills, lack of support, restricted market opportunities, and risk aversion influence youth entrepreneurial intentions. A quantitative research design was adopted, with primary data collected through structured questionnaires from a sample of 384 youth in Colombo District. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, employing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to assess the relationship between these challenges and youth entrepreneurship intention. The study hypothesized significant relationships between each identified obstacle and entrepreneurial intention among the youth. The findings revealed that all five independent variables significantly affected Colombo's youth entrepreneurial intention. To overcome these barriers, the study suggests targeted interventions, such as improving access to capital, enhancing entrepreneurship education, and fostering a supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Policy recommendations include financial incentives, specialized business training, and market access programs tailored to youth entrepreneurs. Future research should examine the effects of these interventions across different regions of Sri Lanka in order to promote comprehensive national development.

Keywords: Youth entrepreneurship, obstacles, capital, skills, support, market opportunities, risk aversion, Colombo district, Sri Lanka

OBSTACLES TO SME PERFORMANCE IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ANURADHAPURA)

T.A.C.C. Gunarathna¹ and J.K. Mallika^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: krishanthimallika@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the obstacles affecting the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Sri Lanka's tourism industry, focusing specifically on Anuradhapura District. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka experienced a significant rise in international tourism, reaching a peak in 2018 with approximately 2.3 million tourists, benefiting areas like Anuradhapura. SMEs are vital to the local economy and contribute to tourism growth, cultural preservation, and job creation. However, they also face various challenges that impede their performance. This study identifies four key obstacles: limited financial resources, human resource constraints, government policies and regulations, and technological infrastructure deficiencies. The study employed a quantitative research methodology, collecting primary data through structured questionnaires from 297 respondents, including SME owners, managers, and employees in Anuradhapura's tourism sector. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, incorporating descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis, to explore the relationships between these obstacles and SME performance. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between each obstacle and SME performance, with financial and human resource constraints emerging as the most critical factors. Regression analysis further confirms that financial and human capital are the primary determinants of SME success or failure in Anuradhapura's tourism industry. To address these challenges, this study advocates a comprehensive approach that includes improved access to financial resources, workforce development programs, and supportive government policies. Investment in technological infrastructure is essential for SMEs to modernize and remain competitive in the evolving tourism market. The research recommends policy reforms, capacity-building initiatives, and strengthened public-private partnerships to foster SME growth in Anuradhapura's tourism sector.

Keywords: SME performance, tourism industry, financial resources, human resources, government policies, technological infrastructure.

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG CSR, CORPORATE TAX, AND FIRM PERFORMANCE

A.T.N Arampaththa*

Associate Financial Analyst, Acuity Knowledge Partners, Sri Lanka

*Corresponding author (Email: nayanatharu@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a business model that encourages organizations to consider the societal impacts of their operations across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Recognized increasingly as a strategic asset, CSR can enhance competitive advantages and foster sustainable growth. Corporate Tax Expense (CTE) reflects a corporation's tax obligations, while Corporate Financial Performance (CFP) measures asset-to-revenue efficiency. Prior research generally suggests a positive relationship between CSR and CFP, whereas CSR and CTE often show a negative association. However, empirical findings on the relationship between CTE and CFP are mixed, with studies typically indicating a positive, long-term connection. This study investigates short- and long-term relationships as well as the causality between CSR, CFP, and CTE. Following a positivist approach, it uses a quantitative analysis of voluntary disclosures from a sample of five firms listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange, covering quarterly data from 2010 to 2023. CSR expenses, CFP (measured by return on assets), and CTE are derived from financial reports. Descriptive analyses showed negative correlations between CSR and CFP (0.5 to 0.7) and CSR and CTE (0.4 to 0.6), while a positive correlation was observed between CTE and CFP (0.6 to 0.8) across all firms. The Augmented Dickey-Fuller test confirmed that all the variables were stationary at the first difference. The Johansen cointegration test revealed long-run relationships between CSR-CFP and CFP-CTE, although the CSR-CTE relationship remains inconclusive. Granger causality testing indicated bidirectional causality between CSR and CFP as well as between CFP and CTE. This study recommends policies that promote CSR as a long-term investment and advocate for improved tax efficiency through incentives and streamlined compliance for socially responsible firms. Further industry-specific research and promoting CSR as part of regulatory compliance could enhance transparency and align corporate practices with broader economic and social objectives.

Keywords: CSR; corporate financial performance, corporate tax expense, time series, granger causality

IMPACT OF SOCIAL NORMS ON TAX COMPLIANCE INTENTION: EVIDENCE FROM SRI LANKA

N. Dissanayake^{1,*} and B.W.R. Damayanthi²

¹*Inland Revenue Department*, ²*University of Sri Jayewardenepura*

*Corresponding author (Email: dissanayake.nta@ird.gov.lk)

ABSTRACT

Social norms, which serve as personal benchmarks, help individuals identify behaviors accepted or rejected by their society and play a critical role in shaping tax compliance by influencing individuals' perceptions of their duties. When tax compliance is viewed as a societal expectation, individuals are more likely to comply due to peer pressure. In developing countries such as Sri Lanka, limited knowledge of tax laws, widespread malpractices, distrust in authorities, and dissatisfaction with tax revenue utilization have made tax compliance increasingly reliant on informal networks, that is, prevailing social norms. The main objective of this study is to explore how social norms affect tax compliance intentions, which has not yet been considered in the country. This study adopts a positivist research philosophy, emphasizing a quantitative approach to investigate the influence of social norms on tax compliance intention. To meet the sample size sufficiency for statistical analysis, data were collected from a random sample of 246 sole proprietors in the Western province using an online structured questionnaire. The dependent variable, tax compliance intention, was measured using a five-item scale ranging from one (completely disagree) to five (completely agree). The latent constructs for independent variables representing the four dimensions of social norms (injunctive, descriptive, subjective, and personal) and tax compliance intention were derived using the Principal Component Method and were utilized for the measurement and subsequent structural equation models. The path coefficients of the estimated models showed that personal norms significantly influence tax compliance intentions, with subjective and descriptive norms having a stronger impact than injunctive norms. These results highlight the critical role of social norms in determining an individual's tax compliance behavior. Policymakers should integrate social norms into tax compliance strategies by using public campaigns, transparency, and community-driven initiatives to foster trust and collective responsibility. Furthermore, the strengthening and expansion of tax education are widely recommended to produce responsible taxpayers. While contributing to the growing body of literature on the impact of societal norms on shaping tax compliance intentions, this study critically comments that traditional models of tax compliance that focus solely on legal and economic factors are insufficient without considering the influence of social norms.

Keywords: Social norms, compliance intention, tax compliance, voluntary compliance

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Tourism, Events & Hospitality

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YOUTUBE TRAVEL VLOGS AS A TOURISM MARKETING INSTRUMENT: A FOCUSED ANALYSIS ON HOMESTAYS IN SRI LANKA

L.V.M.G. Vithana*

Department of Management Sciences, Faculty of Management, Uva Wellassa University.

*Corresponding author (Email: minoligeethma55@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Tourism is a rapidly expanding industry that serves as a primary source of income for many countries. This growth has catalyzed the proliferation of small enterprises, particularly those linked to tourism. Among them, homestays have become increasingly popular. The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority defines homestays as community-based tourism programs initiated to distribute tourism benefits to a fair cross-section of society by preparing houses/accommodation units with various themes that highlight Sri Lankan authenticity. These units, located across various destinations within Sri Lanka, meet quality standards suitable for accommodating tourists and facilitate interactions between the local community and tourists, offering them the opportunity to experience the Sri Lankan way of life.” The advent of YouTube, one of the most widely used platforms globally, presents a unique opportunity for homestay owners to extensively promote their businesses. This study explored the potential of using YouTube travel vlogs as a tourism marketing tool for homestays in Sri Lanka, focusing on the challenges and opportunities involved. Employing a qualitative research methodology grounded in a phenomenological research approach, this study targeted homestay operators in Ella and Mirissa. A sample size of 15 interviews with homestay operators from these regions was conducted to gather in-depth insights. This research aims to understand how YouTube travel vlogs can effectively popularize small business schemes, such as homestays, among travelers. By analyzing the experiences of homestay operators and their interactions with vloggers, this study identified the best practices and strategies for leveraging YouTube as a marketing platform. In addition, it addresses the challenges faced by homestay operators, such as content control, digital literacy, and competition, and proposes solutions to overcome these obstacles. These findings offer valuable insights for homestay owners, marketers, and policymakers to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of homestays, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of Sri Lanka's tourism industry.

Keywords: Homestays in Sri Lanka, homestay promotions, social media for tourism, Sri Lanka tourism, travel vlogs as a marketing tool

ROLE OF LEGAL FRAMEWORKS IN THE ADOPTION OF SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THE EVENT INDUSTRY: THE CASE OF SRI LANKA

D.B.S.M. Senanayake^{1,*} and P.K.U. Perera²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Management, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hte21016@std.uwu.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The entertainment event industry in Sri Lanka plays a pivotal role in the nation's cultural and economic landscape; however, it faces significant challenges related to legal compliance and the adoption of sustainable practices. This study explores how legal frameworks impact the integration of sustainable practices within the event industry by focusing on the specific barriers and opportunities present in Sri Lanka. The research problem centers on the complex and often burdensome legal requirements that event managers must navigate, which can hinder or facilitate the adoption of sustainable practices. The primary objectives of this study were to identify the key legal requirements for event management in Sri Lanka, assess the current adoption of sustainable practices, examine the barriers to implementing these practices, and propose strategies for better integrating legal compliance with sustainability. A qualitative research methodology was employed, involving in-depth interviews with event managers, legal experts, and government officials supplemented by observations during large-scale events. The thematic analysis revealed several key themes, including regulatory complexity, cost of compliance, environmental impact, and adoption barriers. For instance, event managers have highlighted the significant challenges posed by intricate permit processes and the high costs associated with legal compliance, which often deter the adoption of sustainable practices. Additionally, the study found that while there is growing awareness of sustainability, its implementation is impeded by inadequate infrastructure and insufficient government support. The findings suggest that simplifying regulatory processes and establishing transparent fee structures could reduce the burden on event managers and encourage greater adoption of sustainable practices. Furthermore, government incentives, such as tax breaks and grants, coupled with the development of the necessary infrastructure, are crucial for promoting sustainability. This study recommends aligning legal frameworks with sustainability goals and fostering collaboration between stakeholders to achieve integrated development. In conclusion, valuable insights are provided into the interplay between legal frameworks and sustainable practices in the Sri Lankan entertainment event industry. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the opportunities, the industry can progress towards a more sustainable future, contributing positively to the socioeconomic and environmental landscapes of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Barriers in events industry, legal frameworks, mice tourism, Sri Lankan events industry, sustainable practices

PREFERENCES AND PRACTICES OF ECO-FRIENDLY LEISURE TRAVELERS

H.A.M. Peiris¹ and K.A.J.S. Jayasuriya^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Environmental Management, Faculty of social sciences and humanities,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: jayasankajs11@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Currently, tourism is a hub for people of all ages, with a special focus on accommodation choices. People spend their leisure time as tourists based on their thoughts and needs. Accordingly, the research problem here is “what is the potential of an eco-friendly tourist in choosing his tourist preferences and practices?” The purpose of this study is to explore the preferences, behaviors, and attitudes of leisure tourists, with a focus on eco-friendly hotel choices. This study aims to explore the preferences, behaviors, and attitudes of leisure travelers, emphasizing eco-friendly hotel selection. The primary data obtained from a survey of 50 students aged 18-35, used thematic data analysis in this qualitative analysis methodology. Accordingly, the analysis was based on several themes. Themes such as "eco-consciousness," "sustainable practices," and "nature-oriented leisure" were identified from survey responses. Findings revealed that 74% of respondents were between the ages of 18-24, with 42% traveling frequently and 34% occasionally. Preferred accommodations include eco-friendly hotels, resorts, and budget hotels, where location, sustainable practices, and prices are critical decision factors. Notably, 56% of participants considered eco-friendliness to be very important when choosing a hotel, favoring practices such as the use of sustainable materials and energy-efficient appliances. Furthermore, 80% of the respondents strongly preferred to spend their free time in nature. This study underscores a significant trend toward sustainable tourism among young travelers, suggesting that hotels prioritizing environmentally friendly practices can attract this demographic. The findings highlight the importance of sustainable tourism in young leisure travelers' accommodation choices. At present, it is clear from this study that tourists who are more inclined towards environmental conservation and environmental management methods have developed. These findings suggest that hotels and tourism destinations that prioritize sustainability and environmental responsibility are likely to attract a greater proportion of eco-conscious tourists.

Keywords: Accommodation preferences, eco-friendly travel, environmental management, leisure travel, sustainable tourism

EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR FOR VEGETARIAN MENU OPTIONS IN HIGH-END HOTELS IN SRI LANKA

P.W.B.N. Umay^{1,*} and D.D.P. Sanjeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: nethmiumaya126@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The demand for vegetarian foods has proliferated in recent decades, driven by an increased consumer interest in health, environmental sustainability, and ethical considerations. However, research on consumer behavior regarding vegetarian food options in the hospitality industry is limited, particularly in high-end hotels in Sri Lanka. This study aims to identify the factors influencing consumer buying behavior concerning vegetarian menu options in 5-star hotels and examine their impact on purchase intentions. This study utilizes the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explore how consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, motives, and past behavior influence buying behavior. The ultimate dependent variable of the study is consumer buying behavior, while purchase intention, a central factor in TPB, is considered a mediating variable. The study investigates how purchase intention mediates the relationship between these factors and buying behavior. Adopting a post-positivist philosophy, this study employed a quantitative research design following a deductive approach. Primary data were collected through an online survey of 150 consumers dining in 5-star hotels in the Western Province of Sri Lanka using the convenience sampling technique. Data were analyzed using SPSS 27, employing correlation analysis and stepwise regression tests. The Sobel test was conducted to examine the mediating effect of purchase intention. This study reveals that consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, consumer motives, and past behavior significantly influence consumer buying behavior, with purchase intention substantially mediating the relationship between TPB elements and buying behavior. Additionally, it was found that consumer attitudes, subjective norms, and past behavior had the strongest impact on buying behavior, with purchase intention effectively mediating these relationships. This study recommends that hoteliers analyze past purchasing trends, incorporate cultural influences, and offer a variety of vegetarian options that cater to dietary and cultural requirements. Furthermore, leveraging social media to highlight positive consumer experiences with vegetarian options; launching targeted promotional campaigns; and promoting the use of organic, local, and fresh ingredients can help hotels achieve a competitive advantage and attract a diverse customer base, including both vegetarian and non-vegetarian guests.

Keywords: Consumer buying behavior, consumer demand, purchase intentions, theory of planned behavior, vegetarian menu options

IDENTIFYING THE POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF PROMOTING ATANWALA VILLAGE IN MATALE DISTRICT AS A RURAL TOURISM DESTINATION

H.M.L.K.K. Jayasekara^{1,*} and J.A.P.M. Jayasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: jayasekara1127@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the potential challenges of promoting Atanwala Village in the Matala District of Sri Lanka as a rural tourism destination. This research aims to explore the village's unique attributes and identify both opportunities and obstacles in establishing it as a notable tourist spot. The research centers on the underutilized potential of Atanwala, despite its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty, and the need for strategic planning to develop it sustainably. The purpose of this study was to assess the feasibility of promoting Atanwala Village by evaluating its natural attractions, infrastructure, economic impacts, and socio-cultural dimensions. The study employed a qualitative approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including local residents, tourism organizers, and business owners. Data were collected through purposive sampling and analyzed using content analysis techniques with NVivo to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the village's tourism potential. Major findings revealed that Atanwala Village boasts significant natural attractions, such as scenic mountain views, waterfalls, and rich biodiversity, presenting strong potential for eco-tourism and cultural tourism activities. However, the study also highlights challenges including inadequate infrastructure, limited accommodation facilities, and the need for effective marketing strategies to enhance visibility. The economic prospects of rural tourism in Atanwala include job creation and increased income for local residents, while sociocultural benefits encompass the preservation and promotion of traditional customs and heritage. This study's implications suggest that targeted efforts to improve infrastructure, community engagement, and sustainable tourism practices are essential for the successful promotion of the village. Recommendations include developing eco-friendly accommodations, enhancing road connectivity, and implementing community-based tourism initiatives to ensure inclusive growth and the equitable distribution of benefits.

Keywords: Atanwala village, rural tourism, stakeholder perceptions, tourism challengers, tourism potentials

UNVEILING THE CONTRIBUTION OF WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHY IN ELEPHANT CONSERVATION INITIATIVES IN SRI LANKA

R.K.K. Shanika¹, J.A.P.M. Jayasinghe², D.M.C. Dassanayake³ and W.H.M.S. Samarathunga⁴

^{1,2,3,4}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: kasu14shani@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The rising number of wild elephant deaths in Sri Lanka owing to human interactions underscores the urgency of their conservation. Wildlife photography, with its compelling imagery, has become a potent tool for shifting public perception and influencing conservation efforts. This study examines the role and impact of wildlife photography on elephant conservation in Sri Lanka from the perspective of wildlife photographers, and addresses a gap in understanding the relationship between these fields. It aims to identify emotionally resonant elephant photographs, the role of photography in raising awareness of elephant behavior, and its contribution to conservation. Seven professional wildlife photographers in Sri Lanka who shared their work on social media were interviewed via semi-structured phone interviews. Data were analyzed using NVivo software to identify themes and relationships, providing insights into photographers' experiences and perspectives on conservation. The study found that photographs of elephant families, baby elephants, and tuskiers evoke empathy, enhanced by narrative captions that convey conservation messages in an empathetic approach. Wildlife photography significantly raises awareness of elephant behaviors, improving public understanding and making "Wild Elephants" a popular and positively viewed topic. It also contributes to conservation efforts by raising awareness, changing perceptions, and promoting proactive involvement, as seen in the "Agbo Wild Elephant" social media campaign. This research highlights the role of wildlife photography in addressing issues like injured elephants and promoting human-elephant coexistence. The study's credibility is bolstered by data triangulation, gathering diverse opinions from photographers. Findings emphasize wildlife photography's potential in conservation, with theoretical implications for visual storytelling in shaping public perception and behaviors, and practical implications for the Department of Wildlife Conservation, practitioners, educational institutions, and policymakers, encouraging cross-disciplinary collaborations and integration of emerging technologies for positive conservation outcomes.

Keywords: Elephant behaviours, emotional attachment, ethical photography, visual storytelling, wildlife conservation

ADAPTATION STRATEGIES, TOURISTS REVISIT INTENTION AND CUSTOMER ATTRACTIVENESS OF HOTEL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

M.T.U. Chandrasiri^{1,*}, J.P.R.C. Ranasinghe² and M.M.P.K. Munasinghe³

^{1,2,3}*Uva Wellassa University*

*Corresponding author (Email: ttarindu307@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The tourism industry is among the top income-generating industries in the world. With the growth of this industry, numerous job opportunities have opened up in the market, contributing to the improvement of living standards not only globally but also in Sri Lanka. As an emerging tourism destination, Sri Lanka has seen significant growth in investments by international hotel chains in city hotels and resorts. However, researchers have identified several issues regarding how adaptation strategies of international hotel chains affect customer attraction and lead to revisits. This study reveals several gaps, including a lack of literature on the topic, and theoretical and methodological shortcomings. Limited and contradictory findings have been reported in this area of research. This study has two main objectives: (1) to identify the impact of international hotel chain adaptation strategies on tourists' revisit intention and (2) to examine the mediating role of customer attractiveness in the relationship between international hotel chain adaptation strategies and tourists' revisit intention. A quantitative method was employed, using a self-administered questionnaire and convenience sampling method, with a sample size of 384 respondents and a response rate of 78.12%. Data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) using the Smart PLS software. The study population consisted of local and foreign tourists visiting international hotel chains. The results indicated a positive impact of adaptation strategies on tourists' revisit intentions. Additionally, customer attractiveness was found to mediate the relationship between adaptation strategies and tourists' revisit intentions, demonstrating a positive effect on both independent and dependent variables. These findings are beneficial for organizational management and stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism industry to enhance revisit rates for international hotel chains and to increase profitability. This study contributes to the theoretical background of this field. It can be recommended that hotel chains collaborate and form partnerships with different stakeholders. The study offers vital implications for both researchers and practitioners.

Keywords: Adaptation strategies, customer attractiveness, international hotel chains, organizational management, tourist revisit intention.

STREET FOOD VENDORS' EXPERIENCES, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA: A STUDY OF TOURIST ENGAGEMENT

H.A.I.S. Perera^{1,*} and K.T.N.P. Abeywickrama²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: hm2019025@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Street food is an integral part of Colombo's tourism landscape, reflecting Sri Lanka's rich culinary heritage. Despite its importance, there is limited research on street food vendors' perspectives on tourist engagement. This qualitative study explores street food vendors' experiences, challenges, opportunities, and tourist engagement in Colombo and Sri Lanka. Theoretical frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory and Service-Dominant Logic analyze vendors' interactions with tourists. Institutional Theory addresses the regulatory and infrastructural challenges faced by vendors, while Innovation Diffusion Theory explores how vendors can innovate their offerings to meet tourists' demands for creativity, quality, and technology. Employing a phenomenological approach, this study used purposive sampling techniques to select participants, and conducted semi-structured interviews with eight street food vendors in the Galle Face and Aluth Kade areas of Colombo. This study analyzed data thematically to explore various aspects of street food tourism, focusing on tourist engagement, vendors' experiences, the challenges faced, and future opportunities. The findings indicate that vendors have a positive perception of tourist engagement, but encounter communication barriers that hinder meaningful interactions and the ability to meet tourists' expectations. Vendors report resourcefulness and adaptability despite economic hardships, demonstrating a proactive approach toward enhancing their offerings and services. Key challenges include limited access to financing and a lack of integration into tourism supply chains, which restricts vendors' growth potential. Despite these challenges, vendors recognize the potential of street food tourism for business growth and are eager to explore innovative strategies to attract more tourists. This study underscores the importance of supportive policies, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable practices to harness the full potential of street food tourism in Colombo. These measures can foster local entrepreneurship and enhance a city's identity as an appealing culinary destination.

Keywords: Culinary heritage, street food vendors, tourist engagement, tourist expectations, vendor perception.

EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES THROUGH TOURISM: THE CASE OF POLONNARUWA UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE CITY

M.U.M.T. Sewwandi^{1,*} and J.A.P.M. Jayasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: takshilat@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The ancient city of Polonnaruwa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, offers immense potential for tourism-driven empowerment of marginalized communities. Despite its rich historical and cultural heritage, the surrounding rural communities, including women, youth, and individuals with disabilities, continue to face socioeconomic challenges. This study investigates how tourism can be utilized as a tool to empower marginalized groups, thereby improving their quality of life and fostering inclusive growth. Although the city attracts a steady influx of tourists, local communities often remain excluded from the benefits of economic barriers, limited skills, and a lack of awareness. A qualitative case study approach was employed to gather data through in-depth interviews and observations from key stakeholders such as community members, local tourism operators, and government officials. Twenty-two respondents were selected to represent marginalized groups. Content analysis was used to identify recurring patterns in the data. The findings reveal that marginalized communities in Polonnaruwa face significant barriers, including high unemployment, low-income levels, and limited access to education and training. However, tourism offers promising opportunities for economic empowerment through employment in tourism-related services, community-based tourism initiatives, and preservation of cultural heritage. The involvement of women and youth in tourism activities has demonstrated the potential to enhance their socioeconomic status and promote community development. This study underscores the need for targeted interventions by both the government and private sectors to create an enabling environment for marginalized communities to actively participate in tourism. Recommendations include capacity building, infrastructure development, and increased awareness of the benefits of tourism. If these issues are addressed, tourism can serve as a catalyst for the socio-economic development and empowerment of marginalized groups in Polonnaruwa.

Keywords: Case study, empowerment, marginalized communities, Polonnaruwa, tourism

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE SRI LANKA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COLOMBO DISTRICT)

I.M.G.M. Samarasinghe^{1,*} and W.H.M.S. Samarathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: gayanmadusanka9468@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on tourism development in Sri Lanka. Tourism is a cornerstone of Sri Lanka's economy, contributing significantly to GDP and employment. However, the industry faces challenges, such as fluctuating tourist arrivals, increased global competition, and the need for enhanced service quality. This study examines how AI can address these challenges, drive sustainable growth in the tourism sector, and explore the advantages, challenges, and managerial significance of AI. A qualitative approach was used for data collection, involving primary data gathered from interviews and focus group discussions with tourism professionals. Ten structured interviews were conducted with professionals from the travel and hospitality sectors. Purposive sampling was employed to select respondents, as knowledge of AI is uncommon among travel industry professionals. Questions related to AI adoption in the tourism and hospitality industries, availability of digital infrastructure, cost of high technology, impact of AI on business promotions, management attitudes toward AI, and challenges in introducing AI for tourism development were posed and discussed during the interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data and identify patterns and themes in three main areas: AI-driven decision-making, benefits and challenges, and recommendations. The findings contribute to the understanding of AI adoption in Sri Lanka's tourism sector and include recommendations for improved stakeholder communication, skill training, and addressing challenges in technological implementation and ethical considerations. The study concludes with key findings and suggestions for the hospitality and travel agency sectors, along with a comprehensive discussion of the implications of AI adoption for tourism development in Sri Lanka. AI-driven decision making significantly enhances customer engagement and operational efficiency, as demonstrated by AI-based language translation and the integration of AI chatbots on websites. While challenges such as cost and skill gaps hinder widespread adoption, smaller organizations may struggle to bear the cost of technology implementation. Additionally, there is a limited pool of human resources in Sri Lanka, with requisite knowledge and expertise in AI. This study provides valuable insights for policymakers, tourism stakeholders, and industry professionals, aiming to leverage AI for sustainable tourism growth in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence in tourism, AI adoption in Sri Lanka, thematic analysis, Sri Lanka tourism

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF AIRPORT SERVICE QUALITY ON PASSENGER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY: A CASE STUDY ON JAFFNA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

N. Mayunesan^{1,*}, W.H.M.S. Samarathunga² and D.M.C. Dassanayake³

^{1,2,3}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: mayunivetha99@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The aviation industry plays a crucial role in the economic development of nations, and the focus on enhancing service quality has become paramount for ensuring sustained competitiveness. This study investigates the impact of airport service quality on passenger satisfaction and loyalty, focusing on Jaffna International Airport (JIA) in Sri Lanka. The JIA plays a crucial role in enhancing regional connectivity and supporting the economic development of the northern region. To remain competitive in the aviation sector, improving service quality is essential as it directly influences passenger satisfaction and fosters loyalty. The aim of this research is to identify the most significant service quality dimensions influencing passenger satisfaction at JIA and examine the relationship between each SERVQUAL dimension—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—and passenger satisfaction. The study sample consisted of 250 passengers who were traveling via JIA, surveyed between November and December 2023 using a five-point Likert scale questionnaire distributed manually and electronically via platforms such as Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Email. The data were analyzed using SPSS Version 26.0. Regression analysis confirmed that tangibility, assurance, and empathy were the most significant factors contributing to passenger satisfaction, which, in turn, enhanced passenger loyalty. The findings offer valuable insights for passengers, researchers, service providers, and decision-makers, enabling them to improve the overall service quality at the JIA. The findings of this research offer practical implications for passengers, researchers, service providers, civil aviation authorities, and decision-makers, providing a foundation for informed decision making to enhance the overall airport experience at Jaffna International Airport. As the airport industry continues to evolve, understanding and addressing the dynamics of service quality and passenger satisfaction are critical for sustained success and competitiveness.

Keywords: Airport service quality, Jaffna international airport, passenger loyalty, passenger satisfaction, SERVQUAL model.

MAPPING TOURIST VISITOR EXPERIENCE USING TRIP ADVISOR REVIEWS: THE CASE OF HURULU ECO PARK

M.S. Dhananjaya^{1,*} and W.H.M.S. Samarathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: samudithadhananjaya@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Tourist experience mapping is an emerging research area in tourism that has received little attention in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the present study aimed to identify how tourist experiences were constructed in a natural park during the pre-pandemic era. Hurulu Eco-Park, a popular elephant-watching site in Sri Lanka, was selected for this study. This study purposively selected and analyzed 217 TripAdvisor reviews. The key inclusion criteria for selecting the reviews were written in English between January 1, 2015, and December 31, 2019. Data were collected in the last quarter of 2022. Netnography was adopted as the key research approach in this study, and manual thematic analysis was performed to analyze the data. The key themes identified in this study were natural attractions, services, infrastructure and amenities, prices, and perceived experience. The "natural attractions" theme was constructed with two focused codes: elephants and park, while the "services" theme constituted Jeeps, drivers, and guides. The third theme, "infrastructure and amenities," included road conditions and ticket counters, while the fourth theme, "price," carried only one focused code, price. The fifth theme, "perceived experience," encompasses the type of experience and worth. While the overall experience was positive, the study identified areas of potential enhancement. This study recommends promoting sustainable park management in Sri Lanka by managing overcrowding, enhancing wildlife viewing, addressing accessibility and infrastructure, and improving visitor satisfaction. It also emphasizes a comprehensive sustainability plan covering waste management, water conservation, energy efficiency, and responsible wildlife tourism. These measures aim to build on the park's strengths, address its weaknesses, and ensure continuous improvement for future visitors. This research provides valuable insights, and the overall findings paint a positive picture of visitors' encounters with the park.

Keywords: Hurulu eco-park, netnography, Sri Lanka elephants, sustainable tourism, tourist experience mapping

STAGNATION AND REVIVAL OF SPICE TOURISM: THE CASE OF MATALE, SRI LANKA

K.C. Dharmarathne^{1,*} and W.H.M.S. Samarathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: kalashanichathu@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's tourism industry offers myriad services, with spice gardens being significant contributors because of their role in generating foreign currency. However, the spice garden sector has stagnated without significant development, underscoring the urgent need for revitalization to unlock its tourism potential. Although extensive research exists on spice gardens from an agricultural perspective, there is a notable gap in exploring their potential for tourism. This study addresses this gap by examining the barriers and opportunities to revive spice tourism in the Matale area. The primary objective of this study is to revive spice tourism in the Matale area using a qualitative approach aligned with interpretivist philosophy. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten (10) spice garden owners and managers selected via purposive sampling. The interviews, ranging from 15 to 38 minutes, covered topics such as developmental barriers, the impact of COVID-19, promotion strategies, and government support. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed manually. The qualitative content analysis resulted in nine main themes: Natural Environment, Convenient Access, Business Environment, Security Challenges, Operational Challenges, Institutional Factors, Government Support, Collaboration, and Rejuvenation. The analysis revealed several barriers to spice tourism development, including operational challenges, inadequate government support, and security concerns. However, opportunities were identified, such as leveraging the natural environment, improving access, and fostering stakeholder collaboration. The impact of COVID-19 poses significant challenges but also spurs innovation in promotion strategies. Understanding these factors can help stakeholders implement effective strategies to overcome barriers and enhance spice tourism in the Matale Area. This study highlights the barriers to and opportunities for revitalizing spice tourism in Matale. Addressing operational challenges, enhancing government support, and leveraging the natural environment can unlock spice gardens' tourism potential. These insights provide practical guidance for stakeholders to develop strategies that contribute to the growth of spice and shopping tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Content analysis, COVID-19 impact, shopping tourism in Sri Lanka, spice tourism, tourism in Matale

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF COMMUNITY-BASED ECO-TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN POST-WAR AREAS: CASE OF CHUNDIKULAM BIRD SANCTUARY

M.Thamilvany^{1,*} and W.H.M.S. Samarathunga²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding author (Email: thamilm05@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The tourism sector is one of the most valuable industries worldwide because of its direct and indirect impact on economic and non-economic performance. Despite Sri Lanka's over 25 years of experience with tourism challenges during times of conflict, the sector has become a crucial part of the country's economy since the conflict ended. However, the tourism sector still faces numerous challenges in terms of its development. This study examines the prospects and challenges of community-based ecotourism development in the postwar area, focusing on the Chundikulam Bird Sanctuary. This study aims to address three strategic objectives: identifying ecotourism potential, identifying challenges, and exploring implications for promoting community-based ecotourism. A qualitative approach was employed in this research, utilizing interviews and observations as the primary methods of data collection, with content analysis used for data interpretation. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three residents and seven local authorities selected purposively based on their expertise in local knowledge and authority in the area. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes, depending on the participants' knowledge and experience with community-based ecotourism. The interview findings were cross validated using observational data to enhance the reliability of the results. The findings of this research indicate that Chundikulam has significant natural and cultural attractions, including ancient temples, dunes, beaches, diverse flora and fauna, and scenic landscapes, which have a strong potential for ecotourism. However, this study also identified several challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, economic constraints, technological limitations, management and marketing challenges, and the critical issue of community involvement in tourism development, all of which hinder community-based ecotourism development in this area. The study concludes by offering insightful analysis and recommendations. These suggestions emphasize the need for targeted efforts to enhance infrastructure, improve economic conditions, and increase community participation to promote community-based ecotourism.

Keywords: Community-based tourism in Mullaitivu, eco-tourism in northern province, post-war tourism, tourism development in Chundikulam, tourism in northern province

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DETERMINANTS OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY OF ANURADHAPURA DISTRICT

A.G.A. Bandula^{1,*}, Y.M. Wickramasinghe² and S.A.U. Niranjala³

¹*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

²*Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

³*Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale.*

*Corresponding author (Email: bandulaamukotuwa@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Alcohol consumption varies significantly across different regions worldwide, and has a long history in Sri Lanka, tracing back to ancient civilizations. This subject has been extensively explored owing to its potential health risks and broader societal impacts. Numerous factors, including demographic, psychological, social, economic, and environmental factors, contribute to alcohol consumption patterns. This study aimed to examine alcohol consumption trends in the Anuradhapura district while investigating the demographic and socioeconomic factors that may impact alcohol consumption. The study used the proportion of income allocated to alcohol consumption as the dependent variable and considered various independent variables, such as age, ethnicity, religion, education level, marital status, residential location, employment status, personal preference, and smoking behaviors. Data collection was conducted using primary sources in the Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka. Primary data were collected from the Anuradhapura district using a purposive sample of 12 licensed alcohol outlets selected based on sales performance to represent both urban and rural areas. In total, 215 alcohol consumers were selected using snowball sampling. A multivariate regression model was used to identify the key factors influencing alcohol consumption. The analysis revealed that demographic and socioeconomic factors, including age, ethnicity, marital status, educational level, residential location, employment status, and personal preferences, significantly influenced alcohol consumption. In contrast, religion and smoking behavior did not have any substantial effect on consumption patterns. Furthermore, a negative correlation was identified between educational level and alcohol consumption, indicating that individuals with higher educational achievement consumed less alcohol. Higher levels of alcohol consumption were observed among unemployed and unmarried individuals of the Sinhalese ethnic group who practiced Buddhism. Furthermore, most consumers demonstrated a preference for malt and arracks. In the Anuradhapura district, alcohol consumption patterns fluctuated over time, largely influenced by price changes and seasonal demand, particularly during festive periods, such as April. Several factors have been identified as contributing to alcohol dependence, including peer pressure, curiosity, boredom, and adult influence. Reducing alcohol consumption remains a priority for many, with interventions, such as educational campaigns, career development opportunities, awareness programs, and meditation practices, showing promise in addressing this issue. In Sri Lanka, the government faced the challenge of balancing alcohol-related revenue generation with the need to address public health concerns. Prioritizing the reduction in alcohol consumption is essential to protect public health and promote societal well-being. A comprehensive evaluation of long-term consequences is necessary to achieve a sustainable balance between fostering economic growth and safeguarding public health.

Keywords: Alcohol consumption, multiple regression model, socio-economic factors

THE ROLE OF KEY SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON DESTINATION CHOICE: A STUDY BASED ON SIGIRIYA, SRI LANKA

R.M.H.E. Rathnayaka^{1,*} and J.A.P.M. Jayasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: hashinierandika266@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The advent of social media has revolutionized the tourism industry, particularly influencing travellers' destination choices. This study investigates the role of key social media influencers in shaping travel decisions, with a specific focus on Sigiriya, Sri Lanka, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its historical, cultural, and archaeological significance. This research examines how various social media elements, such as information shared by other travelers, destination image, behavioral intentions, the effect of social media on marketing, and tourism satisfaction, influence tourists' decisions to visit Sigiriya. The primary objective of this study is to assess the impact of social media on destination choice within the context of Sigiriya's tourism industry. The study employs a quantitative research methodology using a convenience sampling method, collecting primary data through a structured questionnaire distributed to a sample of 382 travelers who engaged with social media for trip planning. The study focuses on key elements, such as shared information by travelers, the portrayal of destination image on social platforms, and the effects of social media on marketing and tourism satisfaction. Using a convenience sampling method, data were collected from travelers who had chosen Sigiriya as their destination based on social media interactions, with structured questionnaires administered both online and in person. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed using SPSS 21.0 to analyze the collected data. The findings revealed strong positive correlations between the examined social media elements and destination choice. Specifically, peer-shared content, destination image, and strategic marketing efforts on social media platforms play a significant role in influencing travelers' preferences for Sigiriya. The study's results also highlight the importance of behavioral intentions shaped by social media interactions in the decision-making process. They concluded that social media elements exert a substantial influence on destination choice, with 71.5% of the variance in travel decisions explained by these factors. These findings provide valuable insights for tourism marketers, destination management organizations, and stakeholders in Sigiriya, underscoring the need for effective social media strategies to enhance visibility, attract tourists, and sustain competitiveness in the global tourism market.

Keywords: Destination choice, destination image, Sigiriya, social media elements, social media influencers, traveler behavior, user generated content (UGC)

TOURISM NETNOGRAPHY: IMPACT OF USER ENGAGEMENT IN YOUTUBE VLOGS ON DESTINATION IMAGE AND INTENTION TO VISIT SIGIRIYA, SRI LANKA.

D.A.A. Samindini^{1,*} and J.A.P.M. Jayasinghe²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: amashadissanayake60@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Social media platforms have become powerful tools in the digital era, influencing travelers' attitudes and plans. This study explored the impact of user engagement with YouTube vlogs on the destination image of Sigiriya, Sri Lanka, and viewers' intentions to visit. Utilizing a netnographic methodology, this research analyzes user comments from the top ten most-watched YouTube travel vlogs about Sigiriya. The primary purpose was to understand how user interactions and discussions within YouTube vlogs shape the destination image of Sigiriya and influence potential tourists' intentions to visit. A qualitative research approach was employed with content analysis as the data analysis technique. Comments on the selected YouTube vlogs were analyzed using NVivo 12 software, focusing on key themes, such as user interaction, emotional response, destination image, and travel intention. The findings revealed that active engagement by YouTube vlog users significantly enhanced the perception of Sigiriya as attractive tourist destinations. Positive comments, shared personal experiences, and lively discussions contribute to a favorable destination image and increase the intention of YouTube users to visit Sigiriya. This study highlights the crucial role of user-generated content in shaping travel behavior and suggests the importance of online interactions in boosting travelers' interest in destinations such as Sigiriya. The implications of the study suggest that tourism stakeholders can utilize social media platforms such as YouTube to foster user engagement, thereby enhancing destination image and encouraging tourism. By strategically engaging with vlog communities, destinations can enhance their visibility and attractiveness to potential visitors.

Keywords: Destination image, travel intention, tourism netnography, user engagement, youtube vlogs

FACTORS INFLUENCING FOREIGN TOURISTS' SATISFACTION: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CENTRAL PROVINCE IN SRI LANKA

H.M.R.W.K. Wijekoon^{1,*} and T.M.O.K.K. Bandara²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ruwaniwijekoon27@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Tourist satisfaction plays a key role in shaping the success and sustainability of Sri Lanka's tourism industry. Satisfied tourists are willing to revisit and recommend others to visit, thereby creating new tourist attractions and promoting the destination. Therefore, satisfying tourists is crucial to the long-term success of tourism. The problem addressed by this research is the lack of specific knowledge about the factors that significantly affect overall tourist satisfaction in the Central Province, despite having many diverse attractions and being an area visited by a large number of tourists. By properly identifying the factors affecting this, Sri Lanka's tourism industry will be able to improve further, creating opportunities to move towards becoming a developed country. The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that affect the satisfaction of foreign tourists in Central Province, a region where a large percentage of foreign tourists visit Sri Lanka. Through the literature review, five factors were identified as independent variables: Accommodation Services, Food & Beverages, Price Levels, Safety & Security, and Transportation Services, with foreign tourist satisfaction as the dependent variable. Primary data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire survey with 250 respondents. The samples were formed using convenience sampling. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. According to the findings of the study, except for Food & Beverages, the other four variables—Accommodation Services, Price Levels, Safety & Security, and Transportation Services—significantly affected the satisfaction of foreign tourists in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Based on these results, it is recommended to improve food and beverages, enhance advertising, invest in training programs for professional staff and guides, promote unique attractions, improve public transport options, establish tourist feedback mechanisms, and diversify the sample and time for future research. This study provides necessary information for the improvement of the tourism industry for the socio-economic development of Central Province, as well as Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Accommodation services, foreign tourists' satisfaction, price levels, safety & security, transportation services

CHALLENGES CONFRONT BY TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY UNDERGRADUATES DURING INDUSTRIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS: A STUDY ON CAREER ASPIRATIONS AND INTENTIONS

M.G.V. Sewwandi^{1, *} and D.D.P. Sanjeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: vishakasew97@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The tourism and hospitality sector is a major contributor to Sri Lanka's economy, requiring graduates who can smoothly enter the industry from academia. Industrial training programs significantly influence undergraduate career aspirations by integrating theoretical knowledge with practical skills. However, the challenges in these programs can hinder students' professional growth. While existing research explores the impact of industrial training on career development, few studies have focused on the Sri Lankan context, with most findings rooted in Western settings, which may not fully address local challenges. The present study aims to investigate the existing issues confronting undergraduates during their industrial training and how these challenges affect their career decisions. The study used a phenomenological approach to investigate the experiences of Sri Lankan undergraduates undergoing industrial training in the tourism and hospitality sector, gaining a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives and challenges. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which provided flexibility to probe deeper into specific issues, while maintaining consistency across interviews. A purposive sampling method was used to select 15 undergraduates from three universities offering Tourism and Hospitality Management degree programs. These universities were chosen to ensure diversity in the experiences captured. Each interview lasted between 25 and 30 minutes and was audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. The interviews were transcribed for analysis, and thematic analysis was used to identify key themes related to students' challenges, expectations, and career aspirations. The phenomenological approach ensured that the findings remained grounded in the personal experiences of the participants, allowing for a rich and nuanced understanding of the role of industrial training in their career development. This revealed that inadequate workplace support, excessive working hours, insufficient mentorship, and a mismatch between what is taught in academia and what is expected at work become challenging for undergraduates. Furthermore, many students reported a disconnection between their classroom learning and the skills required in actual work settings, leading to diminished enthusiasm for pursuing careers in this sector. This paper suggests enhancing collaboration between industry and academia, refining curriculum and support systems, and improving training programs to better prepare students for the realities of the industry.

Keywords: Career aspirations, career intentions, industrial training programs, tourism and hospitality industry, undergraduates

THE IMPACT OF ECO-CERTIFICATION ON INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' HOTEL CHOICES IN SRI LANKA

M. Weerakkody^{1,*} and K. Nissanka²

¹*Department of Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Sri Lanka.*

²*Finance and Administration, Colombo Stock Exchange, Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: minushaw@sjp.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

As the global tourism industry increasingly prioritizes sustainability, understanding the impact of eco-certification on tourists' hotel choices is essential, particularly in emerging markets, such as Sri Lanka, where eco-certification is voluntary. This study investigates how eco-certification influences international tourists' hotel choices in Sri Lanka, focusing on the direct role of green practices and social factors in shaping decision making. The specific objective was to determine the direct influence of eco-certification and related psychological and social factors on tourists' hotel preferences. Using a modified version of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), this study explored key psychological and social factors, including collectivist orientation, internal locus of control, subjective norms, and environmental visibility. A quantitative approach was adopted, with data collected via a structured questionnaire from 392 international tourists, selected through convenience sampling, who stayed in both eco-certified and non-certified hotels across Sri Lanka. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and regression analyses were employed to assess the impact of eco-certification on tourists' hotel choices. The findings demonstrate that eco-certification directly influences hotel choice, with specific green practices such as recycling, energy efficiency, and water conservation playing a significant role. Tourists with strong collectivist values and high internal locus of control showed a greater likelihood of choosing eco-certified hotels. Social influences, including subjective norms and environmental visibility, also positively impact tourists' decisions to select eco-certified accommodation. Hence, this study confirms that eco-certification is a key determinant of hotel choice for international tourists. These findings provide valuable insights for hoteliers and policymakers by emphasizing the importance of eco-certification in promoting sustainable tourism and attracting environmentally conscious visitors to Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Behavioral intention, eco-certification, hotel choice, Sri Lanka, sustainable tourism

EXPLORING THE POTENTIALS AND CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPING ALCO-TOURISM IN SRI LANKA: INSIGHTS FROM THE SOUTHERN COASTAL BELT

B.D.S.H. Dharmasena^{1,*} and P.K.U. Perera²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Management, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: salanihasamini0427@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka has a rich and diverse cultural heritage, including a rich culinary tradition filled with flavors and aromas enriched by a wide array of spices. Although Sri Lankan cuisine has gained significant attention from tourists, beverage culture, particularly alcoholic beverages, remains underexplored. This study examines the potential to develop alco-tourism in Sri Lanka, with a special focus on the Southern Coastal Belt, and explores how local alcoholic beverages can be developed as tourism products. The objectives of this research are to identify the potential for developing alco-tourism in the Southern Coastal Belt of Sri Lanka, to examine the challenges and barriers limiting the development of alco-tourism in the Southern Coastal Belt, and to explore strategies for promoting and marketing local alcoholic beverages in the Southern Coastal Belt, adopting a qualitative research design rooted in an interpretivist philosophical stance. This study employed purposive and snowball sampling methods to select 15 industry professionals for the in-depth interviews. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, ensuring rigor and trustworthiness by applying credibility, transferability, and dependability checks. This study examined the potential applications of local alcoholic beverages based on tourist interest in local beverages, including their popularity, appeal, and demand for locally inspired cocktails. It also explored ways to enhance the tourist experience through integration with culinary tourism and cultural immersion. Challenges and barriers to developing alco-tourism include cultural sensitivity and religious considerations, such as perceptions of alcohol in local culture and balancing tourism with cultural values. Regulatory and legal barriers, including stringent alcohol regulations and compliance and enforcement issues, were also identified. Another limitation is the quality perception of local beverages, including comparisons with international brands, and opportunities for quality improvement. This study identified strategic implementations for marketing local alcoholic beverages and enhancing tourist awareness. Strategies include targeted marketing campaigns and collaboration with the hospitality sector. The study concludes by proposing strategic recommendations including targeted marketing campaigns, infrastructure development, and community involvement. Collaboration between stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and industry experts is crucial for positioning the Southern Coastal belt as a unique alco-tourism destination. Theoretical implications include contributions to the literature on tourism development in culturally sensitive contexts, while managerial implications suggest practical pathways for developing sustainable alco-tourism.

Keywords: Alco-tourism, tourism development, potential barriers, strategic recommendations.

CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS OF ADOPTING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN SRI LANKA'S FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY: INSIGHTS FROM INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

R.A.U. Piumanthi^{1,*} and P.K.U. Perera²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism Studies, Faculty of Management, Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: piumanthi2716@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Although Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly reshaping global industries, including the food and beverage sector, the adoption of AI in developing countries, such as Sri Lanka, remains underexplored, particularly in terms of its practical benefits and challenges. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the perspectives of industry professionals regarding AI adoption in Sri Lanka's F&B industry. The objectives were to identify the benefits and challenges of AI adoption and provide recommendations to facilitate its integration into the industry. Using a qualitative approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 15 industry professionals, including 12 hotel executives and 3 academics, selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which was conducted from January to March 2024. The findings reveal that AI technology enhances operational efficiency through improved inventory management, supply chain optimization, and quality control. It also elevates the customer experience by enabling personalized recommendations, automated customer services, and feedback analysis. In addition, AI contributes to waste reduction through predictive analysis and resource optimization. The benefits of AI include cost reduction in labor and operations, enhanced decision-making through data-driven strategies, real-time monitoring, and gaining a competitive advantage through innovation and market expansion. Challenges include financial constraints, such as high initial costs; uncertainty about return on investment; and technological limitations, including infrastructure deficiencies and skill gaps. Cultural and organizational resistance, driven by a preference for traditional methods and concerns about employment, also pose significant barriers. Additionally, regulatory and ethical concerns, particularly regarding data privacy and the ethical use of AI, complicate adoption. Strategic recommendations derived from these findings include investing in infrastructure development, particularly technological investments, and support for small and medium enterprises. Capacity building through targeted training programs and talent acquisition are crucial. Furthermore, this study suggests the initiation of policy and regulatory frameworks, emphasizing government policy reforms and industry standardization. Finally, managing organizational change through cultural shifts and pilot projects is essential to successful AI integration. In conclusion, although AI offers substantial benefits to the Sri Lankan F&B industry, its adoption is fraught with challenges that require careful management.

Keywords: AI adoption, challenges, food and beverage industry, operational efficiency, strategic recommendations

EXPLORING THE COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE IMPACT OF TOURISM IN HIRIWADUNNA RURAL VILLAGE

K.I. Udayangani^{1,*} and D.D.P. Sanjeewa²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: ireshau09@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The tourism sector plays a vital role in developing local regions by offering a range of benefits to the communities involved. In Sri Lanka, tourism stands out as a key sector of the economy, serving not only as a significant source of foreign exchange but also as a crucial industry for rural development. Rural tourism is a niche market that focuses on experiencing rural lifestyles and engaging in local activities. However, tourism development has both advantageous and disadvantageous effects on the local inhabitants. In the agrarian community of Hiriwadunna, the introduction of tourism has led to transformations and advancements within the community. Thus, understanding the perceptions of the community is imperative to fostering sustainable tourism development in the region. This study explores community perceptions of the impact of rural tourism in Hiriwadunna village, Sri Lanka. Adhering to constructivist philosophy, the research employed a qualitative research design with an inductive approach to examine the case of Hiriwadunna. Hiriwadunna is a rural village with approximately 400 households, primarily comprised of farmers and artisans. The population for this study consists of residents of Hiriwadunna village, specifically focusing on community members engaged in or affected by tourism-related activities. Fifteen community members were selected using purposive sampling and interviewed over phone. Content analysis revealed the positive and negative impacts of rural tourism on the community. The results showed that the community had positive perceptions of rural tourism in Hiriwadunna village in terms of revenue generation, women's employment, growth of the household economy, and social empowerment. However, the local community also has negative perceptions due to the emergence of misbehavior among youth, drug abuse, and cultural erosion. The recommendations for Hiriwadunna village focus on sustainable rural tourism through community engagement, cultural preservation, and economic development. Key strategies include facilitating local decision-making forums, fostering partnerships, providing entrepreneurial training, promoting eco-friendly practices, and ensuring inclusive tourism that empowers marginalized groups while addressing socioeconomic disparities.

Keywords: Community perception, Hiriwadunna, rural tourism, tourism development, tourism impact

IDENTIFYING TOURISM AS A STRATEGY TO MINIMIZE HUMAN-ELEPHANT CONFLICTS: A CASE STUDY OF UDAWALAWE NATIONAL PARK AND ITS ADJACENT AREAS

W.A.D.S. S. Sanjana^{1,*}, K.T.L.U.S. Dayangana² and S.A.I. Somarathna³

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, ³Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sajnaseneshi1928@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the potential of tourism as a strategic approach to mitigating human-elephant conflicts in and around Udawalawe National Park in Sri Lanka. This study aims to assess how tourism can contribute to reducing these conflicts, which significantly affects both local communities and wildlife conservation efforts. Despite elephants being a central attraction for tourism, they are also at the heart of ongoing conflicts, necessitating a detailed investigation of sustainable solutions. The purpose of this research is twofold: (1) to identify the root causes of human-elephant conflicts and (2) to evaluate how tourism can be leveraged to address these challenges in a sustainable manner. This study adopts a qualitative research approach with a case study research design grounded in an interpretivist philosophical view. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including park rangers, residents, conservationists, and tourism service providers, using purposive and convenience sampling to ensure a wide range of perspectives. A thematic analysis was conducted using a rigorous approach to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings. The findings revealed that human invasion and agricultural expansion into elephant habitats are major drivers of conflict, posing threats to both community livelihoods and elephant conservation. However, tourism has the potential to be a catalyst for positive change, as Udawalawe's economy depends heavily on tourism, and elephants are valuable resources in this context. The key themes identified include promoting responsible tourism and supporting conservation initiatives to mitigate conflicts. The sustainable strategies highlighted in this study include physical barriers such as electric fences, ditches, and fences made from old rail tracks, alongside innovative natural solutions such as honey beekeeping, which act as deterrents to elephants. Additionally, the findings emphasize the importance of educating local communities on sustainable land-use practices and fostering cooperation among tourism stakeholders to minimize conflicts. The study concludes that tourism, when managed responsibly, can play a pivotal role in balancing human-elephant interactions, supporting both wildlife conservation and livelihood development of communities in the Udawalawe region. This research contributes to the existing knowledge by offering theoretical and practical insights with implications for conservation management, tourism development, and future research directions.

Keywords: Conservation efforts, community livelihood development, human-elephant conflict, innovative methods, responsible tourism, Udawalawe national park

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON DESTINATION CHOICE OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN SRI LANKA

T.A.M. Ranasinghe^{1,*} and K.T.N.P. Abeywickrama²

^{1,2}*Department of Tourism & Hospitality Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: asangamalshani97@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the role of social media in influencing destination choices among the younger generation in Sri Lanka. With the rapid growth of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, social media has become a powerful tool for shaping travel decisions. This research focuses on understanding how usage habits, perceived usefulness, and attitudes toward social media impact destination selection among young Sri Lankan travellers aged 15 to 29. The population for this study was young Sri Lankan travellers who actively use social media, and a sample size of 384 was scientifically determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table. A quantitative research approach was employed, using data collected through an online survey. The data were analyzed using reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analyses, to examine the relationships between social media usage and destination choice. The results revealed that Facebook is the most commonly used platform for making travel decisions, followed by WhatsApp and YouTube. Furthermore, the study highlights how peer-generated content, online reviews, and promotional materials heavily influence young individuals' travel choices. While social media has a positive influence on decision making, the research also identifies a gap between online destination portrayals and real-life experiences, which affects satisfaction. These findings provide practical insights for tourism marketers aiming to engage better with younger demographics through targeted social media strategies. Key recommendations include leveraging social media platforms more effectively, improving the accuracy of destination portrayals, and using user-generated content to enhance destination credibility. This study is significant as it offers valuable insights into shaping tourism marketing strategies to better cater to young travellers, ensuring that social media is used as an effective tool to influence positive destination choices and enhance tourist satisfaction.

Keywords: Destination choice, social media influence, Sri Lanka, tourism marketing, younger generation

A blue geometric graphic consisting of overlapping shapes, resembling a stylized arrow or a series of nested triangles, pointing towards the right.

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EXPLORING INFLUENTIAL FACTORS FOR STUDENTS' SATISFACTION AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

K.S.M. Fernando^{1,*} and A.K. Anjala²

^{1,2}*Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: sonalifdo28@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Higher education in Sri Lanka is pivotal for national development, and student satisfaction serves as a critical indicator of educational quality. Accordingly, this study aims to identify and assess the key factors influencing student satisfaction among undergraduate students at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Based on the literature, five primary factors influencing student satisfaction were identified: quality of academic staff, quality of degree programs, university facilities, medium of education, and accommodation facilities. These factors were explored through a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire administered to 370 first-year students via online platforms using a stratified sampling method. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis to understand the relationships and predictive power of these variables on student satisfaction, using SPSS version 23. Accordingly, the findings of the correlation analysis indicated a strong positive correlation between the quality of academic staff, quality of degree programs, university facilities, medium of education, and accommodation facilities and overall student satisfaction, with significant values less than 0.05. Moreover, according to the regression analysis, the R-squared value was 0.88, indicating that 88% of student satisfaction was statistically explained by the independent variables of the study. However, only the variables quality of degree programs ($\beta = 0.232$), medium of education ($\beta = 0.286$), and accommodation facilities ($\beta = 0.327$) were shown to have a significant positive impact on student satisfaction, with significant values less than 0.05. Here, accommodation facilities ($\beta = 0.327$) were the most influential factors affecting student satisfaction. Consequently, this study emphasizes the importance of focusing on these factors to enhance student satisfaction and improve educational outcomes. Furthermore, these findings offer valuable insights for higher education management. This study addresses the gap faced by undergraduates across all faculties and provides actionable recommendations for policymakers and university administrators aimed at enhancing educational quality and student satisfaction in Sri Lanka and beyond.

Keywords- Barriers, higher education, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, student satisfaction, undergraduates

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL STRESS FACTORS OF AUDITORS AND QUALITY OF AUDIT SERVICES; DOES MOTIVATION MATTER?

S. Varanitha *

Numerix Private Limited, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's economy is changing rapidly, requiring accurate auditing for market functioning and foreign investment. However, occupational stress can lead auditors to overlook crucial details, thereby affecting their output and financial reports. Companies are increasingly concerned with audit quality, with motivation influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and workload perception. The objective of this study is to ensure the accuracy and integrity of financial reporting in Sri Lanka by investigating the relationship between auditors' occupational stress factors and the quality of audit services, with a focus on motivation. High workload, work pressure, work-life balance, job insecurity, and auditor job satisfaction were employed as occupational stress factors, and the quality of audit services was examined as the dependent variable. This study addresses the knowledge gap by showing that, although a heavy workload initially seems to improve audit quality, motivation is a key component in offsetting this effect, with job insecurity emerging as a more important factor affecting the caliber of audit services in Sri Lanka. Auditing professionals from Sri Lanka's Big Four firms are included in this study. A total of 113 questionnaires were sent, of which 100 were valid for statistical analysis using convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using the Eviews software. The internal consistency of the research instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was used to test the relationship between auditors' occupational stress factors and the quality of audit services. The results of the PLS-SEM analysis showed that high workload ($p=0.00$), work-life balance ($p=0.04$), and work pressure ($p=0.00$) had a statistically significant positive influence on the quality of audit services. Interestingly, after moderating the role of motivation, a high workload no longer exhibited a meaningful link with the quality of audit services, stressing that auditors who initially perform well under heavy workloads may experience a decline in audit quality once motivational factors, such as job satisfaction or recognition, are diminished. Job insecurity was found to have a significant positive influence on the quality of audit services. This study contributes to the current body of knowledge and theories, such as effort-reward imbalance (ERI) theory. This study recommends regular check-ins or stress management workshops to help auditors cope with work pressure and avoid burnout, and regular training sessions focused on time management, stress management, and technical skills to ensure that auditors are equipped to handle workload and pressure effectively.

Keywords: Auditor job satisfaction, job insecurity, high workload, work pressure, work-life balance

IMPACT OF ONLINE DISINHIBITION ON THE SUCCESS OF E-LEARNING OF FINAL YEAR MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

E.M.I.S. Ekanayake^{1,*} and H.M.R.D. Kularathne²

^{1,2}*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: imashiiekanayake@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, e-learning has seen exponential growth, particularly in the field of higher education. The flexibility, accessibility, and adaptability of e-learning platforms have made them crucial components of modern education. In Sri Lanka, e-learning has become increasingly popular, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating a shift from traditional classroom-based learning to online platforms. Universities across the country have adopted various Learning Management Systems (LMS) to facilitate this transition. However, online disinhibition, which refers to the phenomenon in which individuals exhibit online behaviors that they might not display in face-to-face interactions, can affect the success of online education. Given the existing empirical gap in this context, this research aims to explore the effect of online disinhibition on e-learning success, focusing on its implications within the academic context of Sri Lanka. By nature, this study was positivistic, deductive, quantitative, and cross-sectional. Data were collected from a sample of 327 final-year management undergraduates from three leading universities in Sri Lanka, as per the Webometrics Rankings 2023: University of Sri Jayewardenepura, University of Colombo, and Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, selected through the simple random sampling technique (N=2250). The study used the SPSS statistical package (version 25) to analyze the data, facilitating descriptive and inferential data analysis. The multiple regression analysis results indicated a significant negative effect of dissociative anonymity ($\beta = -0.086$, $p = .001$), invisibility ($\beta = -0.446$, $p = .000$), asynchronicity ($\beta = -0.293$, $p = .000$), solipsistic introjection ($\beta = -0.314$, $p = .020$), dissociative imagination ($\beta = -0.349$, $p = .000$), and minimization of authority ($\beta = -0.259$, $p = .010$) on e-learning success. Overall, the findings highlight that each dimension of online disinhibition has a statistically significant negative impact on the success of e-learning, emphasizing its critical role in the refinement of e-learning methodologies, the design of more effective online platforms, and the implementation of tailored interventions that foster a supportive and respectful digital learning environment. Ultimately, this study seeks to offer actionable insights that will enhance the educational experiences of management undergraduates in Sri Lanka and potentially serve as a model for similar contexts in other educational institutions.

Keywords: E-learning, online disinhibition, undergraduates, digital education, Sri Lanka

THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN INSURANCE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NORTHWESTERN PROVINCE)

D.W.M.U.N. Kumari^{1,*} and W.M.R.B. Weerasooriya²

*Corresponding author(Email: uthpalanelum691@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The current economic climate in developing nations is competitive because of globalization and technological advancement, and a company must participate in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to stay competitive. In the insurance industry, corporate social responsibility has emerged as a vital component, highlighting its significant role in promoting sustainable practices and improving societal well-being. In Sri Lanka, the insurance industry plays a crucial role in the country's economic development. The literature explains CSR as important because of its connection with financial performance, customer behavior, company reputation, and competitive advantage (CA). Therefore, this study aims to ascertain how CSR affects competitive advantage in the Northwestern Province insurance sector. This study was quantitative, explanatory, and deductive. This study discusses CSR under Economic, Ethical, Legal, and Philanthropic responsibilities through the lens of Carroll's pyramid of the CSR Model. Competitive advantage is discussed under price/cost, quality, delivery dependability, time-to-market, and innovation. Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire containing previously tested questions. The questionnaire aimed to capture data on CSR and CA. The study surveyed 340 insurance sector managerial-level employees with a sample size of 200, selected using a stratified sampling technique. Correlation analysis revealed a highly positive relationship between economic, ethical, legal, and philanthropic responsibilities and competitive advantage. However, multiple regression analysis revealed that ethical, legal, and philanthropic responsibilities had a significant positive impact on competitive advantage, whereas economic responsibility did not have a significant impact on CA. These findings highlight the significance of enhancing corporate social responsibility activities to achieve a competitive advantage. Organizations should implement more CSR activities to create a competitive edge by improving their reputation, retaining customers, and streamlining operations. However, the study had limitations, including the limited geographical scope of the Northwestern Province, potential self-report bias, and the limited sample size. It was observed that future research can expand the scope of inquiry by including sectors such as banking and apparel and also increase the depth of discussion by explaining other factors that influence CSR and CA using a qualitative approach.

Keywords – Corporate social responsibility, competitive advantage, insurance sector

THE IMPACT OF FAMILY DYNAMICS ON ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

W.A.T.D. Weththasinghe^{1,*}, W.G.V.R. Wathuliyadda² and Y.A.N.K Kularathna³

^{1,2,3}*Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author (Email: thisurudananjaya@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explored the impact of family dynamics on academic stress among undergraduates at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. The culturally unique context of the university provides an ideal setting for examining the interplay between family relationships, financial stability, and parental involvement in shaping students' academic stress. A structured online survey was administered to 367 undergraduates, and the collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS. Demographic analysis showed a balanced representation across gender, faculties, and academic years in the sample, while validity and reliability assessments confirmed the robustness of the research tools. The findings revealed significant correlations: Positive family relationships and financial stability were linked to lower levels of academic stress, with parental involvement playing a key role in reducing pressure. Parental involvement strongly correlated with stress reduction ($r = 0.532$, $p < 0.00$). Regression analysis further demonstrated that family dynamics significantly predicted academic stress. All the hypotheses regarding the influence of family relationships, financial background, and parental involvement were supported, highlighting their crucial role in shaping academic stress among students. These results emphasize the importance of fostering supportive family environments, ensuring financial security, and encouraging active parental engagement to alleviate academic stress. This study offers valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and families, stressing the need for integrated support systems to enhance student well-being. Future strategies and interventions should consider the multifaceted effects of family dynamics on students' academic experience in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Academic stress, family dynamics, financial background, parental involvement, Rajarata University

FACTORS AFFECTING THE SELF-EFFICACY OF NON-MANAGERIAL EMPLOYEES IN THE GOVERNMENT BANKING INDUSTRY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KEGALLE DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

W.G.L.S. Kosgolla^{1,*}, C.M.Y.S.S Bandara² and J.M.G.C. Jayasundara³

*Corresponding author (Email: lalindasenarath8@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the factors influencing the self-efficacy of non-managerial employees in the government banking industry within the Kegalle district of Sri Lanka. It examines how mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and affective states impact self-efficacy beliefs through the lens of the Social Cognitive Theory. Self-efficacy, described in the literature as confidence in effectively performing tasks, is essential for non-managerial employees, as it influences their motivation, effort, persistence, decision-making, behavior under stress, perceived abilities in challenging situations, and skill development. These factors also contributed to resilience. This study adopts a positivistic, quantitative approach, collecting data through a survey of 196 non-managerial employees from the two largest State Banks in the Kegalle district. Self-administered questionnaires were emailed to the participants and responses were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods using SPSS (version 21). The results revealed that mastery experience, vicarious experience, and verbal persuasion positively influence self-efficacy. Mastery experience emerged as the strongest predictor, emphasizing the role of past achievements in building confidence. Vicarious experiences also significantly impact self-efficacy, particularly when individuals relate to the models they observe. Verbal persuasion contributes positively to self-efficacy by enhancing motivation and confidence. However, affective states such as anxiety and stress negatively affect self-efficacy, underscoring the importance of emotional well-being in sustaining high self-belief. The findings highlight the need for organizations to promote self-efficacy among non-managerial employees by creating opportunities for mastery experience, providing role models, and offering constructive feedback. Addressing emotional well-being and reducing workplace stress are also crucial for fostering a supportive environment for self-efficacy. The limitations of the study include the restricted geographic scope of the Kegalle district, focus on government bank employees, potential self-report bias, and limited sample size. Future research could expand the scope to include emerging industries such as IT and explore other factors affecting self-efficacy through a qualitative approach.

Keywords: Affective states, mastery experiences, self-efficacy, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience.

FACTORS INFLUENCING UNDERGRADUATE INVOLVEMENT IN CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES AT RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA.

H.M.D.C.M. Herath^{1,*} and Y.M.W.G.P.K. Udurawana²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email:chamika.m620@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This explanatory study aimed to identify and address the factors influencing undergraduate involvement in career guidance and counseling services at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Guidance and counseling are among the educational services that support the efficacy of the educational system by guiding undergraduates through the learning process and helping them achieve their goals. This study specifically considers undergraduate involvement in career guidance and counseling at Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. According to a pilot study, undergraduate involvement in career guidance programs is lower than expected. A literature review guided the development of a conceptual model with five variables: personal, psychological, social, cultural, and institutional factors. This study facilitated the survey strategy through random sampling with a structured questionnaire and Google Forms, which was directed to a representative sample of 367 undergraduates of Rajarata University of Sri Lanka out of 8,752 undergraduates across all faculties of the university. SPSS software was utilized for data analysis, and all constructs were valid, reliable, and fit with the model. The regression analysis indicated that personal, cultural, and institutional factors significantly affected undergraduate involvement, explaining 76.2% of the variance, while social and psychological factors had an insignificant effect on undergraduate involvement. This study contributes to universities and educational policymakers by enabling them to monitor and support counselors for career guidance and counseling. Policies and practices are deeply embedded in local history and culture. In view of Sri Lanka's unique educational and social situation, researchers suggest that approximately 23.8% of the variance is determined by other crucial factors specific to the study.

Key words: Career guidance, undergraduate involvement, counseling services, Rajarata University, educational factors

**FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT RETENTION IN MASTER'S DEGREE
PROGRAM
A CASE STUDY OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

M.M.M.D. Kamalasiri^{1, *} and Y.M.W.G.P.K. Udurawana²

*^{1,2}Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata
University of Sri Lanka, Mihinthale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: malithidewmini99@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This explanatory study aimed to identify and address the factors influencing student retention in master's degree programs. A master's degree is an advanced academic qualification awarded by a university after completing a course that demonstrates a deep understanding of a specific subject or professional area. Nowadays, simply earning a degree is not sufficient for career advancement, as there is intense competition among companies to attract highly educated individuals. Therefore, obtaining a postgraduate degree, such as a master's degree, has become increasingly important. Earning a master's degree can greatly enhance a career by allowing individuals to apply for more advanced jobs, earn higher salaries, and become more valuable employees. This also increases the job security. This study identifies and analyzes various determinants, including institutional-related factors, personal factors, psychological factors, situational factors, and support systems, which significantly shape students' decisions to persist in their academic journey. Using a quantitative research approach, this study examines a sample of 56 students from the 2022 and 2023 master's cohorts enrolled in the Faculty of Management at RUSL. The entire population was used as the sample. Data analysis was conducted using the SPSS software, confirming that all constructs were valid, reliable, and fit the model. The findings revealed that only one variable has a significant impact on students' intention to retain a master's degree program: the institutional-related factor. The insights derived from this research aim to provide valuable information to the academic community, university administrators, and policymakers, fostering a deeper understanding of the dynamics influencing students' intentions to persist in Master's degree programs at RUSL and beyond.

Keywords- Institutional-related factors, Personal factors, Psychological factors, Situational factors, Support systems, Intention to retain, Master 's degree

FACTORS INFLUENCING MIGRATION INTENTION OF MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATE IN SRI LANKA

C. Muthukumarana^{1,*} and S.D. Weerawardane²

^{1,2}*Horizon Campus, Malabe.*

*Corresponding author (Email: chalanigethmini2000@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka is a developing nation with a comparatively high graduate unemployment rate. State universities offer limited post-secondary education. Additionally, new private universities have been established and dynamic changes in the country's educational system have occurred over time. Many Sri Lankan students still choose to study abroad in wealthier countries, and many plan to migrate permanently after earning their degrees. This study focuses on the economic, social, and political push and pull factors that influence the migration intentions of management undergraduates. Migration intention among educated youth is a critical issue in developing countries such as Sri Lanka. This study sought to determine the primary motivations that lead undergraduate students to consider migration and how this information might help in formulating policy and management decisions. A quantitative research method was employed using the responses of management undergraduates across numerous universities in Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional survey was conducted covering a sample of 100 management undergraduates using a convenience sampling method to collect data. Push and pull factors, encompassing economic, social, and political instability, were measured using a self-administered questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS software. The preliminary results of the study indicate that economic factors such as job opportunities and income potential in foreign countries are the most significant pull factors, whereas local economic instability and limited career prospects are the push factors for migration. Some social factors, such as quality of life, educational opportunities, and the influence of family members, were also identified as important determinants. Moreover, political factors, including governance quality and political stability, affect students' intentions to migrate in the future. The implications of these findings for policymakers and educational institutions are also discussed. By understanding why students want to leave or remain, strategies can be developed to address this issue, thereby retaining talented individuals.

Keywords: Migration intention, economic push factors, social push factors, political push factors, economic pull factors, social pull factors, political pull factor

FACTORS INFLUENCING ATTITUDE TOWARDS E-GOVERNMENT ADOPTION: A STUDY IN SOUTHERN PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

B.B.D.S. Abeykoon^{1,*} and A.B. Sirisena²

^{1,2}*Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: dilhani@mgt.ruh.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

E-government adoption can significantly improve government service provisions for citizens. Unfortunately, e-government penetration rates remain relatively low among emerging economies. Accordingly, understanding the factors that affect e-government adoption can significantly increase adoption rates. Despite the importance, studies examining these factors remain limited, creating a gap in understanding. Therefore, the objective of the current study is to analyze the impact of contextual factors (i.e., Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Perceived Risk) on the adoption of e-government services among citizens of the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. The authors used factors originating from the Unified Model of E-government Adoption (UMEGA), which is one of the most popular models used in this context. The study collected data from 200 respondents using a structured questionnaire, employing the convenience sampling technique. The regression model revealed a moderate fit with an R^2 value of 0.392. Thus, 39.2% of the variance in adoption can be explained by the four contextual factors modelled here. Although Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, and Social Influence indicated significant positive effects, Perceived Risk became insignificant. While the authors acknowledge the preliminary nature of the study, this validates the contextual factors within the context of Sri Lanka, specifically the Southern Province. This study provides valuable insights to policymakers and service providers, including prioritizing communications, designing user-friendly interfaces, and promoting services through community leaders and influencers.

Keywords: e-government, context factors, UMEGA, attitude

IDENTIFYING THE E-LEARNING CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS DURING PANDEMIC SITUATIONS IN CASE OF UNDERGRADUATES IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

H. G. L. A. L. Jayasekara^{1,*} and R. A.M. Madhuwanthi²

^{1,2}*London Metropolitan University*

*Corresponding author (Email: anushka94jayasekara@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the e-learning challenges faced by students during pandemic situations, specifically focusing on undergraduates in Sri Lanka's Kurunegala District during COVID-19. The pandemic led to global lockdowns, severely disrupting education, with schools and universities forced to close. Sri Lanka experienced similar issues, with the government pushing for e-learning, though universities faced difficulties transitioning to online platforms. This research aims to identify the challenges faced by undergraduates pursuing bachelor's degrees, who are more dependent on structured courses compared to postgraduates. E-learning, while driven by technological advancements, presented various challenges, such as issues with technology, compatibility, affordability, adaptability, and the workload and stress placed on students. Effective e-learning requires not only engaging and motivating content but also addressing the psychological strain on students. The pandemic amplified these difficulties, highlighting the importance of enhanced e-learning strategies in developing nations like Sri Lanka, where resources are limited. The study followed a positivist research philosophy and a deductive approach, relying on a survey strategy and quantitative methods. To investigate these challenges, the study surveyed 368 respondents, with 361 being undergraduates from the Kurunegala District. The research utilized both primary and secondary data, with a structured online questionnaire used to gather primary data and secondary data drawn from websites, journals, and blogs. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 26 and MS Excel. The findings revealed a moderate correlation between e-learning engagement and the identified challenges: technology, compatibility, affordability, adaptability, and workload and stress. Interestingly, students faced no significant issues with e-learning applications, the internet, or devices, but struggled with a lack of suitable study spaces and collaborative opportunities. These insights provide valuable contributions to overcoming e-learning barriers in Sri Lanka's education system during future pandemic-like crises.

Keywords: E-Learning, engaging in e-learning, e-learning challenges, pandemic situations, undergraduates

CHALLENGES FACING LECTURER AND STUDENT IN USING A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN SRI LANKA (IN CASE OF USING LMS IN ABC CAMPUS)

M.D. Munasinghe^{1,*} and R.A.M. Madhuwanthi²

^{1,2}*London Metropolitan University.*

*Corresponding author(Email: madushandmunasinghe@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

E-learning has emerged as a critical component of higher education in Sri Lanka, driven by the rising demand for post-secondary education. Despite government efforts to promote remote learning through platforms such as Moodle and Zoom, lecturers and students continue to face significant challenges in effectively using Learning Management Systems (LMS). This study examines these challenges in the context of Sri Lanka's higher education system, with an emphasis on the ABC Campus. The most significant issues identified were economic concerns, quality content issues, and policy issues from the student perspective. Economic constraints such as technology infrastructure and cost-effectiveness impede the integration of educational technology. University management and policy issues affect LMS usage from the lecturer's perspective. Data were collected using a positivist research philosophy and deductive approach, with 279 students and 60 lecturers participating in surveys and case studies. Statistical analysis using SPSS and Excel revealed that reliable energy access, affordable Internet, and clear policies are essential for successful LMS implementation. The quality of LMS content, policy issues, economic concerns, and university management have a significant impact on both students and lecturers when using LMS. The findings highlight that improved content quality, enhanced technical support, policy updates, and institutional support are critical for overcoming cultural barriers and governance challenges. Addressing economic constraints through government intervention and strategic institutional planning is crucial for the successful implementation of LMS in Sri Lankan higher education. This study provides valuable insights for developing effective e-learning strategies tailored to Sri Lanka, with broader implications for improving higher education quality and accessibility in developing countries.

Keywords: E-Learning, learning management system (LMS)

KEY FACTORS BEHIND KNOWLEDGE HOARDING AMONG UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

J.M.S.T. Karunarathna^{1,*} and A.K. Anjala²

^{1,2}*Rajarata University of Sri Lanka.*

*Corresponding author (Email: bm2020190@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors influencing knowledge-hoarding behavior among management undergraduates in state universities in Sri Lanka. Despite extensive research on knowledge sharing in Sri Lanka, no study has explored the factors influencing knowledge hoarding among state university undergraduates, which this study seeks to address. Drawing upon an extensive literature review, a comprehensive model was developed that incorporated individual characteristics, organizational environment, and social influences as independent variables, with knowledge-hoarding behavior as the dependent variable. This research focuses on management undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities, utilizing a stratified sampling method to ensure diverse representation across different institutions. Data were collected through an online survey administered through Google Forms, yielding 386 responses, representing a response rate of 55.1%. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 29, employing descriptive statistics and regression analysis to examine the relationships between variables. The regression analysis revealed an R-squared value of 0.532, indicating that these factors collectively accounted for 53.2% of the variance in knowledge hoarding behavior among undergraduates. Specifically, the findings indicate that organizational environment ($B = 0.414$, $p < 0.001$) and social influences ($B = 0.548$, $p < 0.001$) are significant predictors of knowledge-hoarding behavior. In contrast, the individual characteristics were not significant predictors. The study concludes that knowledge-hoarding behavior among management undergraduates in Sri Lankan state universities is predominantly influenced by the organizational environment and social factors. Based on these findings, this study recommends fostering a culture of knowledge sharing through initiatives such as knowledge-sharing workshops and seminars, developing platforms for collaborative learning, enhancing university policies and practices to support open communication and collaboration, and improving technological tools to facilitate secure and efficient knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Knowledge hoarding, Individual characteristics, organizational environment, social influences, state universities

IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS ON EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MANAGEMENT GRADUATES OF RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

S.N.R. Gunathilaka¹ and M.A.I.T. Marasinghe^{2,*}

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

* Corresponding author: (Email: indunilmarasinghe@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

The employability of graduates has become a critical concern in the modern job market, in which technical proficiency alone no longer ensures successful employment. Soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, are increasingly recognized as essential competencies that complement technical knowledge and enhance job readiness. However, there is limited research on how these soft skills specifically impact management graduates' employability. This study explores the effect of soft skills on the employability of management graduates from Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, aiming to identify the competencies most valued by employers and assess graduate preparedness in these areas. A quantitative approach was used with data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to 200 management graduates from various pass-out years. The sample was selected using convenience sampling. SPSS was used for the data analysis, incorporating both primary and secondary sources. The results reveal a significant positive correlation between soft skills and employability. Core skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, were identified as crucial for securing employment, with graduates demonstrating advanced competencies in these areas achieving higher employment rates. Employers have also highlighted the importance of adaptability and emotional intelligence, particularly in dynamic work environments. This study identified gaps in Rajarata University's current curriculum and extracurricular activities, suggesting areas for improvement in developing these essential skills. Recommendations include integrating soft skill development into the academic curriculum, strengthening industry-academic partnerships, and offering targeted training workshops. This study emphasizes the pivotal role of soft skills in enhancing employability and offers actionable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and employers to better prepare graduates for the evolving job market.

Keywords: Competencies, graduate employability, soft skills, state universities

IMPACT OF STUDENT ROLE BEHAVIOUR IN VALUE CO-CREATION ON UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE IN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA.

R.U.R.D.W.M.W.B.O.C. Dissanayake^{1,*} and D.M Endagamage²

¹*Sri Lanka Institution of Information Technology,*

²*University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding author (Email: oshani.d@slit.lk)

ABSTRACT

With the commanding competition in the higher education sector, there has been global growth in private higher education universities to meet the increasing demand. Recently, private higher education has started to move from the traditional marketing concept of 'student as a customer' to 'co-creation' of value, with the intention of maintaining the quality of education while facing high competition in the private education sector. The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of student role behavior on value co-creation and undergraduate experience at a private university in Sri Lanka. The study was quantitative in design, using a self-administered questionnaire with a sample of 370 students from the Business Management Faculty and the Faculty of Computing of a selected private higher education institution. SPSS Statistics V21.0 software was used for the analysis. Key areas of the study include identifying the role of a student, the level of co-creation behavior, and using a validated model of higher educational institutions to measure students' educational experience. The key findings of the study show that the majority of students in the university play a mixed role (irregular), partly as customers, and partly as co-creators. Educational experience is also better for co-creators than for their irregular counterparts. Hence, there is a significant positive relationship between role behavior in co-creation and educational experience. Feedback, helping, and responsible behavior had a significant positive impact, while the age of the student had a significant negative impact on educational experience. Academic level significantly moderates the relationship between role behavior and educational experience. Residual analysis ensured the accuracy of the final model, and the adequacy of the model was 51% (Adjusted R-squared=0.51). Moreover, this study adds valuable insights by exploring student-centered learning and active engagement as key drivers of academic success. Universities can design their curriculum by adding more practical aspects rather than focusing solely on theories. A well-balanced curriculum is therefore important for universities. This will facilitate and promote the entire process and lead to improved thinking patterns and the implementation of new solutions.

Keywords: Educational experience, higher education, private higher education institutions, role-behaviour, value co-creation

EXPLORING EDUCATORS' PERCEPTION OF OUTCOME-BASED MANAGEMENT EDUCATION; THE CASE OF STATE UNIVERSITY IN SRI LANKA

K.G.C.C. Piyasena^{1,*}, L.A. Mohommed^{2,*} and R.M. Danapala³

¹ Faculty of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Malaysia

² Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

³ Department of English Language Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Teaching, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

* Corresponding author (Email: kgccpiyasen@lincoln.edu.my or piyasena@sjp.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is an internationally recognized pedagogical framework that focuses on clearly defining the skills and knowledge that students are expected to acquire by the completion of a program, course, or session. In management education, the objective is to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to meet the demands of the business management field. Despite OBE's student-centered nature, educators continue to play a central role in decision-making, particularly in Sri Lanka, where the education system is shaped by religious heritage and colonial history. However, little research has been conducted on how educators in Sri Lanka perceive the OBE framework. This study investigates the research question, "How do educators perceive the OBE approach?" and aimed to explore the perceptions of educators in management education in Sri Lanka. The study holds both empirical and theoretical significance, guiding decision-making for outcome-based management education and reassessing theories such as 'constructive alignment' and 'pedagogical content knowledge.' A qualitative, single-case design was employed owing to data accessibility. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 senior educators, selected based on their roles in faculty board decisions and their experience with both traditional teacher-centered education and the OBE approach. Data were analyzed thematically using NVIVO content analysis software. The findings revealed that 86.7% of participants viewed the OBE approach as more beneficial for students, while 66.7% perceived it to be more effective than traditional teaching methods. Furthermore, educators noted increased student engagement with the implementation of the OBE. However, they also expressed the need for greater resource allocation (80%), more training opportunities (60%), and increased stakeholder engagement (53%) to improve the applicability of the OBE in management education in Sri Lanka. This study opens avenues for future research examining the perceptions of students and management professionals regarding outcome-based management education.

Keywords: Educator, management education, outcome-based education.

FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER PREFERENCES OF MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITIES IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

G.H.C. Prabhashini^{1,*} and J.S. Kumari²

^{1,2}*Department of Accountancy & Finance, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka*

*Corresponding Author (Email: ac2020295@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study examined the factors influencing career preferences among management undergraduates at universities in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. A decline in career preferences among these students could have significant societal implications, impacting both the national economy and socioeconomic well-being of the country. A quantitative research approach was used, with data gathered through structured questionnaires distributed to 377 undergraduates. The sample size was determined using the Morgan table, referencing University Grants Commission data, which estimates that around 20,000 undergraduates are enrolled in universities within Western Province. Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses were used to analyze the collected data. The results revealed significant relationships between the independent variables and career preferences. Societal and technological factors (STF) were found to strongly influence career choices, highlighting the role of societal trends and technological developments. Personal factors (PF), such as individual interests and skills, were also significant. Job-related factors (JRF), including salary expectations, job security, and career growth opportunities, impact career preferences, while individual factors (IF), such as career ambitions and long-term goals, further shape career decisions. However, university-related factors (URF) had an insignificant effect on students' career preferences. These findings offer critical insights for educators, policymakers, and employers, emphasizing the diverse influences that shape students' career decisions. By addressing these factors, universities can enhance their career guidance programs to align better with students' needs and aspirations. This study provides practical recommendations for improving career development initiatives in Sri Lankan higher education, aiming to support more informed career decision-making among management undergraduates.

Keywords: Intentional factors, job-related factors, personal factors, social & technological factors, university related factors

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EFFECT OF TOTAL PRODUCTIVE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES ON MANUFACTURING PERFORMANCE: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO APPAREL INDUSTRY IN COLOMBO DISTRICT IN SRI LANKA

D.M.S.H. Maduwanthi^{1,*} and W.M.P.G.R. Pushpakumara²

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding Author (Email: bm2019220@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's apparel industry is crucial, accounting for over 50% of exports, and significantly affecting foreign exchange and employment. However, manufacturers contend with global competition, which requires superior quality, quicker delivery, and lower costs. Traditionally, they have employed reactive maintenance, fixing machines post-failure, causing unpredictable breakdowns, wastage, and inventory defects. Effective manufacturing and maintenance strategies can enhance productivity, cost efficiency, product quality, and delivery speeds. Total Productive Maintenance (TPM), a proactive strategy, is essential for lean production to maximize asset use. By implementing TPM's preventive principles, Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers can minimize plant disruptions, enhance asset reliability, and reduce operating costs. Unlike reactive maintenance, TPM prevents failures through routine cleaning and inspection. The present study aims to address this critical gap by investigating the influence of planned maintenance, quality maintenance, training and development, and development management on cost efficiency, product quality, on-time delivery, and volume flexibility. A structured questionnaire was used to gather responses from 150 managers and owners of export-oriented firms with established TPM programmes. Correlation and regression techniques determine the nature and magnitude of the relationships between TPM practices and manufacturing performance. All the hypothesized maintenance elements exhibited strong positive correlations with manufacturing effectiveness, accounting for over 80% of the improvements. Planned maintenance activities emerged as the primary driver, with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.409, which significantly enhanced production stability. Development management strategies were essential for establishing a competitive advantage, with a coefficient of 0.237. Training initiatives and quality control exhibited comparable effects, with coefficients in the approximate range of 0.2, underscoring the importance of learning and conformance capabilities. These findings align with asset management theories positing equipment availability and change management as priority areas for leveraging TPM-led transformations in manufacturing excellence. Overall, this study contributes significantly to understanding the critical role of TPM in enhancing the competitiveness of Sri Lanka's apparel industry, offering theoretical insights and practical recommendations for industry stakeholders. Future observational audits and longitudinal tracking studies can yield more objective estimates of the transformed manufacturing capabilities.

Keywords: Total productive maintenance, planned maintenance, quality maintenance, training, development management

**IMPACT OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) ON ACHIEVING
ACADEMIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI): EVIDENCE FROM THE
ACADEMIC STAFF OF PRIVATE SECTOR EDUCATION INSTITUTES**

E.M.N.D. Ekanayake*

Esoft Metro Campus

*Corresponding Author (Email: bm2019220@mgt.rjt.ac.lk)

ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of Total Quality Management (TQM) on achieving employee Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within educational institutes in Western Province, Sri Lanka. It was conducted at 20 private sector education institutes. TQM is a management approach that focuses on continuous improvements, customer satisfaction, and employee empowerment. This study examines how implementing TQM principles influences academic staff performance and productivity by explicitly meeting KPIs. This study aims to identify the key factors contributing to the successful alignment of TQM practices with academic KPIs through a mixed-method approach involving surveys, a comprehensive literature review, and empirical analysis. It investigates the roles of student success, admissions, enrollment, and staff performance. This will add to the graduation rates, course success rates, student outcomes, and student engagement for student success. Transfer rate, enrollment, retention, and effectiveness of marketing programs for admissions and enrollment, faculty workload and productivity, student-to-faculty ratio, and faculty turnover for staff performance will be measured. These factors affect the tracking of a firm's progress, with which decision-makers may perform internal and external benchmarking. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of TQM in enhancing academic staff performance metrics and achieving institutional goals. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on TQM and performance management. It offers practical recommendations for organizations to optimize quality management practices and improve employee KPI attainment.

Keywords: TQM, KPI, student success, admissions and enrolment, staff performance

IMPACT OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KANDY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AREA)

K.G.N.S. Rathnasena^{1,*}, W.M.P.G.R. Pushpakumara² and T.M.O.K.K. Bandara³

^{1,2}*Department of Business Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale*

*Corresponding Author (Email: nipunirathnsena6@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a significant role in economic development worldwide. This study investigated the impact of Total quality management practices on operational performance in the small and medium enterprises in the Kandy Municipal Council area. Employing a quantitative research approach, this study focuses on the impact of organizational leadership, process management, supplier quality management, customer focus, and employee involvement. The respondents were small and medium enterprises in the Kandy Municipal Council area. The sample size was 114 Small and Medium enterprises, and the population comprised 161 Small and Medium enterprises located in the Kandy Municipal Council area. SPSS software was used to analyze the data. The reliability, validity, and regular distribution of the responses were significant among the variables. Descriptive and inferential statistics were evaluated during the data-analysis phase. The hypotheses were tested using correlation and regression analyses, out of which four hypotheses were accepted and one was rejected. The findings revealed a high correlation among all the variables and a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The data supported four of the five hypotheses, and the multiple regression analysis confirmed the conclusions of the correlation analysis. The findings indicate that while process management, supplier quality management, customer focus, and employee involvement significantly impact operational performance, organizational leadership does not. To improve operational performance, it is essential to provide adequate process management, supplier quality management, customer focus, and employee involvement among SMEs in the Kandy Municipal Council area.

Keywords: Total quality management practices, supplier quality management, customer focus, employee involvement, operational performance



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Faculty of Management Studies
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka
Mihintale, Sri Lanka
Tel/Fax: +9425226680
Web: <http://fms.rjt.ac.lk/irsm2024/>
Email: irsm@mgt.rjt.ac.lk