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1ST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP (ICOME 2022)

"Business Management: Innovation, Challenges and Resilience"

31st March - 1st April 2022

Faculty of Management Studies
The Open University of Sri Lanka

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1st International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2022)

CHIEF GUEST



Professor Philip Kotler

Philip Kotler is an American marketing author, consultant, and professor; the S. C. Johnson & Son Distinguished Professor of International Marketing at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. He is known for popularizing the definition of marketing mix. Philip Kotler is well known as the "Father of Modern Marketing" the world over. Kotler's book "Marketing Management" is the most widely read textbook in marketing around the world.

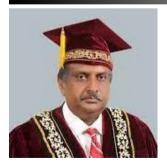
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Professor WU Xiaobo is currently serving as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and served as a Former Dean of the School of Management, Zhejiang University, the Director of National Institute for Innovation Management (NIIM), After obtaining his PhD in Management from Zhejiang University in 1992, Professor WU conducted his postdoctoral research at Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand (1996). He had been a visiting scholar of the Institute for Manufacturing and the Judge Institute of Management Studies at Cambridge University, UK (1996-1997).



Professor Xiaobo WU

GUEST SPEAKER



Professor Sampath Amaratunge

Professor Sampath Amaratunge, presently the Chairman of University Grant Commission (UGC), Sri Lanka has won several awards including the prestigious research excellence award (2002) of the Kyushu Society or Rural Economics, Japan. He was also elected as a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, United Kingdom as a representative of the countries under the constituency II.



MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA



I consider it a great privilege to issue this message for the memorable event, the First International Research Conference on Management Entrepreneurship (ICOME) with a timely theme "Business Management: Innovation, Challenges and Resilience", organized by the Faculty of Management Studies, the youngest Faculty established at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL).

It is assured that this research conference will provide a precious opportunity to move towards achieving one of the much valued objectives of the OUSL that is to become a renowned academic and research institution, not only in Sri Lanka, but also the world over. One of the leading tasks expected to be carried out by the university academics of the modern day is to strengthen the research culture and thereby to contribute towards the wider body of knowledge that is necessary to ensure speedy progress of humankind. I fervently wish that this admirable effort by the organizing committee of the conference will make an everlasting contribution to the dynamic field of management, which could be productively and fruitfully utilized by all the interested parties around the globe, more importantly the academics, industry partners and the professionals.

I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude towards all those who relentlessly and tirelessly contributed in making this international conference a reality. My appreciation goes towards the organizing committee that carried out numerous activities in making this landmark event a success.

My warmest wishes go to all those that actively contributed towards making the ICOME a reality, including those that will make presentations at the symposium.

Professor P.M.C Thilakerathne



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA



I am extremely delighted to pen this message to mark the First International Research event. Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME) organized by the Faculty of Management Studies of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL), on the theme "Business Management: Innovation, Challenges and Resilience", One of the prime objectives of the newly established Faculty of Management Studies is to foster and strengthen the research culture, especially in relation to the field of

management, as the research plays a pivotal role in ensuring quality and standing of any institution that provides higher education opportunities.

Research contributes in no small measure in broadening the existing knowledge base and in deepening our intellectual landscape. I am highly confident that ICOME 2022 will create a forum for all stakeholders including scholars, professionals, policymakers, and students to get together and share their knowledge in creating a better world in which innovation and entrepreneurship play a decisive role.

This noteworthy event could not have been a reality if not for the enormous dedication of the faculty members ably assisted and lead by the organizing committee of the conference. Organizing an international research conference of this nature is a no small task and the task becomes mammoth when it is done for the first time, the members of the Faculty of Management studies are capable of making the impossible, possible. I am certain that their utmost dedication will make this international conference a resounding success.

It is the teamwork that will ensure the success of the ICOME and therefore my deepest appreciation goes to all those that contributed in making the conference a reality, including academics, professionals, presenters, sponsors and all the supporting staff.

Professor V. Sivalogathasan



MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR



It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the First International Conference on Management Entrepreneurship (ICOME). Being the youngest faculty of the university, the Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) in the Open University of Sri Lanka proudly conducting ICOME- 2022 under the theme "Business Management: Innovation, Challenges Resilience". As you know the event would be graced by Prof. Philip Kotler and Prof. Xiaobo WU, renowned researchers in the subject domain of research.

One of the major attributes of this event is to create a productive forum for researchers worldwide to present their research studies. The objectives of the conference are to bring local and foreign researchers and practitioners to one forum to share, disseminate current developments and insights in Business Management and Entrepreneurship, strengthen the scholarly and professional network among researchers and underpin the need for collaboration and cooperation of individuals from a wider range of professional backgrounds in Business Management and Entrepreneurship, the effort surely will contribute towards creating a sustainable future.

ICOME has provided a cross-disciplinary forum for researchers and practitioners in management to address their specific research problems and to conceptualize in their own areas of expertise. About seventy authors and presenters from different territories in the world will make their valuable contributions at ICOME 2022.

As the chair of the conference, I appreciate the leadership given by the Vice-chancellor of the Open University of Sri Lanka and the Dean, Faculty of Management Studies. I am especially indebted to the Department of English language teaching, CETME, IT division, CRC staff, Finance division, VC office and all the faculties and divisions of the Open University of Sri Lanka. The hard work and dedication of all the members of the organizing, planning, technical and financial committees of ICOME is the main factor behind the success of this landmark event. Most of all, I should extend my gratitude to the presenters, reviewers, and conference chairs for their great contribution. Further, I would like to thank our sponsors for their generous financial support.

I hope that you will find First International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME) organized by the FMS, OUSL stimulating, constructive and inspiring.

Professor Nalin Abeysekera



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH UNIT, THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA



I am indeed happy to contribute this message to the First International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME) organized by the Faculty of Management Studies of the Open University of Sri Lanka.

The annual Open University Research Sessions (OURS) organized by the Research Unit of OUSL established itself as a high caliber research forum that attracts not only researchers from the OUSL community, but also from other state universities and higher education institutions,

creating a forum for presenting and discussing valuable research findings leading to enriching experiences to the researchers. OURS significantly contributed to enhance the research culture among OUSL staff members in ODL and disciplinary-based research, which directly inspired our staff members to participate at other national and international conferences including the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) conference by contributing quality research findings. The OUSL hosted the 34th Annual Conference of AAOU in 2021.

As a further step ahead of enhancing the research culture in OUSL, the Faculty of Management Studies is hosting the 1st ICOME 2022 on 31st of March and 1st of April 2022 in a virtual platform. The theme of the conference is "Business Management: Innovation, Challenges and Resilience".

The essence of a university in the 20th and 21st centuries has been the unity of teaching and research. Although we have responsibilities to admit students and teach them to the highest degree of excellence, it is through our research performance, the much desired global recognition can be gained.

ICOME 2022 will provide insights into the latest research and provide a plenty of opportunities for the academics and researchers to exchange their research deliberations to build up collaborative research with local and foreign universities and research institutes and thereby foster national development with economic productivity. ICOME 2022 will also be a stepping-stone for further development of OUSL's national and international advocacy campaigns.

While congratulating the presenters and thanking the Conference Committee, I wish the ICOME 2022 all success.

Professor Shyama R. Weerakoon



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Business Entrepreneurship, and Innovation



BEYOND TYPICAL ENTREPRENEURS' CHARACTERISTICS: EXPLORING SRI LANKAN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS' PERSONALITY

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Abstract

Social entrepreneurship is increasingly recognized as a crucial element for the progress of societies. Consequently, both governments and researchers have shown particular interest in understanding this phenomenon. However, there is little research investigating the differences between typical and social entrepreneurs traits. The study's main purpose is to explore the unique personality of social entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka. Given the relatively new and unexplored nature of the research problem, a qualitative, specifically narrative design, was adopted. Ten social entrepreneurs were purposively approached and interviewed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze and interpret qualitative data. The findings suggest that social entrepreneurs exhibited unique characteristics such as, being reightous, sense of social responsibility and empathy. This research provides new insights into personality trait differences between social and traditional entrepreneurs.

Keywords: entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, personality, Sri Lanka

THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON THE USE OF BUSINESS ANALYTICS IN SRI LANKAN COMPANIES

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Abstract

At present, business analytics has become an extremely popular field as it helps to investigate past business performance and to gain insights and predict future business performances. This study intends to investigate the impact of organizational culture on the usage of business analytics across Sri Lankan companies. The main identified independent variable of the study is organizational culture to measure the dependent variable of the "use of business analytics". This research has used a quantitative approach and survey method to test the hypothesis. A total of 311 Sri Lankan companies have been selected through a simple random sampling to collect primary data. Collected data has been analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and linear regression analysis to achieve the research objectives. According to the results, there is a significant positive relationship between organizational culture and the use of business analytics. The main recommendation is that the organizations need to develop a culture, in terms of analytics, to improve the applicability of business analytics.

Keywords: business analytics, use of business analytics, analytic culture



THE NATURE OF CRISES FACED BY SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE TOURISM SECTOR IN SOUTHERN SRI LANKA: EVIDENCE FROM A PILOT STUDY.

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Abstract

Organizational crises management is a critical factor in determining an organization's survival. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are more vulnerable to crises than other organizations due to their characteristics. Crisis management is a heavily researched area in organizational management, with SMEs receiving comparatively less attention despite SMEs' positive contributions to any economy. Most previous empirical studies focused on specific crisis types and the impact on SMEs or crises in general, focusing on quantifiable factors. However, the nature of various crises that may impact SMEs can determine their vulnerability. Thus, understanding the nature of different crises faced by SMEs is critical in directing management to better manage crises encountered during business operations. This research aims to fill this gap in the existing academic literature. A social constructivist approach is used to investigate the crisis phenomenon confronting SMEs. Thus, using the phenomenological perspective, a qualitative study was conducted to examine the nature of SME crises, and SME owner-managers with crisis experience were purposefully chosen and interviewed. Accordingly, this pilot study investigates the nature of crises faced by Sri Lankan SMEs in the tourism industry. The findings identified two broad categories of the nature of crises: (1) the wide range of crises that SMEs face and (2) factors that increase SMEs' vulnerability to the crisis. Thus, this study adds to the existing literature by conducting an in-depth analysis of the SME crisis phenomenon to explore the nature of crises faced by SMEs in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: organizational crisis, crisis management, SMEs, nature of crises, tourism industry

IMPACT OF INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE ON THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE TOURIST HOTELS IN SRI LANKA: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This study aims at developing a conceptual framework for a doctoral study in understanding the impact of innovation and entrepreneurial culture on the business performance of hotel industry. World over, the impact of tourism on sociocultural and socioeconomic environment is substantial. During 2015 -2018, a positive sectorial distribution of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was found in accommodation, and food and beverage service activities, despite the constant de-growth in GDP of Sri Lanka. An extremist terrorist bout and Covid 19 pandemic are identified as the main reasons for declining tourism related activities since 2019 onwards. Conversely, there appears to be a vast opportunity for improving the GDP growth by enhancing the business performance of small and medium scale tourist hotels (SMTHs), since 52% of classified tourist hotels in Sri Lanka are SMTHs, maintaining reasonable profitability. Concurrently, an argument can be made that the business performance of such hotels could be enhanced through improved innovation and conducive entrepreneurial culture. Empirical studies assessing the relationship between innovation and business performance yielded mixed and inconclusive results. There have been limited number of studies that aimed at understanding the relationship between entrepreneurial culture and business performance. Moreover, researchers have extensively studied innovation, entrepreneurial culture and business performance in isolation, but rarely, all factors in combination. This contextual and theoretical knowledge deficiency suggests the importance of understanding the combined effect of innovation and entrepreneurial culture on the business performance. The proposed research is a survey based, cross-sectional study and SPSS Statistics 28.0 software package is relied upon for data analysis.

Keywords: Business Performance, Entrepreneurial Culture, Innovation, Small and Medium Scale Tourist Hotels, Small and Medium Enterprises



PROACTIVE PERSONALITY AND CAREER ADAPTABILITY OF FINAL YEAR ENTREPRENEURSHIP UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA: THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SELF-EFFICACY

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Abstract

Amidst the technological advancements and the increasing complexity and uncertainty in the business world, the development of career adaptation skills is one of the significant factors affecting the success of undergraduates. However, the controversial findings regarding the determinants of career adaptability have triggered this study to question what antecedents would predict undergraduates' career adaptability. Proactive personality on career adaptability is a popular area for study within the subject of career adaptability. However, empirical research on this issue in the context of Sri Lanka is insufficient. Furthermore, the mediating role of this relationship as an intervening mechanism is less understood, and there is a knowledge gap in the literature. The major contribution of this research is to examine the direct and indirect impact of proactive personality on career adaptability under the mediating role of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Data is collected using self-administered questionnaires and distributed using the convenience sample technique among undergraduates 120 entrepreneurship degree programs at five state universities in Sri Lanka. The results indicate that a proactive personality has a significant and positive impact on career adaptability. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the indirect impact of proactive personality on career adaptability, mediated through entrepreneurial self-efficacy, was significant. The results of this research assist university mentors, coaches, and policymakers in conceptualizing and implementing relevant interventions and projects that incorporate university support for transitioning undergraduates to a more dynamic work world.

Keywords: career adaptability, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, proactive personality, undergraduates

A CRITICAL REVISIT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF COOPERATIVES: A CASE STUDY OF MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The cooperative movement, a business initiative in its own right, operates in the market according to its unique set of principles that promote user ownership, user control and user benefit. However, despite the cooperative value system that emphasizes social wellbeing, the image it has developed in the minds of customers over time is apparently in trouble, due to the backlash from the neoliberal market economy that promotes consumerism. Against this backdrop, the current research paper focuses on understanding the nexus of connections that the principles of cooperatives have given rise to in creating the practices of its membership, in the light of the Theory of Social Practices. Neoliberalism as a political theory is critically analyzed in relation to its dominant practices, while shedding light on the pressures that those practices have brought to bear on the survival of cooperatives in the cotemporary neoliberal economic landscape of Sri Lanka. Based on the Case Study method, two Multipurpose Cooperative Societies in Sri Lanka were studied by analyzing the data gathered from them thematically through a Cross Case Analysis. It was found that of the three main components that are essential to the creation of a practice, namely, materials, meanings and competencies, meanings are the most powerful component in the creation of practices in cooperatives. Thus, it can be concluded that it is not the principles of cooperatives that have prevented cooperatives from competing effectively in the Sri Lankan retail market, but their implementation under the current economic conditions in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Cooperatives, Principles, Social Practices, Neoliberalism, Image



CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF SAP IMPLEMENTATION IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) refers to enterprise resource planning software, SAP system which is developed to help a company or an organization to conduct its business. SAP stands for System Application and Product in data processing (SAP, SAP.com, 2021). SAP ERP system implementation is a massive undertaking for any organization. There are many success and failure stories. Therefore, this paper analyzes the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) in the three stages of implementation: pre-implementation, implementation and postimplementation in Sri Lanka. The qualitative interpretive research was conducted by using in-depth interviews with SAP senior consultants. The data was a subject for a thematic analysis process to generate codes, themes, and concepts. An openended question interview makes a difference in supplying a few essential questions as a guideline.

This study found twelve critical success factors in the pre-implementation period, fifteen CSFs were found during the period of implementation and thirteen CSFs in the post-implementation period. The three main CSFs are Project Management, Gap analysis, Knowledge - and Involvement in the pre-implementation period. The other three main CSFs are Top management commitment, Requirement gathering and Process map in the implementation period-. Training and support, Change management, System impression and Quality are the three main CSFs in the postimplementation period.

This research will help SAP consultants, implementation partners, or companies to be better prepared for success in SAP implementation projects.

Keywords: SAP Critical success factor, SAP Pre Implementation, SAP Implementation, SAP Post Implementation, ERP success factors.

ECO- ENTREPRENEURSHIP PRACTICES OF SMES TOWARDS CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITION:

(CASE REVIEW OF SMES OPERATED FOR FAST-MOVING **CONSUMER GOODS SECTOR IN NEGOMBO)**

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Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate the implication of the sustainable practices, which are being adopted and followed by the small and medium scale enterprises in the fast-moving sectors, on customer value creation in order to prolong business success. The theories related to the green entrepreneurial orientation along with the empirical evidence of the sustainable business practices have been reviewed. The significance of adapting sustainable practices and the impact of green entrepreneurial applications on business operations have been systematically narrated. The fast- moving consumer goods sector comprising six different strata which belong to the Negombo Divisional Secretariat, has been used for the case review analysis with the green entrepreneurial practices which are directed towards value creation for consumers in the contemporary context. Green innovation and environmental related concern of the enterprises create value proposition in comparison to other green related facts. The opportunities and the challenges encountered by the eco- entrepreneurs in adopting and applying the green entrepreneurial practices have been critically evaluated. Moreover, the anticipated actions and the proposition to create customer value are being concluded as per the eco-entrepreneurial perspectives.

Keywords: Eco- entrepreneurship, customer value proposition, fast- moving consumer goods



Interdisciplinary Research



INFLUENCE OF MANAGERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON PROJECT SUCCESS IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION AND TRUST IN EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Over the years, the textile industry has remained the vital engine accelerating the growth of the global economy. The number of projects undertaken by the textile manufacturing industry has increased rapidly due to globalization. As such, the textile industry is famous for deploying an extensive range of projects every year, and there are higher stakes involved in project success. Project managers are responsible for stimulating employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, financial growth of the company, and maintaining a high level of trust in the working environment. The study aims to understand how the project managers' emotional intelligence is linked with project success, trust and employee satisfaction mediating roles. For this research study, quantitative data was collected from managers employed in the textile industries in Pakistan. Multiple statistical tests and data integration processes have been used to determine the findings and consequential results. PLS Regression has been conducted to test all the hypotheses, and SEM (Structural Equations Modelling) has been run in warpPLS (partial least squares) software version 6 to test the discriminant validity. Results indicate that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and project success. Further, there is a mediating effect of employee satisfaction between emotional intelligence and project success. Similarly, trust in employees mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and project success.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, project success, employee satisfaction, trust, organizational performance

APPLICATION OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TOM) PRINCIPLES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION: A STUDY ON NU AFFILIATED COLLEGES OF **MYMENSINGH DISTRICT**

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Abstract

At present quality in tertiary education is a significant issue in Bangladeshi education system. The main objective of the study is to assess the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles in tertiary education. This objective will be carried out by analyzing the application of the said principals on National University (NU) affiliated colleges of the Mymensingh District. The study was conducted by collecting primary data from different stakeholders of the colleges. The sample size of the study is 213 of which 96 were students, 53 were teachers, 34 were office staff. The other 30 samples were taken from the representative of organizations. Both primary and secondary data have been used in the study. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire which was designed as per Likert scale 5- point basis. The collected primary data has been analyzed by using SPSS software. Different statistical tools like mean, standard deviation etc. were used in order to analyze the data. The study found that internal and external customers of the colleges were satisfied with class room space, regularity of class, timely service, and skills of students. However, they are not satisfied with the seminar room, reward facility, multimedia and teaching aid facility, training facility, library facility, workshop related to job market, residence facility, transport system of the colleges as they believe that the service provided are not adequate. Based on the output of the study, it is suggested that the internal and the external customers' needs fulfillment may be a strong weapon to ensure quality service in education systems. In this regard, NU as the prime authority of tertiary education at college level in Bangladesh is required to confirm their close supervision and monitoring towards full-filling the needs of both groups of customers.

Keywords: TQM, tertiary education, quality education, customer satisfaction



THE STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF UNDERGRADUATES' ONLINE LEARNING READINESS ON BEHAVIORAL CHANGES TOWARDS LEARNING

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Abstract

Global changes with the COVID-19 pandemic have caused different industrial changes. The educational industry of Sri Lanka has also rapidly changed the learning process to reflect these changes. As such, the education industry has switched from blended learning to online learning due to the technological enhancements and social changes. As a result of the transformations which have occurred within the education system with web-based learning, different behavioral changes have occurred within the undergraduates. Previous studies have investigated aspects of online learning and the students' readiness toward this significant change. Yet there is a lack of empirically valid studies which have considered this scenario with the student self-attitudes and their behavioral changes. Thus, the study aimed to examine the undergraduates' online learning readiness on behavioral changes during the current pandemic. The stratified sampling technique has been utilized to select the study sample. Out of Sri Lankan undergraduates, 384 state, open, and private university undergraduates were selected randomly from each stratum. Quantitative data was collected through a self-administrated questionnaire. The iterative bootstrapping method in SmartPLS was implemented to achieve this. The findings indicated that computer/internet self-efficiency has not been influenced significantly while online communication self-efficacy has created a salient impact. Therefore the suggests that, there is a need to encourage students' self-motivation and control toward online learning to create the potential for educational procedures within the online platform.

Keywords: behavioral changes, online communication self-efficacy, online learning readiness

EXPLORING SUCCESSFUL ONLINE TEACHING METHODS FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHERS IN THE MANAGEMENT STREAM IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The field of education, especially traditional physical classroom learning, was severely affected by the lockdowns triggered by the pandemic since December 2019. Hence, to eliminate these adverse consequences, the whole world had to turn attention to online education as the only feasible option. However, teachers are less knowledgeable about the use of successful online teaching methods, whereas the number of studies conducted on this topic is minimal. This study explores effective, successful online teaching methods and techniques for university teachers in the management stream by gathering opinions and experiences of experts in university education in Sri Lanka. The population in this study were all university lecturers selected from universities throughout Sri Lanka. Qualitative approach was used in this study for data gathering and analysis by conducting ten interviews with the professionals of universities in Sri Lanka. This research used purposive and snowball sampling, and the data were analyzed using the Thematic Analysis approach. In this study, the synchronous, asynchronous, and the Flipped classroom methods were identified as the most successful online teaching methods. Discussions are also being carried out on other related strategies that can be combined with the above main online teaching methods to ensure a successful outcome. The findings of this study is intended to convince the higher education institutions in Sri Lanka to adopt the latest online teaching methods, which thereby improves the quality of online teaching.

Key Words – Online Teaching, Synchronous, Asynchronous, Flipping Classroom, Blended Teaching



STUDENT PERFORMULATOR: A TRACKING SYSTEM FOR PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT OF UNDERGRADUATES USING CONVOLUTIONAL NEURAL NETWORK MODEL

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Abstract

At present, all the higher educational institutions attempt to ensure their quality in various aspects to meet the local and international standards. In this context, however, most university students lack knowledge of their progress in the degree programme they are enrolled in. Therefore, there is a need for a tracking system in universities to understand and inform the relevant stakeholders of the undergraduate performance, enabling them to make correct decisions. Hence, the main objectives of this study are to provide the management a way to monitor and manage the students' progress and to update the students of their status according to pre-determined zones. A dataset containing 27 attributes and 9504 records was collected, considering the undergraduates from different levels in selected faculties in the University of Jaffna as the sample of this study. The researchers used the statistical technique of Chi-Square test to select the most appropriate predictor variables for student status prediction. Then, the Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) analysis was performed on Python programming with Pandas and NumPy libraries and Excel functions were carried out for the purpose of transforming categorical variables into numerical values. The experimental results show that the proposed model yielded best results up to 81.4 %. Researchers believe that this model could be applied by different faculties in other universities and future studies could be extended by improving this model.

Keywords: Convolutional Neural Network Model, Monitoring Mechanisms, Performance Measures, Python, Tracking System.

DEVELOP UNDERGRADUATES TOWARDS PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR BY USING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO PROMOTE RESILIENCE OF **SOCIETY**

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Abstract

Education plays a key role to enhance the emotional skills of students to create a more cooperated empathetic society. Emotional intelligence plays a vital role to change human behaviours towards pro-social behavior and to promote resilience of the society. Further, in this highly competitive education system maintaining ethical and emotional obligation towards colleagues is significant for others to survive in the challenging periods in their lives as well as a virtuous practice in their future. How students assist for that is questionable and evidence in this regard is lacking. This study was carried out to explore how emotional intelligence influences the pro-social behaviour of the undergraduates during the undergraduate period to promote resilience of society. Using a self-adminstered questionnaire, responses of 175 University of Ruhuna, Management undergraduates were gathered by employing the convenient sampling technique. Results of the study revealed that emotional perception (β =.218, sig = 0.04), emotional understanding $(\beta=.322, sig=0.02)$, emotional use $(\beta=.422, sig=0.00)$, and emotional management (β=.385, sig=0.00) have a positive influence on the pro-social behaviour of management undergraduates for resilience of the society. The findings of the study revealed vital implications to the practitioners and researchers about how emotional intelligence is used to develop pro-social behaviour among management undergraduates for resilience of the society. In the current study, the sample is limited to one-state university management undergraduates but for future studies it is suggested using a larger sample from different academic fields of other universities to explore the same phenomena.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, Emotions management and use, Management undergraduates pro-social behavior, Pro-social behavior, social resilience



ESPOUSED VALUES, PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL, AND WELLBEING OF PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY FROM POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Psychological capital (PsyCap) and well-being have fascinated the scholars and practitioners in the fields of management and organization studies as useful tools for promoting positive organizational behaviour. However, only very little has been discussed regarding the role of PsyCap and well-being on the relationship between organizational values and behaviour at individual and collective levels in organizations. Against this backdrop, this paper aims to explore how the espoused values of an organization affect the positive behaviours of its employees through PsyCap and well-being, in the context of the Sri Lankan public administrative organization (SLPAO). The study adopts an analysis of qualitative primary data (gathered through interviews) and secondary data gathered through document reviews in the light of CHOSE and PERMA models of PsyCap and well-being. Accordingly, responses of the key personnel of the SLPAO and the documentary sources were thematized to derive the PsyCap and well-being dimensions of the espoused values based on selected models. It was clearly apparent that the espoused value bundle, as a whole, will promote hope and optimism among the public officers at the individual level while the content of the espoused values addresses well-being at the collective level, each contributing to increasing positive behaviours. Findings imply the potential use of espoused values as an antecedent of positive behaviour among the public officers through PsyCap and well-being. Nevertheless, the study further substantiates the need for more scholarly investigations into the relationship of organizational values, PsyCap, well-being and positive organizational behaviour.

Keywords: espoused values, psychological capital, well-being, positive behaviour, public sector, Sri Lanka

THE IMPACT OF STUDENTS' AWARENESS ON ADAPTABILITY OF E-LEARNING DURING COVID-19 **PANDEMIC**

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a worldwide health concern and has had a significant impact on education. In the absence of traditional classroom teaching, e-learning has emerged as the only viable option in ensuring the contribution of the learning process. Therefore, the impact of students' awareness of the adaptability of e-learning was identified as a contemporary issue and an opportunity to practically study the students' adaptability of e-learning. Hence, this research study attempted to examine the impact of students' awareness of technological requirements, change in responsibilities, change in the e-learning environment, and the awareness of student-instructor relationship in e-learning environment on e-learning adaptability from undergraduates' perspectives.

The research design was quantitative and an online questionnaire was used as the research instrument to gather primary data using Snowball Sampling Method where the data were analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis. According to the findings, students' awareness of technological requirements showed a significant impact on their e-learning adaptability. Students' awareness of changing responsibilities in an e-learning environment and awareness of the elearning environment also showed a positive impact on e-learning adaptability, whereas students' awareness of interpersonal relationships between instructor and student in an e-learning setting showed no significant impact on e-learning adaptability.

In this context, it is recommended to provide a creative and simplified e-learning environment enabling the learners to actively engage and receive adequate training. Further, it is important to evaluate the feasibility of the e-learning environment in practice using valid performance measurements of e-leaning outcomes.

Keywords: E-learning, Adaptability, Awareness, COVID-19, Education





Marketing, Supply Chain Management and Tourism



THE EFFECT OF BRAND EQUITY AND GENDER ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN THE MODERN TRADE RETAIL SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The supermarket industry in Sri Lanka is set for explosive growth and operates under a huge competition. Empirical studies suggest that a loyal customer base is an invaluable strength to a brand. Super markets follow many tactics to retain customers and engage different strategies to convert them as loyal customers as well as to build customer loyalty. The impact of brand equity on customer loyalty of the supermarket industry is not well captured in Sri Lankan studies and more importantly the influence of gender on customer loyalty of supermarkets is a grey area in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate how brand equity and customers' gender impact on customer loyalty. The study model was based on Steven A Taylor's research conceptual model in which value, satisfaction, resistance to change, affect and trust acted as independent variables (brand equity) in relation to attitudinal loyalty and behavioral loyalty which act as dependent variables. The population of the study was the users of supermarkets in the Colombo and Gampaha Districts. Data were collected through a sample of 231 customers of supermarkets by employing a structured questionnaire. SPSS software has been used for the purpose of data analysis. The study revealed that value and trust do not have a significant impact on customer loyalty whereas satisfaction, resistance to change and brand affect have a significant impact. It was also found that there is no statistical significance of the effect of gender on customer loyalty. The study emphasizes the importance of studying and analyzing aspects such as purchase patterns, behaviors, brand equity, loyalty of supermarkets due to the growing nature of industry. Finally, the study addresses the managerial implications along with directions for future research at the conclusion.

Keywords: brand equity, customer loyalty, supermarkets, Colombo District, gender



THE EFFECT OF SMARTPHONE FEATURES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

At present, the demand for electronic devices, notably smartphones, has increased as a result of COVID 19 pandemic driving up the necessity of digital communication and services. In this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to examine the effect of smartphone features on customer satisfaction. The sub objectives are to determine the status of cellular phone subscriptions and the various types of smartphone usage in Sri Lanka. This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative research approaches and collects primary data using a mixed-method approach such as an online questionnaire (google form) survey and zoom interviews with several smartphone users. Secondary data was collected from several resources. The random sampling method was used to select the 200 smartphone users in Sri Lanka and the data were analyzed through SPSS version 25. The results show that 56.5% of users were male and 43.5% were female. Among the smartphone users, the most popular smartphone brands are Samsung (32.5%), Huawei (15.5%), Vivo (16%), Oppo (10%) and Redmi (7%). For this study, five hypotheses were tested using correlation (significant at 0.01 level) and path coefficient analysis (significant at >0.20 level). It was found that, device features such as functions (0.7146 and 0.262) and applications (0.6491 and 0.226) influenced customer satisfaction. Prices (0.7029 and 0.345) also seem to strongly influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, the usability (0.6849 and 0.099) and design (0.6156 and 0.160) of the smartphone features partially influenced customer satisfaction as well. Overall from this study, it was noted that smartphone features have a significant influenced on the level of customer satisfaction. Smartphone companies should focus on improving customer satisfaction through creative smartphone features at a reasonable price and effective customer policy and quality measures are vital to protect consumer rights and move towards the sustainable development of technologies in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: applications, customer satisfaction, design, smartphones, Sri Lanka.



FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INTENTIONS OF FARMERS TO PURCHASE PESTICIDES

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the factors influencing farmers' intentions of purchasing pesticides, focusing on paddy farmers in Ampara, Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Kurunegala districts in Sri Lanka. The data were collected employing the simple random sampling method, through a self-administered questionnaire and the data were analyzed using the statistical analysis program SPSS. The data analysis included Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson Correlation analysis, and Regression analysis. The results supported the proposed hypotheses indicating that the farmers' attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control have a positive impact on farmers' intention of purchasing pesticides. All independent variables exert a fairly similar influence on farmers' intention towards purchasing pesticides. The results implicated that, marketers should aim to improve farmers' experiences through demonstrations and media exposure in order to improve their attitudes associated with their purchase intention of pesticides. This can be achieved by using free product trials as a marketing tool and by running advertising campaigns to educate farmers about the beneficial effects, right doze and correct application of pesticides on crops.

Attitude, Subjective norm, Perceived behavioral control, Purchase Kevwords: intention



A STUDY ON GREEN PURCHASING INTENTION AND GREEN PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR GAP TOWARDS ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MILLENNIALS WITH AN INCOME IN COLOMBO DISTRICT

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Abstract

Most people have a high intention to buy green products since it provides a significant contribution to the environment. Even though people have the intention to purchase green products, that intention does not translate into actual behaviour. It is mentioned that consumers green purchasing intention will not meet green products' buying behavior. Therefore, that is a violation of the prominent theory "The Theory of Planned Behaviour" (TPB). Researches called it the green intention behavior gap. The researchers try to uncover "Why consumers do not buy green products even though they have an intention to buy green products with the examination of moderating effect of trust on the green purchasing intention and behavior gap. To achieve the purpose, the primary data were collected from 215 respondents through a structured questionnaire, and data were analyzed by using SPSS and AMOS software. The simple moderator regression analysis was tested by using the Hayes SPSS Macro Process Model to obtain the results. According to the findings, when trust is increased, it will reduce the gap of green purchasing intention behaviour. Moreover, it proved the significant positive impact of green purchasing intention on green purchasing behaviour and the significant moderation effect of trust on the relationship between green purchasing intention and green purchasing behaviour. Accordingly, this investigation helps marketing strategists understand those factors hindering or facilitating the relationship of green purchasing intention and green purchasing behavior and develop necessary strategies to cope with the problem of "why consumers green purchasing intention does not lead to actual buying".

Keywords: Green Products, Green Purchasing Behaviour, Green Purchasing Intention, Organic food products, Theory of Planned Behaviour.



IMPACT OF COMPETITIVE PRIORITIES OF FIRMS IN THE THERMOFORMING PROCESS INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION.

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Abstract

With the revolution in organized retail and increased usage of disposable containers, the thermoforming industry is booming globally and locally. This study aims to identify the impact of competitive priorities on customer satisfaction of the thermoforming process industry in Sri Lanka. The objectives of the study were to identify the competitive priorities which affect the customer satisfaction of the thermoforming industry in Sri Lanka, to identify the current satisfaction level of customers, to rank the competitive priorities based on customer satisfaction, to explain how the competitive priorities affect the customer satisfaction and to provide suggestions to use competitive priorities to gain competitive advantage.

The study collected data by distributing a structured questionnaire among customers selected non-randomly. Data analysis was carried out using quantitative data analysis techniques. Each competitive priority as well as customer satisfaction were critically analyzed to identify the impact of competitive priorities on customer satisfaction within the thermoforming process industry. Out of five competitive priorities, quality and cost have a strong positive relationship with customer satisfaction, delivery also has a moderate positive relationship and innovation and flexibility have a weak positive relationship with customer satisfaction.

Since the current satisfaction level of corporate customers is just above the neutral point the study emphasizes on focusing more on the competitive priorities. Further study identified credit terms, reliability & responsiveness of the supplier, environmental friendliness, user friendliness, product development, recycling, after sale service, customer focus and know-how as new competitive priorities that will affect customer satisfaction.

Keywords: customer satisfaction, competitive priorities, thermoforming process industry



FROM OVERCONSUMPTION TO MINDFUL CONSUMPTION: AN EXAMINATION OF CONSUMPTION PRACTICES OF SRI LANKAN CONSUMER ACTIVISTS

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Abstract

Overconsumption, driven by materialism results in many environmental problems. It also impacts the long-term wellbeing of individuals. Therefore, engaging in sustainable consumption is vital. In addressing the issue of sustainability, overconsumption at individual level is likely to be an effective approach which can be achieved by instilling mindful consumption. The root-cause of overconsumption is the detachment from fellow humans and the natural environment. Yet, if one makes their consumption choices mindfully, it will no longer be a problem. Many antimaterialistic consumption practices that are presented in previous literature, are initiated by various types of consumer activists and anti-consumption movements. It is not clear in the current literature how universal love and spirituality are reflected in their consumption practices. To unearth this, using a qualitative approach, 25 semistructured in-depth interviews were conducted with individual consumer activists' who lives in the Colombo district, Sri Lanka using snowball sampling. The gathered data were then transcribed and analyzed through the thematic analysis. Findings highlight the various mindful consumption practices adopted by the consumer activists in Sri Lanka. Reducing, reusing, rejecting, recycling and redefining were the common mindful practices highlighted by the respondents. Mindful consumption can be seen as a delineating social and business challenge. As shown in the implications these ways must be treated as the core values of a society to improve mindful consumption practices in the society because the absence of such values can be seen as the root cause of the unsustainability and unhappiness. Thus, the current study shows key policy implications for improving initiatives related to mindful consumption in the society.

Keywords: overconsumption, mindful consumption, reduce, reuse, reject, recycle, consumer activists



FACTORS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF VISUAL MERCHADISING PRACTICES AMONG SRI LANKAN SMALL SCALE RETAILERS

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Abstract

In the Sri Lankan context, retailing is considered as a vital industry due to its contribution to many aspects of the economy. Among the different categories of retailers within the retail industry, small retailers are considered a vital part in distributing goods and satisfying final consumers all over the country. However, small retailers show lower adoption and ineffective use of modern retailing practices such as visual merchandising. Changing needs of customers and the emerging supermarket trend provide evidence for this. The main objective of this research is to promote effective use of in-store visual merchandising practices for small retailers which will increase sales volume as well as customer satisfaction. To meet this objective, the research is expected to investigate the relationship between different factors and their influence on the success of small retailers' visual merchandising practices. A judgmental sample of 100 small retailers was drawn and administered a structured questionnaire to measure the key constructs and test the hypothesized relationships derived from literature. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed. The findings revealed that knowledge of small retailers about merchandising, visual spectrum of the store and store layout significantly and positively influence the success of visual merchandizing practices but gross square feet available for merchandising do not significantly affect the retail success. The findings have practical implications for small retailers in enhancing their competitiveness and business performance in terms of sales volume and customer appeal in order to face the increasing challenges of modern trade retail outlets.

Keywords: visual merchandising, retail merchandising, Sri Lankan retailers, small retailers, success factors



THE IMPACT OF VALUE PROPOSITION OF FOOD DELIVERY APPS ON CONSUMER IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOR DURING THE COVID CRISIS

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Abstract

Food delivery apps are dramatically growing in line with the advancements in technology - And the Consumers tend to widely adopt this technology. This research study aims exploring the impact of value proposition of food delivery apps on impulse buying behavior during the COVID crisis. This research study was constructed by using four constructs namely, price value, prestige value, affordance value, and consumer impulse buying behavior. The filtering research questionnaire was distributed via online platform using the judgmental sampling method. By using a filtering research questionnaire, 160 responses were collected from people using food delivery apps in Colombo district, Sri Lanka. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS software. Reliability analysis, validity analysis, regression analysis, multicollinearity test and regression analysis were used to test hypothesis and examine the impact of different variables. The results disclosed that price value, prestige value, affordance value influence consumer impulse buying behavior during the COVID crisis. Furthermore, these results discovered that all independent variables positively impacted on consumer impulse buying behavior. The research study provides the understanding of the theoretical perspective and practical perspective. Service providers and marketers can adjust the values found as significant in this study to boost the possibility of ordering meals from FDAs. Finally, the research study develops the theoretical framework that could be constructively used in the future research.

Keywords: Food Delivery Apps (FDAs), Value Proposition, Consumer Impulse Buying Behavior, COVID crisis



IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON IMPULSIVE BUYING BEHAVIOUR: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOCIAL MEDIA USERS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Today, the world is like a global village removing all the barriers for people to get together with the help of fast-growing internet and social media. Social media has provided talented users an audience to become micro celebrities. Most of the businesses use social media influencers to reach their target audience, which provides numerous advantages for both influencers and for the marketing firms. In this research, the researcher has focused on studying the impact of social media influencers on impulsive buying behavior. A business that wants to reach a specific set of audience at scale, would follow the trend to use social media influencers to reach their goals. Hence, the findings of the study are important to firms to understand how to choose between right influencers and to have the benefits from social media influencers on consumer purchasing intentions. Based on Ohaninan, (1990) the researcher used five influencing factors (independent variables) namely trustworthiness, expertise, likeability, similarity and familiarity to test the impact on impulsive buying behavior (dependent variable). Convenience sampling technique was used to select the samples and the sample size was 420. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to collect the data. Moreover, after the fulfillment of validity and reliability tests, Pearson correlation test and multiple regression analysis were used to test the hypothesis. However, the findings revealed that except familiarity the other four variables namely trustworthiness, expertise, likeability and similarity have a positive impact on impulsive buying behavior.

Keywords: Social media influencers, Impulsive buying behavior, Micro celebrities



FACTORS AFFECTING PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS TEXTILES IN THE NEGOMBO AREA. SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This study explores the demographic and socio-economic factors that affect the purchasing behaviour in relation to textiles in the Negombo area of Sri Lanka. The objective of this study is to investigate the factors affecting the purchasing behavior of buyers towards textiles in the Negombo area. The study incorporates quantitative research methods by employing 140 respondents, both the male and female, who purchase from Sriyani Dress Point and Nolimit Fashion Store in the Negombo area by using the simple random sampling method. Data were collected by administering a structured questionnaire survey. Data analyses and hypotheses testing were done by using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The results revealed that gender, age and civil status are the main demographic factors that drive purchasing behavior, whereas the need for uniqueness, quality and price are the main socio-economic factors. The demographic factors showed that female respondents intentionally engage in textile shopping by spending more time browsing the quality and price of clothes than male respondents. The age group of 18-25 has the highest percentage of rational buyers, while the above 35 age group has the highest percentage of impulsive buyers. The findings also highlight that the need for uniqueness is the highest influencing socio-economic factor on purchasing behaviour towards textiles while quality is the other important factor impacting purchasing behaviour towards textiles. Finally, the price is the least important factor influencing the purchasing behaviour towards textile consumers in the Negombo area. These findings are vital for the Sri Lankan textile industry to adopt appropriate marketing strategies.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, need for uniqueness, price, quality, textiles



THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITIES AS AN INFORMATION NETWORK ON PURCHASING **DECISION MAKING**

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Abstract

In the past, communities tended to be closed systems with relatively clear boundaries, stable memberships, and a few linkages to other communities. We are now entering an age of open systems where mobility creates new communities as well as different kinds of communities. Virtual communities create relationships among different individuals by gathering people who share common goals and interests. In addition, virtual communities have become a means of getting social support. According to Hagel and Armstrong (1997), Pentina et al. (2008), and Zhou et al (2007) an addition function of virtual communities is economic exchange. Ridings et al. (2006) stated that individuals in virtual communities are motivated to conduct online shopping activities. Evidence suggests that this statement is true, especially, when individuals from strong social connections and trust within members. However, the purpose of this research is to identify the impact of virtual communities as an informational network on purchasing decision making. In this study, the virtual community (independent variable), represents three dimensions, namely, perceived benefits, sense of belonging and emotional trust. Moreover, purchasing intention was measured through four dimensions respectively; information search, evaluation alternatives, within budget, customer feedback and usage experience. The researcher used positivism philosophy and deductive approach in this study as well as explanatory research design. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. 250 responses were collected, however, only 233 responses were analyzed after removing outliers. Since the total population is unknown the convenience sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Hypotheses were tested by using multiple regression analysis. Moreover, after the fulfillment of validity and reliability tests, Pearson correlation test and multiple regression analysis were used to test the hypothesis. Ultimately, this research concludes that perceived benefits are the most salient factor that affects purchasing decision making. Likewise, among three independent variables and perceived benefits, sense of belonging and emotional trust have a significant impact on purchasing decision making.

Keywords: virtual communities, purchasing decision making, information network



PROTECTING CONSUMER RIGHTS: EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID **CONSUMERS IN SRI LANKA**

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Abstract

Despite the belief that consumers freely engage in their market activities (e.g., buying), the contrary appears to be the case on some occasions. This is mainly due to (1) "protection of consumer rights" not being seriously taken into consideration by marketers and (2) the responsible marketers (organizations) and consumers being ignorant of the phenomenon. This is a prominent issue, particularly in markets in the developing countries such as Sri Lanka, where some consumer cohorts are vulnerable due to the restricted consumption situation they experience. Thus, this study aims to explore the barriers encountered by Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) consumers when acting against the violation of consumer rights in an environment where consumption patterns are restricted. In-depth interviews were conducted with twenty participants representing the vulnerable demographics in the Southern province of Sri Lanka, who were chosen using a non-probabilistic snowballing sampling method and the data was thematically analyzed. Despite the fact that a consumer protection mechanism is available in the country, there are certain barriers encountered by BOP consumers when acting against the violation of consumer rights. The study was able to discover three major barriers, which are primarily psychological barriers, social barriers, and market-driven barriers. Although the consumer protection mechanism is available in the country, it appears to be in some situations the mechanism would not provide enough protection to consumers in the BOP segments, and thus creates a vulnerability that expands inequalities in the marketplace.

Keywords: BOP consumers, Vulnerability, Consumer rights



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS COSMETICS IN SRI LANKA: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NEGOMBO TOWN AREA PEOPLE

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Abstract

Cosmetic industry brings the hidden needs of the people as basic necessities. This study is helpful for cosmetic companies and consumers to make effective decisions about their production and consumption activities, since it attempts to find the influence of country of origin on consumer purchase intention with special reference to Negombo town area people. This study used both primary and secondary data sources to collect relevant data. In this study, researcher gave priority to primary data. 100 customers were selected as samples by using simple random sampling technique and then the data were analyzed using regression analysis, descriptive analysis, reliability analysis and correlation analysis. The research results showed that country image, brand image and product quality have significant impact on consumer purchase intention towards cosmetics among Negombo town area people.

Keywords: Consumer Purchase Intention, Country of Origin, Brand Image, Country Image, Product Quality



IMPACT OF INTERNET SERVICE AND PRICE ON CUSTOMER LOYALTY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Customers can select the internet service provider that best meets their requirements based on their priorities. This study sought to investigate the effects of service quality and price (internet service quality) on customer loyalty. This study employed quantitative methodologies, and responses were gathered via a Google form. The researcher used a convenient sampling method to collect data from 244 consumers from various districts in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the findings indicate that the quality and price of internet service have a positive impact on customer loyalty. According to the correlation analysis results, internet service and price are significantly correlated with customer loyalty. In this study, the majority of respondents (81.6 percent) were between the ages of 16 and 25. 38.9% of customers paid 500-1 000 rupees per month for internet service. The study also found that good and well-built service quality can lead to customer satisfaction, which can lead to a higher level of customer loyalty. Results show that customer loyalty is high but the internet service companies can improve their services to reach the level of developed countries.

Keywords: Customer Loyalty, Internet Service, Price



DETERMINANTS OF CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS SOFT DRINKS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CONSUMERS IN THE PANADURA AREA

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Abstract

The soft beverage industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in Sri Lanka and globally. In current society, with its busy lifestyle, consumers are accustomed to purchase instant food and beverages. This research study mainly focused on consumer preferences for soft beverage types. Product attributes health consciousness, and brand preference are the three independent variables used to create the business model. The main objective of the research was to study the existing consumer preferences for carbonated soft drinks, dairy drinks, and fruit juices in the Panadura Urban area situated in the Kaluthara district, in Sri Lanka. Other objectives of this research were to identify the product attributes that the consumers -were concerned about when making the decision the brand preference, and the health-consciousness, regarding the consumption of soft beverages. The data for the survey was collected from 100 randomly selected consumers in the Panadura area using a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that product attributes, brand preference, and health-consciousness positively impacted the consumer preferences for soft beverages. The survey results emphasize that carbonated soft drinks are in greater demand by consumers. Therefore, this study recommends that it is vital to implement marketing strategies and tactics to capture the hearts of consumers for soft beverages.

Keywords: Brand preference, Consumer preference, Health-conscious, soft beverages, Product attributes



FACTORS AFFECTING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROMOTIONAL SMS COMMUNICATION IN THE SRI LANKAN FASHION RETAIL SECTOR

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Abstract

The study was undertaken to explore the determinants that can influence effective targeted promotional SMS communication in the Sri Lankan fashion retail sector. The main objective of the study is to study the current context of targeted promotional SMS communication in the Sri Lankan fashion retailing sector. To examine the relationship between dynamic customers segmentation via transactional and loyaltycard data utilization for targeted promotional SMS communication. To provide relevant recommendations to improve effectiveness of SMS promotional communication. A deductive research approach was taken. Hypothesis were generated and tested via a survey in Colombo, Sri Lanka with 347 responses. Based on the regression analysis, all the independent variables of loyalty-card data utilization, past purchase data utilization and dynamic customer segmentation had a strong positive relationship and a positive relationship towards the independent variable of effectiveness of SMS communication. All the hypotheses were accepted along with the conceptual framework that 72% represents effectiveness of SMS communication by all the independent variables considered. Research was limited to the fashion retailing sector and only the retail customers were surveyed and new customers were excluded from the study benefits. As a research implication, adoption of big data and business-intelligence practices are highly recommended. Most of the prior literature are on the USA and Europe region and some are biased to e-commerce. This study focusses on the Sri Lankan region and the use of offline data sources for targeted SMS promotions.

Keywords: SMS promotional communication, targeting, loyalty-programs (LPs), past purchase behavior, data utilization



THE IMPACT OF GREEN MARKETING ORIENTATION ON GREEN LOYALTY: A CASE IN THE SRI LANKAN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Contemporary organizations have identified the importance of Green Marketing Orientation (GMO) as a holistic view of green marketing initiatives which add novelty to enrich the competitiveness in the industry. Green marketing practices are frequently used in the practice of green hotels to attract more visitors, as a part of relationship marketing strategy. However, scholarly attention is absent on the role of GMOs in enduring customer relationships and the present study aims to provide a framework for building customer loyalty through effective implementation of GMO which is associated with a strong Green Brand Image (GBI). As per the detailed analysis of literature which provides a comprehensive theoretical framework, the researcher identified that there is a need to pursue research on the impact of GMOs on green loyalty in the hotel industry in Sri Lanka, with the mediating effects of GBI. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of GMO on green loyalty and the role of GBI on this relationship. The survey was executed to collect data from 177 consumers and the data were analyzed by using quantitative data analysis techniques. The results revealed that there is a strong positive relationship of GMOs with GBI and GL. Moreover, GBI plays a significant role as a mediator in the relationship between GMO and GL. The findings of the study provide interesting implications to hotel administration/decision-makers, policymakers, and service personnel. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of visible characteristics of GMOs to enhance the GBI which ultimately leads to creating green loyalty.

Keywords: Green Marketing Orientation, Green Brand Image, Green Loyalty, Green Marketing, Sri Lankan Hotel Industry



A MODEL OF SALES FORCE AUTOMATION ACCEPTANCE TOWARDS SALES FORCE PERFORMANCE: ROLE OF TECHNO-STRESS INHIBITORS AND TECHNOLOGY SELF-EFFICACY OF SALES EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

Sales Force Automation (SFA) is one of the key applications of improving the sale functions through the speed and quality of information flow among the integrated parties. Over the last two decades, companies have increasingly implemented and invested in Sales Force Automation (SFA) tools to facilitate customer relationship management processes. SFA applications enable organizations to automate sales activities and administrative responsibilities for the sales professionals, leading to a more productive agenda. SFA is a result of a significant effort taken by organizations investing in techno-innovation for improving firms' ability to maintain a better customer relationship. However, when it comes to realize better performance outcomes from SFA implementation, there stills seems to be gaps in real organizational settings, which can be mainly attributed to issues pertaining to user of SFA and its effectiveness and efficiency. In order to better elaborate this anomaly, the two models, namely Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), were reviewed from existent literature to derive some insights. This attempt gave rise to develop a conceptual framework with hypotheses depicting the potential impact of perceived salesforce acceptance of SFA on performance of Sales Representatives with techno stress inhibitor and self-efficacy, respectively playing mediating and moderating roles. Decision-makers, policymakers and sales & marketing personnel will be able to apply the derived conceptual framework in order to better predict the sales force performance based on SFA and make some justifications on cost, efficient time management, better monitoring, improved customer satisfaction and improved sales from SFA.

Keywords: Salesforce automation, Sales performance, Self – efficacy, Techno stress inhibitors, sales representatives



FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS ADOPTION OF INTERNET **BANKING WITH:**

SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JAFFNA DISTRICT

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Abstract

When providing financial services, the banking sector plays a vital role. All banks have adopted new technological advancements with the development of Information Systems and Technologies. Customers are the most important asset in all organizations including banks. Previously, most banking transactions were carried out through manual banking systems and as a result of utilizing manual banking transactions, customers and banks had to face numerous problems. Internet Banking is a popular method that can be used in banks as an alternative. The main objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing the Customer Satisfaction towards the adoption: with Special reference to Jaffna district. The researcher selected stateowned and some private sector banks in the Jaffna district for the study and the data was collected through online questionnaires. Hundred and fifty (150) customers using internet banking facilities in some banks were identified for the study. The Factor analysis and Multiple Regression were used to analyze collected data. The researcher selected eleven factors that influence customer satisfaction in relation to the usage of Internet Banking based on previous studies namely Security and Privacy, Availability, Ease of Use, User Friendliness, Website features, Trust, Social influence and Responsiveness, Relative Advantages, Service Quality, Compatibility, Customer Support Services and conducting Exploratory Factor analysis, those eleven factors were reduced into nine factors availability and website features were eliminated from the initial list. The findings of the study identified Relative Advantages and Compatibility significantly influence Customer Satisfaction of Internet and the banking industry can use the recommendations provide in the study towards improving the usage of Internet Banking in the study area.

Keywords: Internet Banking, Customer Satisfaction, Compatibility, Factor Analysis, Multiple regression





Human Resource Management and Best Practices

THE CRESCENDO IN LEGAL PRACTITIONER'S WORK HAPPINESS IN GUJARAT STATE – INDIA

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to introduce work happiness research in relation to legal practitioners (LPs). It focuses on what can be useful for the discipline, provides relevant research outcomes and presents the findings with directions for future research. This paper is a combination of a literature review, research questionnaire and analysis of data. It is based on a five-point scale. This cross-sectional study was conducted on selected LPs of the Gujarat State. This paper offers an analysis on Interest, Income & Expenses, Environment, Communication, Infrastructure and the like. The group average mean of the items was revealed to be (82.78) with a standard deviation of (14.772). The main finding shows that selected LPs of the Gujarat State are happy / unhappy in general and have an excellent level in the reliability test with a Cronbach's Alpha of (.952). Only a few respondents are not happy with a few parameters. The rest are highly satisfied. 147 individuals from the Gujarat State participated in this research work. Based on these findings, the research results emphasize the importance of work happiness in a positive way. This is a really good result among such selected LPs of the Gujarat State. This can be adopted by other states. Happiness is extremely important and useful overall for the entire field. Yet, it is largely overlooked in the discipline. Limited literature reviews are written with the discipline in mind, and this viewpoint is aimed at bridging such a gap.

Keywords: Legal Practitioners (LPs), Work Happiness, Life satisfaction, Gujarat, India



FACTORS AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT OF EMPLOYEES OF BASE HOSPITAL WELLAWAYA

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Abstract

Organizational commitment is an employees' volitional psychological bond towards the organization which reflects the dedication towards achieving organizational goals and objectives. This study aims at identifying the level of organizational commitment and investigating the factors affecting the organizational commitment of employees of Base Hospital Wellawaya. Three factors, 1) personal factors, 2) Job characteristics 3) Physical working conditions, and moderating effect of job category on the relationship between job characteristics and organizational commitment were considered in this study. This was a descriptive cross-sectional study. The study considered medical officers, nursing officers, and health care assistants in Base Hospital Wellawaya. The total study population was 194 and the researcher selected 129 employees through stratified random sampling method. A structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The sample consisted of 21 Medical officers (16.3%), 51 nursing officers (39.5%), and 57 healthcare assistants (44.2%) and the mean age of all the respondents was 37.50 years, also the mean value of organizational commitment was 3.18. Results of the research showed that personal factors such as gender, education, working experience, and income have a significant association with organizational commitment. Further job characteristics and physical working conditions too, have a significant impact on organizational commitment. Improvements of the job characteristics increase the organizational commitment of the nursing officers while improvements of the job characteristics among Medical officer and Healthcare assistants decrease the organizational commitment. It is necessary to increase the organizational commitment of employees of Base Hospital Wellawaya by modifying the factors which have a direct impact on organizational commitment.

Keywords: Organizational commitment, personal factors, job characteristics, physical working condition.

FACTORS AFFECTING NURSES' PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AT DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL AMPARA

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Abstract

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a must for improving knowledge, attitudes and skills of a professional. CPD helps to keep the professional up to date that in turn contributes towards maintaining quality of service delivery. Nursing profession is no exception. Nevertheless, many factors influence the nurses' participation in CPD programs. The main objective is to identify the factors affecting nurses' participation in continuing professional development at District General Hospital Ampara. A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out using 233 permanent staff nurses attached to District General Hospital at Ampara. Data from staff nurses was collected using a pre-tested self-administered questionnaire to assess nurses' participation in CPD programs to identify the motivational factors and barriers that determine the level of participation in CPD programs. Out of 172 (73.8%) that responded to questionnaire only 81.9% (n=141) nurses participated in CPD programs after they entered to nursing profession. Among the respondents only 72.1% (n=124) participated in CPD programs during last three years. Research revealed that all four factors, personal, interpersonal, structural and motivational were statistically associated with both intention of participation and actual participation of nurses in CPD programs. (p<0.05). Among the indicators considered, high domestic responsibilities, lack of family support, high cost of courses, long geographical distance and lack of relevant CPD programs were the main barriers. Among the motivational factors studied, to gain new knowledge, to develop new skills and to learn new nursing roles were the main motivators for the nurses.It is evident that facilitation of in-house trainings, introduction of installment plans for course fees and highlighting importance of CPD in nursing curriculum will help to improve nurses' participation in CPD.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, staff nurses, tertiary care



INFLUENCE OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ON EMPLOYEE **OUTCOMES**

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Abstract

The focus of this research is to find out the influence of Socially Responsible Human Resource Management (SRHRM) on employee outcomes in public sector organizations, with a focus on the Ampara divisional secretariat. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a focal point for public sector organizations in terms of contributing to society. Further, socially responsible human resource management is a key component and, in its essence is a socially sensitive approach to human resources implemented by personnel practices within both HRM and CSR. In the Sri Lankan context, there has been a dearth of research related to SRHRM. The objectives of the studies are to identify the determinants of SRHRM, to identify the relationship between SRHRM and employee outcomes, and to find out the impact of SRHRM on employee outcomes. The conceptual variables are SRHRM practices, employee commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. A systematic random sampling method was used to select a total of hundred samples. The questionnaire was used to collect the data and the analysis was done using univariate, bivariate, and multivariate analyses. The finding of the study shows that SRHRM influences employee outcomes and that, in comparison, employee commitment is high.

Keywords: **Corporate** Social Responsibility, *Employee* commitment, Organizational citizenship behavior

THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE PRIVATE BANKING SECTOR IN SRI LANKA: EVIDENCE FROM HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING **CORPORATION (HSBC)**

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Abstract

Motivation is characterized as being the driver which integrates internal and external factors found to stimulate an individual to be continually interested and committed to a job role or subject. Organizations use motivation in order to attain desired business outcomes. Key factors of motivation are extrinsic motivators such as salary, bonus and commission that directly impacts the individual and intrinsic factors like working conditions, employee engagement and job security which also play a major role. The research instrument used for this study was based on a primary methodology using a total of eighty-seven (87) quantitative questionnaires thus resulting in the gathering of high-quality raw data for the use in the study. The primary aim of the current research is to analyse the impact of motivation on employee performance of Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC). Correlation analysis is the main method used to explain the results along with descriptive, frequency and mean ranking analyses. Accordingly, the correlation coefficient indicated that employees ranked good working conditions as the most important non-financial motivating indicator and salary as the highest financial motivating indicator. Analysis of the data also found that employee motivation and employee performance are positively correlated. Henceforth, it is concluded that the bank can design a model whereby salary, promotion and performance appraisal can be the main indicators for employee motivation and employee performance.

Keywords: financial motive, nonfinancial motive, employee performance



THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF FACTORY WORKERS IN A MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATION IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Occupational Health and Safety Management is a human resource management function that aims at improving the physical, mental, and social well-being of employees at the workplace. Even though there is considerable research on the occupational health and safety practices of the construction industry in Sri Lanka, studies conducted in the manufacturing industry are limited. This research attempts to identify the perceived influence of occupational health and safety on the job performance of factory workers in a selected manufacturing organization in Sri Lanka. The data were collected from 100 factory workers in the selected manufacturing firm using the stratified sampling method. Primary data were collected through a self-administrated questionnaire consisting of 41 statements with a five-point Likert scale. The data analysis was done based on the univariate and bivariate methods. The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between occupational health and safety practices and job performance indicating that occupational health and safety is a major determinant of the job performance of factory workers in the selected manufacturing firm.

Keywords: manufacturing firm, job performance, occupational health and safety, factory workers

THE FACTORS WHICH IMPACT THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC HEALTH MIDWIVES OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH AREAS IN NUWARA ELIYA DISTRICT

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Abstract

Public Health Midwives (PHM) are the front-line health workers responsible for the provision of Maternal and Child Health (MCH) care. Despite having the best MCH indicators in the region, Demographic and Health Survey (2016) reported significant disparities of MCH care between districts. The objective of the study was to assess the factors which impact the performance of PHMs of the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) areas in the Nuwara Eliya District. A descriptive crosssectional study was carried out among a convenient sample of 169 PHMs at in the Nuwara Eliya district using a self-administered questionnaire. The data were analyzed with regard to proportions (quantitative data) and associations (multiple linear regression). All three independent variables, namely motivation, job satisfaction, and supervision had statistically significant associations with the performance of the PHMs in the Nuwara Eliya district. Both job satisfaction and supervision had a positive linear correlation with performance while motivation had a negative linear correlation with performance. Moderating effects of leadership on the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable was not significant. Factors related to the job satisfaction of the midwives need to be optimized in the district in order to obtain maximum service from them. The impact of motivation on the performance of PHMs needs to be further studied. Moderating effect of MOH's leadership also needs to be further investigated since the leadership role of the MOH may be deficient.

Keywords: MCH care, Midwives, Job Performance, leadership



IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE DURING A CRISIS SITUATION

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Abstract

The business world is currently faced with the pinnacle of adversity and turbulence due to Covid-19. While some organizations collapsed, certain leaders have succeeded to navigate their businesses towards recovery by understanding suitable strategies, innovation and identifying new opportunities. Given the rate of uncertainty in the contemporary business landscape, a need of further study on employee resilience has arisen to assist organizations understand how to respond to crises. Hence, this research aims to investigate crisis leadership and its impact, under the research topic "The impact of transformational leadership on employee resilience during a crisis situation". The research was conducted having Earl's Regency Resort, Kandy, Sri Lanka as the base grounding for study. Data were collected through a five point likert scale questionnaire, and the sample was decided through simple random sampling method resulting in 63 valid responses. Minitab-19 software was employed for data processing. The findings of this study indicated that there was a significant positive impact of transformational leadership in boosting employee resilience. Furthermore the findings recommended future studies based on other organizational factors affecting employee resilience, apart from transformational leadership.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, employee resilience, uncertainty, turbulence

THE IMPACT OF WORK LIFE BALANCE ON EMPLOYEE JOB SATISFACTION OF EXECUTIVE LEVEL EMPLOYEES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDUSTRIAL CLOTHING (PVT) LTD

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Abstract

Lower job satisfaction leads to higher absenteeism and higher turnover of employees, resulting in lower commitment to the job. Industrial Clothing (Pvt) Ltd has not been able to achieve an adequate level of employee job satisfaction from its employees, which is one of the prominent issues faced by many employers universally. Provision of work life balance is significant to achieve employee job satisfaction in an organization. Nevertheless, the salience and relevance of it is not well identified by Industrial Clothing (Pvt) Ltd, leading to lack of employee job satisfaction. The knowledge gap of the study was derived from the observations and the wealth of literature. The objective of this study is to determine whether there is a positive impact of work life balance on the executive level employees' job satisfaction in Industrial Clothing (Pvt) Ltd. Among the target population of executive level employees, a simple random sample of 86 was used with an effective response rate of 95%. This is a quantitative, cross sectional research which employed survey method by adopting pre-validated questionnaires. Furthermore, using Cronbach's alpha analysis, reliability of the questionnaire was established. The correlation analysis and the regression analysis revealed there is a positive impact of work life balance on the employee job satisfaction of the executive level employees in the Industrial Clothing (Pvt) Ltd. Therefore, this study recommends that the management at Industrial Clothing (Pvt) Ltd should formulate and implement more effective policies and practices, which enables improved work life balance that would in turn enhance employee job satisfaction.

Keywords: work life balance, employee job satisfaction, executive level employees, apparel industry, quantitative study



HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: A BIBLIOMETRIC **EXPLORATION (2015-2021)**

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Abstract

Since the nineteenth century, artificial intelligence (AI) has been regarded as a relic of scientific literature; notwithstanding, most professionals today recognise that integrating innovative technology dynamically morphs workplaces. Traditional business practices are undergoing a paradigm shift in today's globalized world. As business leaders prepare for a fast-paced digital world, AI-based on "machine learning" technology promises to transform the Department of Human Resources on multiple levels. Improving human resource management (HRM) and productivity through AI technology has prompted a strong interest in the future development of this operational area. However, in HRM research, there is still a lack of inclusive knowledge on the evolution of this area. Similarly, traditional narrative literature reviews make significant contributions, however they are insufficient to provide a comprehensive overview of a specific domain. As a result, science mapping, which uses bibliometric methods to visually present an overview and evolution of a specific field, is gaining popularity. The purpose of this paper is to analyze AI and HRM using a bibliometrics method to identify the major research forces (authors, journals, articles and countries), collaborations between countries, hot topics, conceptual structure, and the evolution of research themes on a sample of 30 documents (published between 2015-2021) extracted from the Scopus database. Ten research clusters were identified: 'multi agent system', 'decision support system', 'internet of things', 'active learning', 'decision tree', 'optimization', 'software design', 'data mining', 'cloud computing', 'human robot interaction'. The findings could be useful for researchers and organizational practitioners in the field of HRM to extend their knowledge and understanding of AI and HRM research.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, human resource management, bibliometric analysis

THE IMPACT OF HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM A LEADING APPAREL MANUFACTURING COMPANY IN SRI LANKA)

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Abstract

Human Capital Development is currently one of the major areas contributing to the increase in Organizational Performance both financially as well as non-financially. The present study conducted to study the impact of human capital development on organizational overall performance with regard to a leading apparel manufacturing organization. Human capital is a set of characteristics that encompasses all of an individual's and a population's knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training, judgment, and wisdom. The study was conducted with the participation of executives in the selected organization. Knowledge sharing, skills improvement & attitude development were tested against organizational performance. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis were performed to analyze data. Findings revealed that Knowledge sharing and attitude development have significant impact on the organizational performance where Skills improvement (SI) depicts insignificant impact towards organizational performance.

Keywords: Attitude Development, Human Capital Development, Knowledge sharing, Organizational performance, Skills Improvement



REVIEWING THE LITERATURE ON TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT DIMENSIONS TOWARDS EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The Total Quality Management (TQM) concept is still used by many organizations to successfully enhance their competitiveness, sustainability as well as to enhance employee-related outcomes. To validate this, very few studies have attempted empirically to examine the effects of TQM on employees' performance (Sadikoglu & Zehir, 2010; Fuentes et al., 2004, 2006; Nasab et al., 2013; Dedy et al., 2016; Sila, 2007). Even in the last decade there has been a gap in the literature review of TQM and employees' performance. This article aims to review the critical success factors (CSFs) or dimensions of TQM, and focuses on the two decades long gap in empirical review of TQM towards employees' performance. This study mainly focused on the systematic review articles of Sila and Ebrahimpour (2002, 2003), Karuppusami and Gandhinathan (2006), and Aquilani et al. (2017) as well as the review articles included in them, to identify the listed CSFs of TQM. A total of 100 published articles on TQM studies were selected for this study. This review identified 10 common CSFs of TOM: top management and leadership, customer focus, training and education, information analysis, supplier collaboration and management, process quality management, continuous improvement, strategic planning and quality department, organization cultural climate and learning, and employees' involvement. Furthermore, the empirical review proves that there is a link between the TOM dimensions and employees' performance; most of the CSFs carried positive correlations with employees' performance, while a few carried negative correlations.

Keywords: Total Quality Management (TQM), Critical Success Factors (CSFs), Employees' performance.

WORK-FROM-HOME AND WORK-FOR-HOME: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SRI LANKAN WOMEN WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19 **PANDEMIC**

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Abstract

The world shifted upon its very fulcrum when the COVID-19 pandemic devastated the globe. It toppled economies, caused incomprehensible hardship, professional, social and personal turmoil, and resulted in disrupting the very way of life as we know it.

It is considered the next revolution due to a total culture created around it and the ways of working (Gripenstraw & Saini, 2020). Statistics on Sri Lanka depict a high level of gender inequality estimated at 0.401 (UNDP, 2020). This avails us with an opportunity to learn and understand working women in Sri Lanka who continued to maintain productive, reproductive, and community roles,

The methodology seeks to identify women's gender roles, work-life balance, responsibilities, wellness, and the efficiencies of work from home (WFH). The mandatory variables with limited exploration were covered through literature. The results are from 51 Electronic Surveys, two rounds of Focused Groups including 10 participants, and extensive Literature Reviews were perused, dissected, and examined in formulating this research. It showcased 95% confirming that WFH is more challenging to women than men due to the culture of gender roles. This is further confirmed through the literature on WFH, also known as teleworking, telecommuting, and remote working, both before and during the pandemic. However, with the myriad challenges faced by women, Sri Lanka still has a significant distance to go and adapt to the "New Normal", requiring a change at the agency, structure, and relations levels to consider WFH as a way of engaging women inclusively as a pivotal part of the labour force.

Keywords: Covid-19, Sri Lanka, Women, Work-from-home (WFH), Gender



INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE-CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP IN THE EYE OF PANDEMIC: TEACHERS WORKING FROM HOME DURING LOCKDOWN

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Abstract

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was necessary to impose lockdowns to mitigate the outbreak. This profoundly affected many industries, including the education sector, and employees were compelled to work from home. The ultimate goal of any industry is to satisfy customers, and it depends on employee satisfaction. The employee-customer relationship plays a vital role in satisfying customers and employees, especially in the service industry. The education sector was selected for its highly service-oriented relationship between the employee and the customer. Hence it was challenging for teachers to adapt to the new work environment because the relationship with the students was significantly impacted. In the classroom, the teacher-student relationship was the top satisfier. However, it was rated as the top dissatisfier when the work environment changed. In the current study, teachers are identified as employees and students as customers. The present study investigates the factors that affect employee-customer relationships and how they influence their satisfaction in a work-from-home context. A qualitative approach was applied in the study with a sample of twenty-five secondary teachers in ten private schools. A random sampling method was used, with seven male and eighteen female teachers being interviewed to gather in-depth data. They were analyzed using thematic analysis while applying Heider's Balance Theory. The researchers identified three themes relating to technology, quality supervision, and interaction, affecting the employee-customer relationship. The study concludes that there was a deterioration in the positive employee-customer relationship, leading to dissatisfaction for both the employee and the customer.

Keywords: Employee-customer relationship, Employee satisfaction, Customer satisfaction.

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF EMPLOYEES INTENTION TO LEAVE: EVIDENCE FROM COMMERCIAL BANKS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Sri Lankan financial service providers enjoyed sustained high growth levels in the recent past as evidenced by the activity-wise GDP estimates, in which banks contribute a major share. This continued growth of the banking industry can be attributed to many factors such as, expansion through new branches, new products, and extended service periods. It has been identified that human resources are playing an important role in the performance of the banking sector. However, it has been identified that there is a measurable employee turnover in the banking sector which will be a threat to the smooth functions of the banks. Data collected from the annual report reveals that the bank ABC has a relatively higher employee turnover rate (ETR) compared to other banks in the banking sector. This study intends to investigate the factors that influence employees' intention to leave the bank with special reference to the bank ABC. The survey results show that financial rewards and job stress have mainly influenced intention to leave. However, working conditions, career development and work life balance have not significantly influenced intention to leave. These results recommend consistency in policy implementation to reduce the employee turnover in the bank ABC. The bank should consider financial rewards and remedies to reduce job stress. Further, despite the fact that, working conditions, career development and work life balance had no impact of magnitude on intention to leave, due attention should be further extended to these factors as well, as these are relevant constructs in the study.

Keywords: Intention to leave, Job Stress, Financial Rewards, Career Development, Commercial Banks



Accounting, Finance and **Banking**



DIVIDEND POLICY RATIOS AND FIRM PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE APPAREL SECTOR OF USA

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Abstract

The dividend policy ratio is an influential matter on firm performance in the context of the apparel sector. The shareholders are benefited as a return for investing in the organization. Consequently, there is an impact on firm performance from dividend policy decisions. The basic aim of this study is to critically evaluate the relationship between dividend policy ratios and firm performance in the apparel sector of the USA. The research is conducted to determine the factors of dividend policy ratio and firm performance in identifying the relationship between two variables. Based on the results of the secondary method of analysis the research mainly focuses on improving the research aim through practical implications. The annual reports of four companies in the apparel sector of the USA from 2015-2019 are utilized as a source of data collection. Return on equity (ROE) was used as dependent variables while dividend per share (DPS) and earning per share (EPS) were modeled as independent variables.

The data analysis shows a positive relationship between dividend policy ratio and firm performance. DPS and ROE have a significant relationship while EPS and ROE have an insignificant relationship. The combination of dividend policy ratio and firm performance results in investors making better decisions and the results of the study revealed that measuring ratios are the best strategy to improve the performance of the firm and attract more investors.

Keywords: dividend policy ratio, return on equity, earning per share, firm performance

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FACTORS THAT AFFECT CUSTOMER ADAPTATION TO ONLINE BANKING SERVICES: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ABC PUBLIC BANK IN ANURADHAPURA CITY AREA, SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

For the purpose of conducting banking activities for their end consumers, online banking systems have been designated as a parallel system development project. At this point, the researcher has carried out a preliminary study on scan client adjustments for online banking systems, which is still in progress. At this point, the researcher has discovered that while there has been an overall increase, it has not been proven to be statistically significant in comparison to banking expectations and central banking requests. This study's goal is to examine the numerous factors that influence customer adaptation in the online banking market, with a special focus on the public banking sector in Sri Lanka. The features of the specified variables, which are attitude, subjective norms, and perceived conduct on the ABC bank's online banking system, will be covered in this study. As a result, the researcher decided that the sample comprises of consumers who visit the counters of the three branches in the Anuradhapura town region; the sample size was 91, and the study was carried out using the quantitative approach for the purposes of the study. The findings and conclusions of the study, as well as recommendations for how to properly address the issue, are detailed in the report.

Keywords: customer adaptation, online banking, Covid-19



THE IMPACT OF MICROFINANCE SERVICES ON THE LIVING STANDARD OF PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRINCOMALEE DIVISIONAL **SECRETARIAT**

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Abstract

In the recent years there has been an increase in occurrences of suicide and selfharming which has been taking place concurrently in Sri Lanka and other countries due to the inability of repaying the microfinance loans and increased microcredit interest rates. While microfinance institutions show a rapid growth, the cause for the inverse relationship that is being shared between the microfinance institutions and poverty alleviation is questionable. This has even led to the questioning of these institutions, as to whether they really have any impact on the poor people or sink them deeper into poverty. These questions prompted this study which explores it in a systematic way. Findings have attempted to provide an understanding of operations of microfinance institutions and its services through academic research that will result in contributions to improve the outline of future microfinance projects and help policy makers to formulate effective credit policies and programs. The main objective of this study is to explore the impact of the microfinance services on the living standard of people in the Trincomalee D.S. division with special reference to HNB Finance. This study was constructed with variables of microfinance services and the living standards of people. In order to attain this goal, 100 respondents were selected using the convenient sampling method. The data was collected through close-ended questionnaires and the SPSS package was used in analyzing the data. The results of this research revealed that microfinance services and the standard of living have a positive significant relationship. Accordingly, the study recommends the HNB finance, to introduce more micro loan schemes with different advisory supports on the decision-making process, the importance of account opening, and the utilization of microfinance.

Keywords: Microfinance, Living Standard, Advisory Support, Micro Saving, Micro Credit.

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL MARKETS DEVELOPMENT ON CAPITAL STRUCTURE: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES

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Abstract

Capital structure is the mixture of long-term debt and equity and the primary objective of it is to minimize the cost of capital in order to maximize shareholder wealth. Studies on capital structure were started after Modigliani and Miller's theoretical underpinnings in 1958, in which they claimed that capital structure of a firm was irrelevant in determining the value of a firm. The study aims to review current empirical evidences to see what has been found about financial markets development and capital structure, as well as to identify research gaps in the field. Most studies have considered market capitalization, stock market liquidity, commercial bank size, and credit growth as indicators of financial market development. Most of the studies concluded that financial markets development in terms of market capitalization, market liquidity, and the size and credit growth of commercial banks, influence the combination of long-term debt and equity and the firms are led to adjust the combination of long-term debt and equity capital whenever financial market developments occur. However, most of the researchers had not focused on the level of leverage that firms are having in the capital structure and largely used secondary data to evaluate the impact of financial markets development on capital structure. There is no study concentrated on primary data assessing the impact of financial markets development on capital structure. Future research can be done on the combined determinants of capital structure such as financial markets development, firm specific factors, macro-economic conditions and corporate governance practices using a survey approach.

Keywords: Financial markets development, Capital structure, capitalization, Stock market liquidity, Size of commercial banks, Credit growth of commercial banks



DIFFERENTIATION IN GENDER PAY: A STUDY OF INDIA

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Abstract

In 2021, the Gender wage gap in India extended to 62.5%; despite in recent times millions of additional ladies have joined the labor force and made colossal increases in their instructive achievement. Again and again, it is expected that this wage gap is not the proof of segregation, yet it is rather a factual ancient rarity of neglecting to adapt to factors that could drive profit contrasts among people. Notwithstanding, these elements especially word related contrasts among ladies and men-are themselves frequently impacted by orientation predisposition. The gender wage gap is genuine and harms ladies in all cases by smothering their profit and making it harder to adjust work and family. Genuine endeavors to comprehend the gender wage gap to exclude moving the fault to people for not acquiring more. Rather, these endeavors ought to look at where their economy gives inconsistent open doors to ladies at each purpose in their schooling, preparing, and profession decisions. The introduced paper concentrates on the gender wage gap in India and the elements influencing it while contrasting India and different countries. The paper likewise means to break down the explanations for the abrupt expansion in Gender wage hole during COVID-19. The paper has utilized explorative technique in view of secondary information.

Keywords: Gender wage gap, work life balance, gender bias

THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE ON DIVIDEND PAYOUT: A STUDY OF BANKING FINANCE SECTOR COMPANIES LISTED IN CSE

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Abstract

In every organization, financial performance is the main indicator that measures the health and stability of the company. It is a very important factor to shareholders because, dividend payment is directly dependent on the financial performance of the organization. Dividend decision entitles striking a balance between future growth of the firm and the organization's shareholders. Therefore, financial performance helps to enhance the wealth of the shareholders. The objective of this study was to investigate the impact of financial performance and dividend payout in finance companies listed in the Sri Lankan stock market, between the period of 2016 and 2019. The sample of this study consisted of 25 randomly selected finance companies. Return on assets, net profit margin and return on equity were used to measure the firm's performance and dividend payout ratio. The study found that, there is a significant impact on return on assets and dividend payout ratio in a positive way since the significant level is 1%. Also there is a negative relationship between the net profit margin and dividend payout ratio at the significant level of 5%. Finally, return on equity and dividend payout ratio also has a significant level of 5% and a negative relationship. The findings of this research would be vitally important to the policy makers in banking companies, insurance companies, and diversified companies, in deciding their dividend policy towards ensuring efficient and effective finance performance for a better future.

Keywords: Dividend Payout Ratio, Return on Assets, Net Profit Margin, Return on Equity, Finance Performance, Dividend Policy, Shareholder's Wealth



UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICES OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IN BUDDHIST EIGHTFOLD PATH **PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Most of the modern economic practices collapse due to lack of legal and moral considerations. Hence, there is a high demand for alternative economic models and financial accounting methods, though there are major differences which exist between traditional economic policies and alternative theories/ ideologies. Buddhism is more like an ideology than theology. As a result, Buddhism and economics differ from today's leading neo-classical economics, pointing out the limitations of current approaches and highlighting important points. The Buddhist economic system is an alternative explanation for the spiritual and ethical deficiencies of modern economic activities. The aim of this study is to explore how financial management is described in Buddhism and how financial management frameworks of Buddhism can be adapted for contemporary business activities. This may develop a holistic view of management and economics that facilitate moral and ethical values in society. This was achieved by adopting qualitative research methods, thematic analysis to explore the ideas of participants and content analysis to qualify the presence, meanings and relationships of Buddhism and financial management in Sutta Pitaka. The data was collected from Sutta Pitaka and interviews were conducted to explore the main aspects of financial management pointed out by Sutta Pitaka. According to the findings of the study, neoclassical economics is narrow in moral and ethical issues. Buddhism just shows that both the natural world and the gods put wealth in the first place. It recognizes that sustainable growth and financial management are basic human needs. Most Suttas emphasize that economic and financial stability are basic needs. These are called the foundations of spiritual development. According to the results of the content analysis, the Buddhist eightfold path highlights the importance of moral and ethical considerations for individuals, companies and society in managing business activities and taking financial decisions.

Keywords: Eightfold Path, Buddhist economics, Neoclassical economic, Moral and ethical considerations, Financial management



Doctoral Colloquium

OPEN INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE CREATION FROM A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Open innovation is an umbrella paradigm of innovation. It emphasizes the importance of collaborative innovation through knowledge flows to stimulate the internal innovation process of the organization. This approach can be considered as a winning strategy in improving innovation performance as a widespread business practice. Though open innovation theory emphasizes that external knowledge enhances internal innovation to gain competitive advantage, the open innovation theory does not explain how firms can develop internal innovation through external collaboration. The basic premise of open innovation theory is that external knowledge can be captured and exploited smoothly by firms. However, external knowledge cannot enhance innovation performance automatically. External knowledge is not enough to increase competitive advantage without a strong internal mechanism which has not been emphasized by the open innovation theory. The human resource of the organization has a vital role, which is to effectively manage the acquired external heterogeneous knowledge and combine it with the internal knowledge base to promote innovation. The significance of this role has not been covered by the open innovation theory. Numerous researchers argue that open innovation increases the short-term performance of firms but does not affect long-term success. Depending on these arguments there is a theoretical gap that needs to be addressed by potential studies. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to perform desk research on the open innovation and knowledge creation process. Hence this study proposes an integrated model linking open innovation theory and knowledge creation theory highlighting the internal knowledge creation mechanism through the SECI model to gain sustainable competitive advantages from open innovation initiatives. Future studies can be focused on testing the model with empirical data for further development of the open innovation knowledge creation model.

Keywords: knowledge creation theory, open innovation theory, SECI model, theoretical perspective



IDENTIFING THE DOMINANT PERSONALITIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CAREER DECISION MAKING SELF-EFFICACY AND CAREER SATISFACTION: A STUDY ON THE SENIOR BANK EMPLOYEES OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This empirical research to be carried out to identify dominant personalities and their impact on career decision self-efficacy and career satisfaction. This will be conducted in the banking sector of Sri Lanka, considering their high labor intensiveness and high-risk taking business environment. Sample selection will be from the cluster random sampling method among senior bank employees who are more than 30 (thirty) years of age in the western province of Sri Lanka. This sample was selected irrespective of designation or gender in this study, in order to identify the impact of their career decision self-efficacy; the impact of the career decision they have taken at least ten (10) years ago and its current state. Which includes the present status of their career ascendency and career satisfaction on the selected career path and the influence and effect of their dominant personality traits on this process. The results of preliminary survey conducted by the researcher adding to existing literature (Wickramasinghe et al 2007), identified that majority of employment seekers were indifferent about selecting their own career path on value identification with their own dominant personality trait i.e. personal preferences, personality-based competency and aptitude levels. Further identified that human resource professionals also, do not pay sufficient attention in evaluating the dominant personalities of candidates in the recruitment / selection process. On perusal of existing literature, no published studies were found to have adequately researched on this exact topic in the Sri Lankan context. In view of that, due to the gap in published literature and the visible gap in the societal integration of already existing (widely tested) personality measurement toolkits/indexes in the employment selection process in Sri Lanka, this researcher intends to introduce a New Personality Measurement Index – Sri Lanka (NPMI-SL), validated in the banking sector of Sri Lanka in this study. This New Personality Measuring Index - Sri Lanka, will be utilized to identify the impact of dominant personalities on career decision self- efficacy and career satisfaction among the cluster of bankers in the western province of Sri Lanka. The intended NPMI -SL will be postulated from the existing widely tested theories, concepts, indexes, and extended open ended interviews (qualitative) with relevant stakeholders, while validity of the instrument will be confirmed by a pilot test project.

Keywords: Dominant personality traits, Career decision self-efficacy, Career satisfaction, personality measurement Index.

TOWARDS A MODEL OF HUMANIZED MARKETING TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

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Abstract

Marketing and branding are blamed for promoting consumption. On the one hand Consumerism as a concept has come forward to fight against Marketing blaming them on the fact that marketers are creating needs and wants which are not essential for living. On the other hand, marketers are expected to increase consumption for organizations and brands to achieve growth which is mostly measured in terms of value and volume of sales and profits generated through them. Triple bottom line and related concepts have become yet another marketing gimmick merely catering to the needs of brands and organizations not for the benefit of the consumers and the society. Achieving SDGs such as sustainable consumption by 2030 has become almost impossible. In this backdrop, promoting sustainable consumption has become the need of the hour for the long-term survival of mankind if they are to co-exist with the environment. Hence, there is a clear need for bringing about changes to the process of branding and marketing while allowing brands to sustain. In other words, brands should be in existence for the benefit of societies and people and not the other way around. Marketing makes use of scientific approaches in planning for growth and at the same time, is making use of art and creativity in making such plans palatable to end users and consumers. Therefore, another crying need of the hour is also to humanize marketing and creativity for the long-term survival of mankind.

The author has analyzed the consumption under three main categories as Body-Mind-Soul; has elaborated on the three and in the end come up with a point where sustainable consumption can exist. In addition to that an approach is proposed for brands and brand marketers to practice in performing their duties.

Key words: Sustainable Consumption, Sustainable marketing, Sustainable branding, humanizing marketing, New Normal



INNOVATION AND RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WAY FORWARD: OPTIMIZE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OUTCOME

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to broaden limited country specific understanding, of why the majority of developing countries struggle to embark on sustainable development trajectories because of internal and/or external barriers to technological innovation and innovativeness. By studying Sri Lanka's struggle in establishing a National Innovation System with dynamic government, university and industry collaborations, the researcher aims to identify cohesive factors for dismal performance in developing well-articulated collaborative framework for innovation and technology advancement at national level and maximize the opportunities available to rejuvenate the prevailing National Innovation System of the country by customizing best practices of global pacesetters to suit the local environment.

This research intends to consider the mixed methods approach, which composites both quantitative but predominantly qualitative methods enabling the researcher more comprehensive interpretation of findings. By reviewing the data gathered from multiple sources the author will be able to correlate data by identifying patterns, categories, and themes. Further, more innovative approach to this predominantly qualitative case study will be taken by combining subjective interpretation and an action-oriented approach.

Well implemented National Innovation System leads to sustainable economic prosperity by facilitating the commercialization process of innovations and if not transferring the innovations to the public domain for the creation of public goods or services. Unlike in developed countries, in developing countries, Public Research Organizations and universities have to take the leadership and act as major sources of innovation, justifying the limited budgetary allocations for Research and Development by the government. The proposed research explores the country's precedence in technological innovation leading to achieve intellectual superiority to become globally competitive and a successful nation in prevailing a knowledge centric economic environment.

Keywords: NIS, R&D, Innovation, Universities, PROs

COLONIAL SPACES AND POSTCOLONIAL DILEMMAS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF NON-WESTERN TOURISTS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Tourism industry and its spaces emerged and developed with colonialism initially serving the colonial masters who subsequently became western tourists. The tourism industry globally and tourism literature today is dominated by the modern paradigm and Eurocentric thinking. Literature on tourism has extensively explored the western experience of tourism in the non-west rather than the nonwestern /postcolonial experience of tourism by the non-western tourists. Sri Lanka being a postcolonial tourist destination continues to construct colonial spaces to cater to western tourists. However, due to the changes in its socio-political and economic dimensions, an increasing number of tourists in Sri Lanka seem to be those from the non-west. More specifically inter-regional tourism in Asia (e.g., India and China) and domestic tourism seems to dominate the tourism industry in Sri Lanka, replacing the historical western tourists. This observable change of tourism has not been given much attention in tourism literature due to its dominance of Eurocentric thinking. While postcolonial studies in tourism attempts to focus on these complexities, they do not seem to consider market exchange as a theme – whereas 'service management' literature in tourism management studies capture this theme from a neoliberal perspective. Researchers in both streams (postcolonial studies in tourism and service management in tourism) accept the insufficiency of such studies and their inherent theoretical limitations. This study explores the dilemma of postcolonial/non-western guests confronting colonial spaces in postcolonial locations embracing neoliberal market forces from an interpretive epistemology. Using phenomenology as a research design, it explores the phenomenon of host and guest interaction. Using Van Manen's hermeneutic phenomenological analysis, the researcher is currently attempting to develop and identify themes linking with the phenomenon and attempt to explore the lived world and meaning creation of participants who are non-western hosts and guests in the Sri Lankan tourism spaces

Keywords: Host-guest interaction, Non-western tourist, post-colonial perspective, Neoliberal perspective, Hermeneutic Phenomenology.



CUSTOMER SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN ONLINE TRAVEL COMMUNITIES: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

The participation of customers in co-creation has been extended with the invention of social media and has become a challenge as well as a key success factor for marketing services. The notion of customer participation in social media is identified as customer social participation. Though customer social participation is a popular phenomenon and explored in the context of online brand communities, it still lacks a systematic exploration in relation to travel. Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to explore customer social participation in online travel communities during the last five years. Hence, the study presents a systematic review by synthesizing 18 papers on customer social participation in online travel communities published from 2017 to 2022 March. This study conducted a content analysis of reviewed articles from selected databases. The findings of the study imply that customer participation in online travel communities is still undermined and needs more focused investigation from the customer aspect and the company aspect. This study also presents a framework based on the variables identified from the reviewed articles. Further, antecedents were clustered into six categories: functional, social, emotional psychological, hedonic, and brand-related factors. The study identified two brand-related antecedents: brand loyalty and brand cognition of customer social participation. The consequences identified were clustered into customer aspects and brand aspects. Further, this article points out that the theories and models adopted were mainly focused on an individual's cognitive aspects. The majority of the articles pointed out that many studies were quantitative in nature and the majority adopted structural equation modeling technique for data analysis. This study presents several research gaps by providing a comprehensive knowledge on customer social participation in online travel platforms which can be used by academia and experts in the travel industry to investigate this phenomenon further.

Keywords: Customer participation, Social Media, Online Travel Communities

INFLUENCE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TOWARDS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELATIONSHIP MARKETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The concepts of relationship marketing, transformational leadership and organizational performance have attracted significant importance in the field of academia over the past few decades. Given the intense competition in the banking industry it has required banks to maintain close relationships with its customers to ensure organizational performance. In such a context leadership exerted by the branch managers towards their branch staff will also play a major role. Therefore, this study will investigate the mediation effect of transformational leadership in the relationship between relationship marketing and organizational performance, with special reference to Licensed Commercial Banks of Sri Lanka. The researcher expects to adopt a quantitative approach for this research whereby a survey is conducted targeting the frontline branch staff of four (04) Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), comprising Bank of Ceylon (BoC), People's Bank (PB), Commercial Bank of Ceylon (COMB) PLC and Hatton National Bank (HNB) PLC operating in the Western province. The stratified random sampling technique will be adopted with a sample size of 364. As part of data analysis both descriptive and inferential statistics will be generated. Mean value, standard deviation, maximum and minimum value of each variable for descriptive statistics, while Pearson correlation matrix, multiple regression analysis and one sample t-test for inferential statistics. The quality of data will be ensured through finding out construct validity and inter-item consistency reliability. This study will help frontline bank staff who meet the daily needs of the customers to understand the level of relationships to be maintained with customers for organizational performance. They will be able to get an idea how guidance and leadership received from their branch managers will affect in the process of maintaining relationships with customers for organizational performance. Thereby, it will ultimately influence on the quality of the service delivered by the bank to the community.

Keywords: Relationship Marketing, Transformational Leadership and Organizational Performance



Three Minute Thesis (3MT)



ACCEPTANCE OF E-BANKING APPLICATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Electronic banking (E-Banking) services enable customers to conveniently patronage financial services through smart mobile devices. Present research analyses the effect of subjective norms and security of e-services aspects on electronic banking acceptance. University students who use mobile banking and internet banking services have been considered for sample selection. Finally, completed 287 self-administered questionnaires were utilized for the data analysis process. Technology Acceptance Model has been adapted by means of incorporating the subjective norms variable and security of e-services variable (SoES). ANOVA, ANCOVA as well as Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) were considered in analyzing data. Formulated hypotheses of the study (suggesting significant positive influence of subjective norms, SoES and interaction factors towards adoption of e-banking-AoEB) were supported by the results. Empirical evidences of the research have supported the first and second hypotheses proposing the importance of subjective norms, SoES towards AoEB. Further, the interaction of subjective norms and reason towards the same (whether the reason is perceived ease of use or perceived usefulness), have predicted AoEB, significantly, as proposed by the third hypothesis. Accordingly, cross-sectional nature and restrains on sample selection were recognized as limitations. Research findings would be beneficial for banks, mobile banking service providers/application developers, regulators and related stakeholders, alike. Contextual application of HLM analysis, incorporation of associated models, contribute to originality. In quest of knowledge in wide-ranging country, cultural and societal settings, future researches may integrate relevant theoretical models and diverse perspectives.

Keywords: E-Services, Mobile Banking, Online Banking, Technology Adoption

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT ON SOCIAL CAPITAL IN COMMUNITY TOURISM AND ITS IMPACT ON PEOPLES' INVOLVEMENT

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Abstract

Social capital (SC) is defined as network and relationships, built on trust and reciprocity, connecting people within the community. A strong requirement exists for more studies and investigations on SC in relation to the tourism sector as this area is characterized by fragmented and vague conceptualizations, lack of empirical inquiries and non-availability of measurements. The objective of the study is to develop a valid and reliable measurement instrument of SC in the context of tourism, and testing its impact on Peoples' Involvement (PI) in a community tourism context. The data collected using a structured questionnaire through a household survey and 618 filled questionnaires were collected using a stratified sampling method. Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were used during the scale purification process. Finally, a path model was developed to test the impact of SC on PI in the tourism context. Initially the study developed a valid and reliable instrument for SC having 13 items across four dimensions: Bonding Social Capital, Social Bridging Capital, Social Linking Capital, and Social Harmless Capital. Secondly, the study found that SC impacts on PI in Community-Based Tourism. This study is important in the tourism context on several grounds; development of measurement scales in the tourism context, Social Harmless Capital is one of the important dimensions of SC, provided empirical evidence that SC enhances the PI in Community-Based Tourism, and providing important implications for stakeholders in the tourism sector. Therefore, these findings have significant managerial implications and the study provided a detailed discussion on this.

Keywords: Social Capital, Scale development, Peoples' Involvement.



THE EFFECT OF FEAR APPEALS EMBEDDED IN CIGARETTE PACKAGING ON SMOKERS QUITTING BEHAVIOR WITH MODERATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL NORMS: "A STUDY IN SRI LANKAN TOBACCO INDUSTRY"

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Abstract

Tobacco smoking is a major public health issue globally, also smoking is a harmful habit which violates the social norms in any country. Tobacco smoking is the single most preventable cause of ill health and death in the world. Annually it contributes to more hospitalizations and deaths than alcohol and illicit drug use combined (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2012, p. 221). Most smokers commence smoking prior to the age of 24 therefore, lowering the levels of adoption in this age groups is likely to translate to less people smoking in the future.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) tobacco and tobacco related products have become the foremost reason for many cancers. Also smoking leads to other different smoking related diseases. It has been unanimously acknowledged that more than 24 different smoking related diseases have been recognized in today's world, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, 10 different forms of cancer, strokes, incapability and sexual ineffectiveness are critical among those identified diseases.(Hammond, Fong, Borland, & Cummings, 2005) Also, the same study has found that smoking is the world's second largest cause of death. (Hammond, et, al 2005) smoking is the major cause of pre-mature deaths; not only of the smoker, but a considerable number of passive smokers as well (Vangeli, Stapleton, Smit, Borland, & West, 2011). Approximately **5.4 million** deaths worldwide occur due to smoking. (World Health 13.3% among people aged 15 years and over. (Australian Bureau of statistics-2018) Apart from the above reasons it also causes a social cost and economic cost. Many underdeveloped and developing countries are suffering from this smoking related disease since it tarnishes social values. As an example, in the Sri Lankan context the tendency of school children starting to smoke is very high which is a negative signal for the country's future.

Keywords: Fear Appeals. Quitting Behavior, Social Norms

DEVELOPING SRI LANKA AS AN ENTREPRENEURIAL NATION: AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TOWARDS ENABLING SUCCESSFUL NEW TECHNOLOGY VENTURE CREATIONS

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship is all about value creation. But the truth is that entrepreneurship does not happen in a vacuum. Only a vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem can facilitate these value creation processes at comfort. Since entrepreneurship is recognised as an engine of economic growth, many nations around the world have made it a top priority and are deliberately creating these conditions towards enabling entrepreneurship within their country and cities. An entrepreneurship ecosystem is "a set of interdependent actors and factors coordinated to enable productive entrepreneurship". A vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem consists of fifty plus conditions which can be classified into six domains of policy, finance, culture, support, human capital, and market. Today, Sri Lanka has a low level of entrepreneurial activities with high venture failure rates. These are due to the unavailability of an exclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country. The solution is straight forward. It is to deliberately create these conditions in the country. However, it is advised to not expect the creation of the next Silicon Valley because entrepreneurial activities happen within the existing economic and sociocultural structure, where an empirical examination is required. Therefore, this research aims to understand both the multidimensional phenomenon of entrepreneurship ecosystem as well as successful new venture creation through the perspectives of institutional theory and resource-based theories in the context of Sri Lanka. The research reflects on the philosophy of positivism and follows the deductive approach through the exploratory research design with the survey strategy via an online questionnaire. The sample frame is the Sri Lankan entrepreneurs who have successfully created new ventures. These findings will enable the development of an entrepreneurship ecosystem taxonomy-based success factors model for developing an exclusive ecosystem strategy for the prosperity of all.

Keywords: entrepreneurship ecosystem, new venture creation, success factors, Sri Lanka.



THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON GENERATING ONLINE PURCHASING INTENTION OF BRANDED FASHION PRODUCTS THROUGH **CONSUMER BRAND RELATIONSHIP:** THE MODERATING EFFECT OF INNOVATIVENESS AMONG GENERATION Y IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Social media disrupted the communication strategies of organizations globally and brought opportunities for marketers to reach customers effectively. Influencer Marketing (IM) is relatively a new discipline in contemporary marketing to interact and engage with stakeholders in social media. The increasing importance of social media influencers (SMIs) has been acknowledged by marketers and gained the attention of academics. Theory of human brands and theory of attachment contributed to the marketing domain by supporting appreciation of the relationship between traditional celebrities, consumers and brands. However, SMIs as human brand has not been explored in theories prompting researchers to connect new dynamics of SMI marketing into theories and models. Largely fashion brands deploy SMIs to boost their sales. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic drove the fashion industry to accelerate use of digital channels to reach customers. As a result, 60% of the fashion industry goes for SMIs campaigns to increase consumer relationship and conversion. However, very few empirical studies were carried out to signify the impact of SMIs on consumer brand relationship (CBR) and online purchase intention for branded fashion retail products in Sri Lanka. The result of this study contributed to an increased understanding about how branded fashion organizations can use SMIs with the right attributes that match the brand value, which in turn could contribute to increase CBR and to drive sales conversions by optimizing marketing budget.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Online Purchasing Intention, Innovativeness

ADOPTION OF FRUGAL INNOVATION ON CAPTURING BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID MARKET POTENTIAL OF SRI LANKAN MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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Abstract

Frugal innovations play a significant role in bottom of the pyramid market, yet there is a low uptake of adopting frugal innovations in Sri Lankan manufacturing companies to grow business in bottom of the pyramid markets. There have been numerous studies on the importance and application of frugal innovation in emerging economies throughout the world, giving the advantages it provides to untapped markets in both developing and developed countries. However, these studies have not adequately identified impediments to frugal innovation. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to explore how far decision-makers have adopted frugal innovation in capturing bottom of the pyramid market potential of Sri Lankan manufacturing companies. The research defines frugal innovations and how they differ from other types of innovations. This also investigates the use of frugal innovations to serve bottom of the pyramid markets and the key qualities of frugal innovations in more detail. The research investigates the potential of manufacturing firms to capture developing markets through frugal innovation. It explores the barriers that prevent manufacturing companies from adopting a frugal innovation strategy and provides solutions to overcome them. The study employs a qualitative approach. The research method employed is the constructivist grounded theory. The data collection is through semi-structured interviews with decision-makers in Sri Lankan manufacturing companies. The results of this study will benefit manufacturing companies with enhanced market opportunities and consumers will benefit from socially valuable, economically feasible, ecologically friendly frugal products, services and business models which can change the lives of billions of people, resulting in equally distributed economic growth.

Keywords: Frugal Innovation, Bottom of the Pyramid, Sri Lanka, Manufacturing



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