

Conference Proceedings

**4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON MANAGEMENT
AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
(ICOME 2025)**

*“Shaping the Future: Innovation, Leadership and
Entrepreneurial Excellence”*

11th September 2025

Faculty of Management Studies
The Open University of Sri Lanka

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4th International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025)

Keynote Speaker – Dr. Gerasimos Balis



Dr. Gerasimos Balis is a Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship, Pedagogical Research Director, and Postgraduate Research (PGR) Director at the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, University of Bristol. His work focuses on innovation pedagogy and understanding how interdisciplinary education can drive creativity, entrepreneurship, and real-world impact. For almost a decade, the Centre has been unique in the United Kingdom for bringing together students from across engineering, science, social sciences, and the arts to learn in collaborative, cross-disciplinary teams. These teams work on real-life projects with external partners, tackling challenges ranging from sustainability and community wellbeing to emerging technologies and business innovation. As Pedagogical Research Director, Dr. Balis investigates the learning models, practices, and outcomes that enable this distinctive approach and explores how experiential, project-based learning shapes graduates prepared to navigate uncertainty and lead innovation. They also support a diverse community of postgraduate researchers and teach across entrepreneurship, design thinking, and systems thinking, while actively fostering collaborations that reimagine how innovation education can prepare the leaders of tomorrow.

Keynote Speaker - Dr. Alvise Favotto



Dr. Alvise Favotto is the Deputy Director of Internationalization at the Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow. His research focuses on management control and governance systems, with a particular emphasis on corporate social responsibility and labor relations. As an expert in Management Control Systems, Corporate Accountability, Social and Environmental Accounting, Corporate Political Activity, Labor Rights, and Public Good. He has been the recipient of several prestigious research grants, including the CoSS Strategic Research Fund for Financial Education in Scotland, the Leverhulme Trust grant for Responsible Lobbyists: Corporate Responsibility and Public Policy. With 17 publications in world-ranked journals and five book chapters, Dr. Favotto's work continues to shape discussions on corporate governance, sustainability, and ethical business practices.

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



I am delighted to extend my warmest greetings to the Faculty of Management Studies at The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) as they host the Fourth International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025) under the timely and inspiring theme “Shaping the Future: Innovation, Leadership, and Entrepreneurial Excellence.”. In today’s rapidly evolving global landscape filled with unprecedented challenges urge the requirement of new ways of thinking with bold approaches to problem-solving. By fostering research, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, we need to create a sustainable tomorrow for our nation’s sustainable economic growth and development. In this regard, ICOME 2025 offers a unique platform for academics, industry professionals, policymakers, and the community as a whole to come together and explore the latest advancements in management, business and entrepreneurship.

I am confident that this conference will empower participants to translate their research insights into action and to contribute meaningfully to shaping a better future for our nations and the world at large.

On behalf of the university, I express my gratitude to the organizing committee, our partners, and all participants for their dedication and commitment.

Senior Prof. P.M.C. Thilakarathne
The Vice Chancellor
The Open University of Sri Lanka

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



As the Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies, with immense pleasure, I send this message to the Fourth International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025), hosted by the Faculty of Management Studies of The Open University of Sri Lanka. This conference has become a vibrant platform for sharing ideas, research findings, and innovative practices that shape the future of management, business, and entrepreneurship.

The theme of this year's conference, "Shaping the Future: Innovation, Leadership, and Entrepreneurial Excellence," reflects our commitment to nurturing knowledge that goes beyond boundaries that empower individuals, organizations, and societies to thrive in an era of transformation.

I am highly pleased as this conference brings together scholars, policymakers, industry experts, and learning partners across the globe to engage in constructive dialogue and exchange. With its diverse technical sessions, doctoral colloquium, industrial forum, mini symposium and 3MT competition, ICOME 2025 provides an enriching experience for all participants.

On behalf of the Faculty of Management Studies, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our keynote speakers, presenters, reviewers, and organizing committees for their dedication and hard work. May this conference inspire collaboration, new research pathways, and innovative solutions for the challenges of tomorrow.

Welcome to ICOME 2025.

S.A.D. Senanayake
Dean
Faculty of Management Studies
The Open University of Sri Lanka

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



It's a pleasure to contribute this message to the Fourth International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025), organized by the Faculty of Management Studies at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). For over two decades, OUSL has been at the forefront of academic discourse with its annual research conferences. This tradition began 21 years ago with the first Annual Open University Research Conference, which was established by the Research Unit. It has since grown into a high-caliber forum that attracts researchers from local and international universities and various higher education and research institutions.

ICOME 2025 represents a significant milestone in our journey to foster a dynamic research culture at OUSL. Building on the success of the inaugural ICOME in 2022, the Faculty of Management Studies is proud to host this fourth iteration on 11th September 2025.

The conference theme, "Shaping the Future: Innovation, Leadership, and Entrepreneurial Excellence," highlights its focus on cutting-edge topics. ICOME 2025 will provide a valuable platform for academics and researchers to present their latest findings and engage in rich discussions across a wide range of fields, including:

- Work, Organization and Digital Society
- Accounting, Finance, and Banking
- Marketing, Supply Chain Management, and Tourism
- Human Resource Management and Best Practices
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship

This event will not only enrich academic experiences but also create invaluable opportunities for collaborative research with local and international institutions, ultimately contributing to national development and economic productivity.

I extend my sincere congratulations to all presenters and my heartfelt thanks to the Conference Committee for their unwavering dedication in organizing ICOME 2025. I wish the conference great success in fostering meaningful discussions, forging strong collaborations, and catalyzing impactful research initiatives for years to come.

Senior Prof. Shyama R. Weerakoon
Director-Research Unit
The Open University of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR



It is with great pride and pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to all participants, contributors, and partners of the Fourth International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025), organized by the Faculty of Management Studies of The Open University of Sri Lanka.

The theme of ICOME 2025, “Shaping the Future: Innovation, Leadership, and Entrepreneurial Excellence,” reflects the urgency of reimagining how organizations, entrepreneurs, and societies respond to an era of constant disruption, technological transformation, and resource constraints. In today’s environment, success is no longer defined solely by traditional strategies but by the ability to innovate creatively, lead responsibly, and cultivate entrepreneurial agility. This conference provides a timely platform to explore how these dimensions intersect to address pressing global, societal, and business challenges.

Over the years, ICOME has built a strong reputation, nationally and internationally, as a hub for knowledge creation and exchange. ICOME 2025 continues this legacy by bringing together an impressive community of scholars, practitioners, industry leaders, policymakers, and students to share research, debate ideas, and inspire action. The insights presented in these proceedings not only enrich academic discourse but also provide practical pathways for driving sustainable growth, resilience, and inclusive progress.

As Conference Chair, I am deeply honored to witness the continued growth and impact of ICOME as one of South Asia’s premier academic events. I sincerely appreciate the invaluable contributions of our authors, reviewers, organizing committee, sponsors, and partner institutions whose collective dedication ensures the success of this conference. Your commitment advances scholarly excellence and nurtures the next generation of leaders, innovators, and entrepreneurs. I wish you all a rewarding and inspiring conference experience.

Prof. Aruna Shantha
Conference Chair - ICOME 2025
Faculty of Management Studies
The Open University of Sri Lanka

MESSAGE FROM THE CONFERENCE SECRETARY



On the occasion of the International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025), organized by the Faculty of Management Studies, The Open University of Sri Lanka, for the fourth consecutive year, under a timely theme of “Shaping the Future: Innovation, Leadership and Entrepreneurial Excellence,” I warmly welcome all the participants. This conference will bring together both the local and global community committed to advancing knowledge and addressing contemporary challenges in leadership, business, and entrepreneurship.

As the Conference Secretary, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Chief Guest, Senior Professor P.M.C. Thilakarathne, Vice Chancellor of The Open University of Sri Lanka. I extend my thanks to our keynote speaker, Dr. Gerasimos Balis from the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, University of Bristol, United Kingdom, for delivering such an insightful keynote address. I also appreciate Dr. Alvise Favotto from the Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom for joining us online and delivering a timely speech. I would acknowledge the support we received from Dean of the Faculty, Mr. S A D Senanayake, Former Dean Prof. N. Abeysekera, Heads of the Departments, academic and administrative staff, session chairs, presenters, reviewers, sponsors, and the dedicated teams whose tireless efforts made this event possible. I thank all participants for your enthusiasm and contributions, which truly enrich the spirit of the conference with impactful research aligned with the conference theme.

I am confident that the discussions, networking, and collaborations will inspire new ideas and pave the way for impactful research and sustainable practices in the future.

I wish you a productive and memorable conference experience at ICOME 2025.

Dr A. A. I. Lakmali
Conference Secretary- ICOME 2025
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4th International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025)

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4th International Conference on Management and Entrepreneurship (ICOME 2025)

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Work, Organization and Digital Society

VISUALIZING ESG PERFORMANCE IN SMEs: A POWER BI DASHBOARD APPROACH

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Abstract

The report examines how Microsoft Power BI dashboards allow SMEs to visualize and manage their ESG performance. ESG is no longer just a "nice-to-have" for companies, it is now a "business-critical factor," driven by regulatory requirements, investor expectations, and consumer preferences. However, SMEs have difficulties collecting data, tending to lack expertise and resources. To deal with the challenges noted above, the study has employed a simulated data strategy and created realistic ESG-related datasets that are representative of commonly referenced Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including carbon emissions, energy use, employee diversity, board composition, and community involvement. The simulated data were created from secondary data benchmarks and adjusted for the average profile of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's) in various sectors. Adopting a design science methodology, the research developed an interactive Power BI dashboard that focuses on stakeholder relevance and materiality of the selected ESG metrics. The report assessed the dashboard's capacity to identify patterns, offer insights, and support decision-making. It has also discussed the tool's potential for scalability, plus its limitations, especially for SMEs with limited digital infrastructure. Finally, the report has concluded by presenting actionable recommendations for developing an enabling ecosystem, as well as potential future research possibilities, particularly in AI integration and development of ESG impact measurement tools.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Business Intelligence, Environmental, Key Performance Indicators, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, Social and Governance*

THE IMPACT OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ISO AND NON-ISO CERTIFIED APPAREL FIRMS IN COLOMBO & GAMPAHA DISTRICTS

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices on business sustainability in Sri Lanka's apparel industry. The study was carried out in the apparel industry as it happens to be one of the key areas of the Sri Lankan economy. Over the period of January to August in the year 2024, the industry generated a total earning of USD 3,364.8 million, which is 1.2 percent above earnings of the previous year, 2023. Export earnings were also increased by 17.4 percent in August 2024 making the amount USD 512 million. This expansion shows the industry is well able to adjust to the fluctuating market conditions and its role in stabilizing the enterprise. Given that nature of competition and the necessity to achieve international standards, it will be essential to introduce the practice of TQM to realize the provision of high-quality products and customer satisfaction. The apparel industry, hence, presents an apt background in investigating the relevance of the usage of TQM practices in the promotion of business sustainability over time. The research study involved the analysis of information about 101 clothing companies, which are ISO-certified and non-certified ones, which are in Colombo and Gampaha districts. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, graphical, correlation, and regression analysis. By evaluating leadership, employee training and Management, information analysis, supplier Management, process management, customer orientation, strategic planning, and continuous improvement, this study assessed their effects on economic, environmental, and social sustainability. The results indicated a positive correlation between the TQM practices and business sustainability. Finally, this study gave valuable insight to improve sustainability performance through TQM practices.

Keywords: *Apparel Industries, Business Sustainability, Economic Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, ISO Certification, Social Sustainability, Total Quality Management Practices*

THE NEXUS BETWEEN DIGITALIZATION, EMPLOYEE CHANGE MANAGEMENT, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

Digital transformation has become essential for organizations' existence rather than a mere option. It is described as the process of dramatically changing and improving all parts of entities by the integration of information, processing, communication, and networking technologies. This study aims to identify key theories that explain the relationships between digitalization and organizational productivity, develop a model to show how employee change management influences this relationship, and to identify emerging areas for future research. The PRISMA standards guided the execution of a systematic literature review (SLR). Sixty-four articles published during 2000-2025 were selected from the Scopus and Taylor and Francis online databases according to defined inclusion criteria. Articles were examined using Amos VOS viewer software. Despite extensive research on digital transformation, some areas i.e. digital technologies, digital leadership, digital organizational culture, digital capability, and competitive environment have received limited attention during the years. Employee change management in digitalization is found to be a top priority for future research. Dignity, employee engagement, employee resilience, employee digital performance, and meaningful work are identified as the key attributes of focus. Further, results depict that the impact of digitalization on productivity remains largely unexamined. The model introduced in this study demonstrates the interaction between digital transformation, employee change management, and organizational productivity, emphasizing employee change management as the mediating variable in this interaction. Resource-Based View (RBV) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) are the fundamental theories supporting the model. This study urges firms to integrate digital endeavours with employee-focused change strategies to enhance organizational productivity.

Keywords: *Digital Transformation, Employee Change Management, Organizational Productivity, PRISMA, Resource-Based View Theory*

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB STRESS OF SECONDARY LEVEL STAFF: A STUDY OF DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT MANTHAI WEST IN MANNAR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Job stress has become a prevalent issue in contemporary workplaces, particularly within the public sector, where bureaucratic limitations and elevated administrative demands can adversely affect employee morale and institutional performance. This study investigated the key factors contributing to job-related stress among secondary-level staff in the Divisional Secretariat of Manthai West, situated in the Mannar District of Sri Lanka. Secondary-level personnel such as Development Officers, Public Management Assistants, and Grama Niladhari play a vital role in administrative operations. However, these employees frequently face extended work responsibilities, inadequate recognition, and limited opportunities for career advancement, making them especially vulnerable to occupational stress. This research adopted a descriptive cross-sectional design with a quantitative approach. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to 87 respondents selected through convenience sampling. The study focused on five independent variables: workload, poor work–life balance, poor work relationships, lack of recognition, and career advancement pressure. Statistical tools, including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis, were employed to assess the strength and significance of relationships between these variables and job stress. The findings revealed that workload and work–life imbalance are the most significant contributors to perceived stress, followed by poor interpersonal relationships and lack of recognition. Career advancement pressure, while present, had a relatively lower impact. These results highlighted the need for targeted human resource interventions such as fair task distribution, employee support systems, and formal recognition mechanisms. Addressing these issues can enhance employee well-being, organizational efficiency, and the quality of public service delivery in rural administrative contexts.

Keywords: *Career Advancement Pressure, Divisional Secretariat of Manthai West, Job Stress, Lack of Recognition, Poor Work-life Balance, Poor Work Relationships, Workload*

THE ROLE OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP IN PROMOTING EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: A CHAIN MEDIATION MODEL OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

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Abstract

Innovation is prominent for the growth and survival of organizations in the contemporary business environment. Employees are the primary source of innovation; thus, promoting Innovative Work Behaviours (IWB) in employees has become a major concern for organizations. Leadership is considered central to the work behaviours of individuals, yet there are disagreements as to which leadership style would foster IWB. Proponents of spirituality research suggest that more value-based, spiritually oriented leadership is essential in this regard, as such a leader promises a culture of trust, altruistic love, meaning, and purpose- the qualities that arouse creativity and encourage employees to embrace the risk of innovative and extra-role behaviours for their organizations. Nevertheless, the linkage between Spiritual Leadership and employee IWB remains under-explored to date. Although the available research supports a causal relationship between the two constructs, recent studies have conflicting conclusions regarding a direct linkage. This has called for new knowledge to explain the mechanisms through which Spiritual Leadership and IWB could be linked. This study, grounded in the theoretical underpinnings of Social Exchange Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Self Determination Theory, proposes a conceptual model that introduces Workplace Spirituality and Organizational Identification (OI) as mediating variables. The proposed model establishes that a spiritual leader, by creating a spiritually rich work climate, elicits OI within the employees. Such employees, with the belief that they share a common fate with the organization, willingly take the risks of engaging in IWB. By proposing this model, the study aims to provide a more holistic perspective to comprehend the causal relationship between Spiritual Leadership and IWB. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of addressing organizational environmental factors as well as employees' inner needs for sustained proactive work behaviours.

Keywords: *Innovative Work Behaviours, Organizational Identification, Spiritual Leadership, Workplace Spirituality*

PROCESS FACTORS INFLUENCING ON-TIME RECEIVABLE COLLECTION IN SRI LANKA'S FOOD MANUFACTURING SECTOR - EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVES OF ABC LTD

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Abstract

Efficient receivable collections are vital in sustaining liquidity and ensuring the financial health of an organization. In the Sri Lankan context, where the food manufacturing sector has been characterized by diverse product offerings and varying customer bases, timely receivable collections are most important in maintaining the regular cash flow, reducing credit risks and supporting the growth of the organization. The main aim of the study is to investigate the process related factors that is associated with the on-time receivable collections in the food manufacturing sector in Sri Lanka. The study examined the impact of several process-related factors on receivable collection timeliness including efficient invoicing, offering multiple payment methods, automated payment reminders, early payment incentives, and streamlined collection processes. Despite the substantial literature available on receivable management process in Sri Lanka, there is a gap in research identifying the specific factors that can be affected. The research employed quantitative methodology utilizing a structured questionnaire to gather data from employees in the Finance and Sales Department at ABC PLC, a key player in Sri Lanka's food and beverage sectors. This study has employed a mono method approach by using SPSS software for data analysis, which included the reliability and validity tests, correlation analysis and chi square tests. Purposive sampling was used to select 121 participants from a population of over 173. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between efficient invoicing, multiple payment methods, automated payment reminders, early payment incentives and streamlined collection processes. This study highlights that enhancing receivable collection practices through process improvements can significantly strengthen the financial stability and sustainability of the Sri Lankan food manufacturing sector.

Keywords: *Automated Payment Reminder, Efficient Invoicing, Food Manufacturing Sector, Offering Multiple Payment, Receivable Collection*

THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS IN ENHANCING GUEST SATISFACTION IN LUXURY HOTELS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This research investigates the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in affecting guest satisfaction in luxury hotels within the Sri Lankan context. Despite the limited and lack of comprehensive research studies, especially in the Sri Lankan context, this study has the potential to identify the opportunities and trends in AI usage in the hospitality industry. The research aimed to find how effective the usage of AI tools is in luxury hotels and how it affects guest satisfaction. The study utilized a quantitative methodology, sampling guests who recently went to luxury hotels in Sri Lanka. Based on the nature of the study, purposive sampling was utilized to select participants as a result of the non-probability sampling approach. Data were collected from 380 participants through a cross-sectional survey, and data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS version 20. The study revealed a strong positive correlation between guest experiences and various AI services, including automated check-in/out, predictive analytics, AI concierge services, smart room technology, multilingual chatbots, AI-powered security systems, and sentiment analysis. Also, the study found strong relationships between AI tools and guest satisfaction in luxury hotels, with automated check-in/out showing a Pearson correlation of $r = 0.72$ ($p < 0.001$) and predictive analytics at $r = 0.63$ ($p < 0.001$). Chi-Square tests reinforced these findings, particularly for automated check-in/out, which had a value of 30.19 ($p < 0.001$). Despite these positive results, challenges like cultural acceptance and infrastructure gaps persist. To address these issues, the study recommends enhanced staff training and clear customer guidance on AI services, aiming to bridge the gap between AI technologies and the hospitality sector for future research and practice.

Keywords: *AI Tools, Artificial Intelligence, Guest Satisfaction, Luxury Hotels, Predictive Analytics*

A CONTEMPORARY EXPLORATION OF THE CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY INITIATIVES CONDUCTED BY RETAIL STORES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This research primarily focused on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with the use of the Sri Lankan retail industry as a case study in order to illustrate the ways through which the different CSR activities are initiated and thereby carried out, and the effects these activities have on the holders of interest. In the context of Sri Lanka, there is hardly any data-based exploration into whether the retail industry is actively engaging in CSR initiatives or not along with its main drivers and the challenges, despite it being an important aspect of the economic contributions of the country. Having adopted qualitative exploration with the conduct of semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten store managers purposively selected from three urban districts, major CSR activities were found to include environmental sustainability considerations, ethical labour practices, along with community engagement activities. The study context being Sri Lanka, the data were gathered using the thematic analysis, manually. Findings revealed that many retailers practice CSR as an instrument towards the enhancement of its brand reputation and also to promote customer loyalty. Other forces identified are consumer demand, internal organizational values, along with the regulatory controls, while constraints noted are financial resources and an institutional shoulder, at times. When it involves sustainable development, the study emphasizes CSR being aligned with business strategy, promoting visibility and accountability in the process. This research furthers the understanding of CSR dynamics in the retail sector of Sri Lanka, thus, with the provision of knowledge to businesses, policymakers, along with stakeholders interested in pushing forward the ethical as well as sustainable practices in emerging markets of the country.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Retail Industry, Social Business Practices, Sri Lanka*

VICARIOUS LIABILITY LAW IN SRI LANKA: ANALYSING JUDICIAL INCONSISTENCIES IN INTERPRETING THE COURSE OF EMPLOYMENT

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Abstract

John Salmond famously observed that it is easy to state the boundaries of the course of employment, but it is difficult to practically determine the contours that delineate acts that fall outside of it. Professor Paula Giliker similarly noted that UK courts continue to face challenges in defining this requirement for vicarious liability. This paper examined how Sri Lankan courts have interpreted and applied the concept of "course of employment" from 1993 to 2023. Six cases which reflect key developments, inconsistencies, and turning points in Sri Lankan vicarious liability law on the interpretation of the course of employment spanning a 30-year period were selected to examine the "course of employment" requirement in depth. The doctrinal and comparative methodology was utilized to critically analyse the decisions delivered by Sri Lanka's superior courts. The paper also explored whether the decision in *Nimal Premasiri v. Hon. Attorney General* marked a shift in judicial approach on the definition of course of employment and assessed the 2023 judgment in *Gamini Fonseka v. People's Bank* to determine emerging judicial tendencies in interpreting the same. The influence of recent UK case law on the definition of the course of employment, *WM Morrison Supermarkets plc v. Various Claimants* on Sri Lankan judicial reasoning was also evaluated. The findings revealed a lack of consistency in judicial interpretation. Sri Lankan courts have relied on conflicting precedents to determine the outcomes of similar matters. The definition of "assigned duties" was found to play a decisive role in determining case outcomes, yet courts have applied it inconsistently. Furthermore, English law was also found to exhibit similar problems in determining the scope of assigned duties. The research concluded that the courts' ability to arbitrarily stretch the boundaries of the scope of assigned duties has allowed them to unnecessarily influence case outcomes. This makes the question of whether employee acted within the course of employment a matter of judicial discretion. This paper contributes to the academic literature by providing the first comprehensive doctrinal analysis of how Sri Lankan courts have interpreted the course of employment requirement which is an issue that remains critically underexplored in local legal scholarship.

Keywords: *Close Connection Test, Course of Employment, Labour Law, Sri Lanka, Vicarious Liability*

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE BEHAVIOURAL INTENTION OF OUSL TEACHERS TO USE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF ATTITUDE TOWARDS TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing the behavioural intention (BI) of teachers at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) to adopt artificial intelligence (AI) for course development activities within the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) context. The research problem focused on understanding how the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) constructs affect BI in the ODL setting with limited AI policies. Grounded on UTAUT, the research investigated the impact of performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), facilitating conditions (FC), and perceived risks (PR) on BI, with Attitude Towards Technology (ATT) as a mediator. A quantitative survey of 122 OUSL teachers was conducted using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire, analyzed through SPSS with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), reliability tests, and PROCESS macro for mediation analysis. Findings confirm that PE, EE, and FC significantly influence BI, with ATT mediating the relationships for PE and FC in simple mediation models. SI and PR show non-significant effects, potentially due to limited institutional (i.e., peer) influence and risk concerns. The study highlighted the critical role of ATT in promoting AI adoption and provided implications for ODL institutions in developing contexts, emphasizing training, infrastructure support, and risk mitigation strategies.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Attitude towards Technology, Behavioral Intention, Course Development, Open & Distance Learning, Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology*

Accounting, Finance, and Banking

ASSESSING FINANCIAL SOUNDNESS OF SRI LANKAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES: A CAMELS MODEL APPROACH

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Abstract

This study examines the financial stability of life insurance market of Sri Lanka and assesses important financial soundness metrics unique to the sector using the CAMELS model. The current study has gathered data relevant to the period from 2016 to 2023 during which the country experienced a visible economic downturn, high degree of economic volatility, from a sample of 13 life insurance companies that are currently active in the Sri Lankan life insurance market. The study primarily aims at assessing the financial stability of the life insurance market in Sri Lanka and in determining how the relevant indicators affect the industry's financial stability. In-depth insights are derived from the data through descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, and sub-analyses; nevertheless, the panel data regression model is mostly used to offer deep and perceptive information on the financial landscape of the industry. The findings reveal that the statistically significant financial soundness metrics of capital adequacy and earnings/profitability have a significant impact on Return on Assets (ROA). The financial situation of the companies is determined by the sub-analysis that is carried out to classify public and private limited enterprises, using the financial data relevant to the previous eight years. It is found that compared to their rivals, companies with a larger market share are in better financial condition. This study offers vital recommendations for life insurers and regulators to promote financial soundness, and protect public confidence by highlighting the importance of adhering to better risk management practices and effective oversight, capital adequacy rules, and investment strategies. The findings clearly highlight the primary forces that ensure the financial soundness, and these insights could be vital in promoting the long-term viability and ensuring the expansion of the life insurance market of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *CAMELS Model, Financial Performance, Financial Soundness, Life Insurance, Return on Assets*

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS IN THE FINANCE STREAM IN SRI LANKA ON CRYPTOCURRENCY AND BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

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Abstract

Cryptocurrency and blockchain technology are reshaping modern day global financial systems through decentralization, transparency, and security. However, in Sri Lanka, these concepts remain relatively new, especially among the professionals serving the respective field. Considering this back ground, the current study aims at exploring the perceptions of Sri Lankan accounting and finance undergraduates towards cryptocurrency and blockchain technology by identifying the key factors that influence these perceptions, namely, IT literacy, financial literacy, and experience in financial markets. The research adopts a quantitative approach and is rooted in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Data for the study collected via a structured questionnaire from 204 undergraduates representing both state and non-state universities and the data is analyzed using SPSS involving descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. Regression analysis has confirmed that there is a significant impact of IT literacy, financial literacy, and experience in financial markets on the perception of students with regard to both cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology. Further, the results of the independent sample t-test indicate that students of state and non-state universities hold similar perceptions on both cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology. Current study highlights the importance of improving digital financial education in Sri Lanka to foster future readiness. This research provides valuable insights to educators, policymakers, and financial institutions aiming to promote crypto-literacy and blockchain adoption.

Keywords: *Blockchain Technology, Cryptocurrency, Experience in Financial Markets, Finance Literacy, IT Literacy*

FINANCIAL SELF-EFFICACY AS A PATHWAY TO FINANCIAL WELL-BEING: EVIDENCE FROM PHYSICIANS SERVING THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Financial literacy has been identified as one of the core areas that needs to be prioritized to successfully overcome the current economic challenges people of Sri Lanka have to grapple with. Despite decades of increased attention to financial education, a visible gap can be observed when it comes to translating financial knowledge into positive financial behavior among the people of Sri Lanka, including professionals presumed to be financially secure. Considering the prevailing background the current study primarily aims at identifying and understanding the mechanisms that could effectively translate financial literacy into improved financial well-being, particularly among high-income professionals who lack formal financial training. Drawing on the cognitive and psychological dimensions of financial capability, this study investigates how financial knowledge, financial attitude, and financial awareness influence financial well-being, with financial self-efficacy serving as a mediating psychological mechanism. Data gathered from a sample of physicians serving the public sector in Sri Lanka, is analyzed using regression and mediation analyses based on the PROCESS macro. The results reveal that financial knowledge and financial attitude have no significant direct effect on financial well-being; nevertheless, their effects become significant when mediated by financial self-efficacy, given that the analysis indicate full mediation. In contrast, financial awareness shows both direct and indirect positive effects on financial well-being, suggesting partial mediation through self-efficacy. These findings highlight the critical role of financial self-efficacy in bridging the gap between financial literacy cognitions and financial outcomes. The findings of the study make vital contributions to both the theory and practice; theoretically this contributes in expanding the conceptualization of financial capability to include psychological enablers, focusing beyond the cognitive and behavioral components. Practically, the results emphasize the importance of designing financial education programs that foster not only knowledge and skills, but also the confidence to apply them. These insights are particularly relevant when developing Sri Lanka's National Financial Literacy Roadmap as the findings of the study could help to formulate strategies to build financial self-efficacy among professionals. This integrated approach can eventually enhance financial resilience and promote sustainable financial well-being in the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: *Financial Attitude, Financial Awareness, Financial Literacy, Financial Knowledge, Financial Self-Efficacy*

CLIMATE VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE IN EMERGING MARKETS: A SECTORAL ANALYSIS OF FOOD, BEVERAGE, AND TOBACCO INDUSTRY

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of physical climate risks on the financial performance of listed companies in Sri Lanka's Food, Beverage, and Tobacco (FBT) industry, a sector highly susceptible to climate-induced disruptions due to its dependence on agricultural production, water, and logistics. Using a panel dataset of 41 listed firms from 2016 to 2023, the research investigates the effects of six major climate risks: high wind, land-related risk, flood, lightning, drought, and heavy rain on two key financial performance indicators: Return on Equity (ROE) and Return on Sales (ROS). After diagnostic tests confirmed the appropriateness, fixed effects regression models with robust standard errors have been employed in analyzing the data. Results indicate that high wind, lightning, drought, and flood have statistically significant negative effects on ROE, while high wind, lightning, drought, and heavy rain significantly reduce ROS. Landslide-related risks were excluded from the final analysis due to multicollinearity, and this has restricted the study's ability to fully test all initially proposed hypotheses. The findings reveal that climate-related disasters undermine profitability and operational efficiency in the FBT sector. This study offers novel firm-level empirical evidence from the climate-vulnerable FBT sector in Sri Lanka, an area largely underexplored in the climate-finance literature, emphasizing the urgent need for industry-specific climate adaptation strategies. Further, the study provides valuable insights for regulators, investors, and policymakers in developing climate-resilient financial frameworks that comply with emerging disclosure standards like SLFRS S2.

Keywords: *Climate Risk, Financial Performance, Food, Beverage and Tobacco Industry, Return on Equity, Return on Sales*

IMPACT OF GOOD GOVERNANCE INDICATORS ON FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT INFLOWS IN ASIAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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Abstract

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been one of the defining features of the global economy over the past several decades. It contributes significantly to economic development by facilitating capital formation, enhancing production capacity, generating employment opportunities, and promoting macroeconomic stability. Consequently, FDI is widely recognized as a growth-enhancing factor, particularly in developing countries. Though, the FDI significantly contribute towards economic growth of countries, their distribution remains highly uneven across nations. These disparities emphasize the importance of identifying the key determinants and enabling factors that influence FDI inflows. Nevertheless, much focus has been shifted towards examining institutional and governance related factors that influence FDI inflows than economic factors, at present. Given this background, the current study aims at examining the impact of good governance on the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) among developing countries in Asian region. In achieving the research objectives panel data from 2013 to 2023 for twenty-six (26) Developing Asian countries is used and the study primarily examines the impact of six key dimensions of governance; namely voice and accountability (VA), government effectiveness (GE), political stability (PS), regulatory quality (RQ), perceived corruption (PC), and rule of law (RL) on the FDI inflows. The data gathered from Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) and World Development Indicators (WDI) is analyzed using regression analysis through Stata 13 software. The findings of the study indicate that perceived corruption, government effectiveness and regulatory quality have significant impact on the FDI inflows in the developing countries in Asian region. Therefore, the study highlights that improvements in good governance, primarily addressing perceived corruption, strengthening government effectiveness and enhancing regulatory quality could ensure increased FDI inflows into countries. It is vital for the policymakers and regulatory authorities to ensure that relevant and effective strategies are formulated and implemented to enhance government effectiveness. By including a wider range of countries and adopting comparative approach the scope of the future research on the area “the impact of good governance on FDI inflows” should be broadened.

Keywords: *Asian Region, Developing Countries, Foreign Direct Investment, Good Governance Indicators*

THE BITTER TASTE OF TAXATION: IMPACT OF UNPRECEDENTED GOVERNMENT TAX INCREASES ON THE OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE TEA FACTORIES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's tea industry, a crucial economic pillar, is significantly affected by substantial tax increases, including a surge in corporate income tax, the imposition of a windfall tax, and a rise in VAT, this has adversely affected its overall performance, notably the competitiveness. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of these fiscal policy measures on the operational performance of private tea factories in the Southern Province, utilizing quantitative approach that is grounded in a positivist philosophical framework. The data for the study gathered from 123 factories identified using simple random sampling method and it is analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics via SPSS. The findings confirm a significant negative correlation between tax increases and operational performance. Increased corporate tax reduces net income and investment, leading to wage reductions and price hikes. Windfall taxes create uncertainty and raise operational costs, while VAT increases production costs and contribute to unemployment and inflation. The broader economic impacts of excessive taxation stated above aligns with existing literature. Recommendations include a balanced tax approach with potential tax relief for SMEs, targeted incentives for modernization, and alternative taxation methods to mitigate inflationary effects. A predictable tax framework and active stakeholder engagement are essential to ensure the industry's sustainability. This study underscores the importance of implementing judicious fiscal policies that support the tea industry's growth and resilience, safeguarding its vital contribution to Sri Lanka's economy. Future research should employ a more comprehensive longitudinal and mixed-methods design that expands the geographical scope beyond the Southern Province to other major tea-producing regions in Sri Lanka, thereby integrating quantitative data with qualitative insights.

Keywords: *Business Growth, Corporate Income Tax, Cost of Production, Value Added Tax, Windfall Tax*

ROLE OF FINANCIAL LITERACY IN WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF GLOBAL EVIDENCE (2006-2025)

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Abstract

Financial literacy is crucial towards enhancing economic empowerment in women; this provides them with vital financial information and skills to effectively navigate complex financial landscape. Therefore, this systematic literature review aims at investigating the critical importance of financial literacy in advancing women's economic empowerment. By systematically reviewing 48 empirical studies published between 2006 and 2025, the research maps the academic landscape towards identifying key trends, thematic clusters, and significant gaps. The findings reveal that financial literacy is a powerful tool that enables women to make independent financial decisions, gain control over their income, and resist economic abuse. Analysis of publication trends indicates a marked increase in scholarly interest in this vital area since 2020, reflecting a growing global focus on gender equality and inclusive development. However, the research is geographically concentrated, with most studies originating from the United States and India, highlighting a significant dearth in research in regions such as Latin America, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The study also notes a conceptual shift in literature, moving beyond purely economic metrics to embrace broader dimensions of empowerment, including agency, self-confidence, and psychological well-being. The review concludes by highlighting the importance of focusing on more geographically diverse, longitudinal, and intersectional research that is grounded in local contexts to build a more comprehensive understanding that would ultimately lead to formulation of effective evidence-based policy and intervention.

Keywords: *Financial Inclusion, Financial Literacy, Gender Equality, Systematic Literature Review, Women's Economic Empowerment*

THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL LITERACY ON FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

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Abstract

Acquiring digital literacy is vital in the modern day world if a person is to effectively steer, evaluate and generate information through digital technology. Given this background, the current study aims at investigating how digital literacy impacts financial performance of small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs') in Gampaha District. Sri Lanka; by focusing on three important aspects: SMEs' adoption and use of digital tools, the knowledge of digital literacy, and the creation of a positive digital culture. Hypotheses to be tested derived based on the Conceptual framework developed using a quantitative method and a deductive design. Data for the study gathered through a structured questionnaire from 384 SME owners in the district identified by adopting a convenience sampling method and the data is analyzed using SPSS, involving descriptive and inferential statistical methods, such as multiple regression analysis, frequency distribution, and reliability testing. Findings of the study indicate that all three independent variables awareness, adoption and utilization, and digital culture have a statistically significant beneficial impact on financial performance. These observations highlight the revolutionary role that digital literacy plays in promoting resilience and long-term growth of organizations in a fast-paced digital economy. To promote digital readiness and competitiveness among Sri Lankan SMEs, the report offers insightful recommendations for SME owners, legislators, and educators; i.e. to create focused training initiatives, enact appropriate laws, and to facilitate relevant investments.

Keywords: *Digital Literacy, Digital Tools, Financial Performance, Small and Medium Enterprises*

IMPACT OF FINANCIAL LITERACY AND DIGITAL LITERACY ON DIGITAL INVESTMENT DECISIONS AMONG SRI LANKANS IN WESTERN PROVINCE

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Abstract

Considering the ever expanding digital financial landscape, especially within developing economies, obtaining an in depth understanding on the factors influencing individual investment choices is vital, and a timely necessity. Given this background, this study aims at investigating how financial literacy and digital literacy of people residing in the Western province of Sri Lanka impact their decisions to invest through digital platforms. With the rapid increase in online trading, mobile banking, and fintech applications, access to digital investment tools has expanded significantly. However, a solid grasp of both financial literacy and digital skills is a must if these platforms are to be effectively utilized. Data for the study gathered through a structured questionnaire from 133 participants identified by adopting a convenience sampling method and the data is analyzed using SPSS, involving correlation and multiple linear regressions. The findings show that both financial and digital literacy play a significant role in shaping digital investment behaviors. These insights suggest that boosting both forms of literacy could empower individuals in Sri Lanka to confidently engage in modern financial activities. As the country continues its economic reforms and digital transformation, this research underscores the value of integrated financial and digital education in supporting inclusive and informed investment practices. It also provides valuable direction for financial institutions, educators, and policymakers striving to enhance financial empowerment in the region. However, the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of the findings, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population of the Western Province.

Keywords: *Digital Investment Decisions, Digital Literacy, Financial Literacy*

IMPACT OF INTERNAL CONTROL SYSTEM ON FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM LISTED MANUFACTURING COMPANIES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

The manufacturing sector of Sri Lanka, though makes a significant contribution to its economy, firms in this industry encounter increasing challenges due to operational risks, supply chain disruptions, and heightened governance expectations. This has made it necessary for these firms to strengthen their internal control systems towards sustaining profitability and ensuring financial resilience. Considering the said background, the current study aims at investigating the relationship between internal control systems and financial performance in 40 listed manufacturing companies and the analytical basis for the study is provided by the COSO Internal Control Integrated Framework. Primary data gathered from managers at senior, middle, and lower levels through structured questionnaires is analyzed using SPSS, employing reliability checks, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The findings reveal that risk assessment & information, and communication have significant positive impacts on both Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE), while other components show weaker or insignificant effects. Collectively, the five components explain over 60% of the variation in financial performance. These findings emphasizes the importance of robust risk management and effective communication in achieving favorable financial outcomes and offers valuable insights for managers, auditors, and policymakers that are crucial for strengthening internal controls and enhancing the long-term competitiveness of Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector.

Keywords: *COSO Framework, Financial Performance, Internal Control Systems, Return on Assets, Return on Equity*

EFFECTIVENESS AND SALIENCE OF EMERGING ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES IN PREVENTING FRAUDS IN SRI LANKAN BANKING INSTITUTIONS: INSIGHTS FROM PROFESSIONAL AND NON-PROFESSIONAL BANKERS

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Abstract

Fraudulent practices remain a significant and ever increasing global challenge for banking institutions, including in Sri Lanka, where challenging vulnerabilities have emerged due to technological advancements and digital transformation. Therefore, this study examines the effectiveness and salience of emerging anti-fraud measures in Sri Lankan banking institutions, by especially focusing on fraud response policies, fraud awareness training, and internal control procedures in addition to investigating the difference in perceptions between professional and non-professional bankers regarding the effectiveness and salience of these measures. The literature highlights that effective fraud prevention relies on strong internal controls, group-level decision-making, and anti-fraud measures such as fraud response policies, awareness training, and IT-based security systems. Empirical studies further emphasize the importance of various anti-fraud techniques in different fields. The data for this quantitative study gathered from 200 banking professionals serving 29 Sri Lankan banks through a structured online questionnaire and it is analyzed via SPSS Software employing one sample test and independent sample T-tests. The findings of the research indicate that consumer-related fraud, improper asset valuations, and e-commerce fraud are the most prevalent types of fraudulent practices. The findings also highlight the importance of implementing effective fraud response policies, robust internal controls and targeted training programs in mitigating fraud risks. Sri Lankan banking institutions have implemented effective anti-fraud measures, but gaps remain, particularly in addressing emerging digital fraud risks. Continuous improvement in fraud response policies, fraud awareness training, and internal controls is essential in effectively mitigating growing risks due to evolving fraudulent practices. This study contributes to the existing limited empirical literature on fraud prevention in Sri Lankan banking and provides actionable insights for policymakers and banking institutions.

Keywords: *Anti-Fraud Measures, Banking Institutions, Banking Professionals and Non-Professionals, Fraud Prevention*

Marketing, Supply Chain Management and Tourism

PRACTICING SALES ETHICS: THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS MOTIVATION OF LOTTERY AGENTS IN GALLE DISTRICT

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Abstract

In the vibrant, yet challenging, lottery sales landscape of Galle District in Sri Lanka, the erosion of ethical sales practices creates a significant negative impact on sales agent motivation and customer trust. Considering this background, the current study aims at addressing the problem of declining ethical sales practices among lottery agents in the Galle District, Sri Lanka, indeed a visible consequence of neglected customer engagement. Specifically, issues like ignoring feedback, delayed responses, and poor long-term relationship management are factors that could make a decisive impact on agent motivation. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the ethical implications of neglecting customer engagement on sales agents' motivation. This quantitative study adopts positivist deductive approach and the data for the research collected via structured questionnaire from 135 lottery agents selected using simple random sampling method from a population of 200. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and Chi-square tests are employed in analysing the data. The findings reveal that there is a significant negative correlation between neglecting customer needs and agent motivation, notably, the strongest association is indicated in relation to ignoring customer feedback. This highlights critical gaps in ethical sales practices and customer engagement. The study concludes that neglecting customer needs significantly demotivates lottery agents, necessitating strategic interventions to enhance ethical conduct and improve customer interactions. Recommendations include implementing structured ethical sales training programmes, leveraging digital tools for real-time feedback and communication, and establishing incentive structures linked to customer engagement. Continuous monitoring and periodic assessments are crucial for maintaining ethical compliance and fostering a customer-centric culture.

Keywords: *Customer Engagement, Customer Relationships, Ethical Sales Practices, Galle District, Lottery Agents, Motivation*

INFLUENCE OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT IN PROMOTING GALLE AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

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Abstract

Galle, a city on the southwest coast of Sri Lanka, rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage, faces the persistent challenge of enhancing tourist arrivals to the city. Given this background, this study aims at addressing a critical gap in existing research: the influence of user-generated content in promoting Galle as a prime tourist destination with special focus on accommodation choices of tourists visiting Galle, i.e. hotel selection. Contrary to prior research on tourism industry in Sri Lanka, which primarily examined social media marketing broadly, this study aims at investigating the role of user-generated content in promoting Galle city as a tourism destination, the study specifically focuses on content credibility, language, and platform influence. The research approach in this study leverages the positivist epistemology and a mono-quantitative method to investigate the identified problem. The data for the study gathered from a sample of 126 tourist bookings from a hotel in Galle during October and November 2024, identified by adopting simple random sampling method and the data is analyzed using statistical methods such as Cronbach's alpha, Pearson correlation, and chi-square tests. Findings reveal that User-Generated Content creator credibility; Language credibility and Platforms plays a pivotal role in enhancing Galle's tourism appeal. Emphasizing on real-time travel data, authentic visual content, and transparent reviews could make a significant contribution in enhancing credibility of the travel industry in Galle. Strategically tailored language use and a focus on sustainable tourism can further attract diverse international audiences. This study provides important insights for various stakeholders in tourism sector in Galle, enabling them to optimize marketing strategies and improve destination experiences, ultimately boosting tourist arrivals and hotel bookings in the city.

Keywords: *Creator Credibility, User-Generated Content, Language Credibility, Platforms, Tourism*

THE DECISION JOURNEY: PERSONAL MOTIVATIONS ON SELECTING ABC PRIVATE INSTITUTION FOR HOSPITALITY & TOURISM STUDIES IN GALLE DISTRICT

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Abstract

In a landscape where Sri Lankan students encounter intense competition for a placement in a public university, the appeal of private higher education, especially in the thriving hospitality and tourism sector, is undeniable. Considering the ever increasing appeal for private sector education, the current study aims at identifying the factors that motivate individuals that seek a placement in ABC Private Institution in Galle District. Recognizing the limited understanding of individual factors influencing the selection of private Higher Educational Institutions, particularly in the hospitality and tourism sector, this research study aims at investigating the interplay of career ambitions, family expectations, and personal interests in selecting a private sector education institute to pursue higher studies. This cross sectional case study adopts a positivist, deductive approach, and the data for the study collected via structured questionnaire from 159 randomly selected students. Statistical analyses, including Pearson correlations and chi-square tests are used to assess the reliability of the instrument. The findings, consistent with existing research, reveal that career goals and industry-aligned offerings are primary drivers towards selecting a private sector education institution for higher studies. Familial expectations too are a significant factor in this, given the prevalent collectivist culture. Personal passions and intrinsic motivations also play a substantial role, while academic background and work experience act as supporting factors. To enhance student recruitment and retention, ABC Private Institution should enhance career-focused programs, strengthen family engagement, leverage personal interests through specialized tracks, support academic transitions, capitalize on work experience with flexible study modes, and adopt technological innovations. These strategies, grounded in both primary and secondary research, address the multifaceted factors that shape student decisions in the competitive hospitality and tourism education market.

Keywords: *Career Aspirations, Family Influence, Hospitality Education, Personal Motivations, Private Institution*

ACCELERATING GREEN MOBILITY: A STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF ELECTRIC THREE-WHEELER ASSEMBLY FEASIBILITY IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's location in the Indian Ocean gives it a strong potential to become a regional hub for electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing and distribution. However, heavy reliance on imported parts increases production costs and creates supply chain challenges. Given this back ground, this study explores the possibility of setting up a cost-effective and sustainable electric three-wheeler (E3W) assembly industry in Sri Lanka. The study adopts a qualitative research approach using stakeholder interviews and secondary data analysis in combination. Primary data is gathered from semi-structured interviews conducted with two prominent staff at Vega Innovations, the only Sri Lankan company currently to be involved in E3W manufacturing. These participants have been chosen due to their direct roles in engineering and supply chain operations. Secondary data is collected by reviewing policy documents, company reports, and trade statistics. Interview transcripts are coded and analyzed using NVivo software to identify key themes. The analysis reveals ten main areas influencing feasibility in the industry: Assembly & Production Strategy, Workforce Skills & Training, Local Manufacturing & Sourcing, Supply Chain & Logistics, Financial Systems, Technology & Automation, Policy & Institutional Support, Geographic & Market Advantages, Cost Pressures, and Component Integration & Testing. Findings indicate that Sri Lanka has several advantages, its strategic location and early-stage capabilities. Nevertheless, major challenges remain, the prominent ones are high import dependency, weak infrastructure, and lack of consistent policy support. The study recommends improving local manufacturing, encouraging public-private partnerships, introducing supportive policies, and training to build a strong E3W industry. These results can guide policymakers, investors, and planners aiming at creating a competitive EV sector in Sri Lanka and offer lessons for other developing countries in similar situations.

Keywords: *Electric Three-Wheelers, EV Manufacturing, Industrial Strategy, Local Assembly, Supply Chain Efficiency*

TOO MUCH TO SCROLL: WHAT DRIVES SOCIAL MEDIA FATIGUE AMONG GEN. Z IN SRI LANKA'S FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Fashion brands in Sri Lanka are increasingly leveraging social media marketing, the strategy used to expand their reach, to directly engage with customers, to enhance brand awareness, thus to drive sales. However, this commercial focus often overlooks consumer well-being, resulting in Social Media Fatigue (SMF) driven by excessive, irrelevant, and intrusive content. Considering the significance of the above, this study explores the factors contributing to SMF among Gen Z fashion consumers in Sri Lanka. Drawing on existing literature, the research identifies branded content overload, branded content irrelevance, and brand advertising intrusiveness as key influences. Using a deductive research design, data is gathered through a structured questionnaire administered to 384 purposively selected Gen Z individuals who actively follow at least one fashion clothing brand on social media and report experiencing SMF. Multiple linear regression analysis is employed to test the proposed hypotheses. The results demonstrate that all three variables significantly affect SMF, with brand advertising intrusiveness having the most substantial impact. The findings of the study offer valuable insights for fashion marketers, emphasizing the need to minimize brand advertising intrusiveness by adopting user-friendly, non-disruptive formats; as such intrusiveness seems to be the strongest driver of social media fatigue. Adopting a quantitative, cross-sectional approach to investigate the SMF among Gen Z fashion consumers in Sri Lanka in this study would likely to have limited generalizability. Therefore, it would be appropriate to employ mixed-method and to focus across diverse age groups, cultures, and industries in future research to obtain an in-depth understanding of SMF.

Keywords: *Brand Advertising Intrusiveness, Branded Content, Gen Z, Fashion Marketing, Social Media Fatigue*

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE CUSTOMER REVIEWS ON CONSUMER PURCHASING INTENTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SRI LANKAN ONLINE SHOPPING PLATFORMS

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Abstract

Online customer reviews are a significant factor that influences consumer purchasing intentions in the modern day business environment characterized by intense competition. Modern day consumers increasingly rely on these reviews to make purchasing decisions and these reviews shape the trust and perceptions of the consumers that ultimately drive them towards making final purchasing decision. Nowadays, online customer reviews have become more of a customer expectation than just a feature. Therefore, identifying how online customer reviews affect the purchase intention of the customers of Sri Lankan Online shopping platforms, is important. Considering the pivotal role played by the customer reviews in shaping purchasing decisions, the current study aims at investigating the impact of Online customer reviews on consumer purchasing intention with special reference to Sri Lankan online shopping platforms. The study adopts a quantitative approach and to achieve its objectives data is collected through a structured questionnaire from 194 respondents residing in Western Province that rely on Sri Lankan online shopping platforms to make the purchasing decisions. Findings of the study reveal that there is a significant impact of the quality and quantity of online customer reviews on the purchase intention of the customers that visit Sri Lankan Online shopping platforms. The research provides valuable insights to marketers of online-based businesses/online shopping platforms aiming at broadening their respective customer base, thus the profitability. Towards this it is important to gain a much deeper understanding of their respective customers, and formulate marketing strategies to maximize their purchasing intention.

Keywords: *Online Customer Reviews, Online Shopping Platforms, Purchase Intention, Quality of Reviews, Quantity of Reviews*

THE INFLUENCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES ON THE GREEN PURCHASING BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG-AGED MUSLIMS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Due to growing environmental awareness and the increased understanding of the impact of unsustainable consumption patterns on the planet, modern-day consumers are showing greater sensitivity towards green products when making purchasing decisions. This growing demand for environmentally friendly products and services has induced many firms to increasingly adopt green marketing as a strategy to gain a competitive advantage. Nevertheless, the younger generation seems to have different attitudes and beliefs, and this has made them critically evaluate their choices related to green products. For the past few decades, environmental hazards and the greater concerns towards environmental sustainability have made green purchasing a significant focus of numerous studies. However, a vital area, i.e., the religious values and the green purchasing behaviors of the young-aged population in Sri Lanka, seems understudied. Thus, the main objective of this research is to empirically examine the influence of environmental knowledge and environmental attitudes on the green purchasing behavior of young-aged Muslims in Sri Lanka. This study is a survey-based, cross-sectional, quantitative study, and the SPSS Statistics 26.0 software package is relied upon in analyzing the data. The data for the study were gathered through a self-administered questionnaire from 384 respondents covering all provinces of the country. The findings reveal that both environmental knowledge and environmental attitudes play a significant role in determining the green purchasing behavior of this faith community. Moreover, environmental knowledge positively influences the green purchasing behavior of this group more extensively than environmental attitudes. This understanding of the green purchasing behavior of young-aged Muslims can help businesses to align their marketing strategies that not only meet consumer demand for sustainable products but also contribute to broader environmental goals. By analyzing the motives and barriers to green purchasing, future researchers can provide valuable insights for policymakers and organizations aiming to foster a more sustainable marketplace.

Keywords: *Environmental Attitudes, Environmental Knowledge, Green Purchasing Behavior, Young-Aged Muslims Sri Lanka*

THE ROLE OF GREEN PACKAGING PRACTICES ON SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF URBAN SRI LANKAN CONSUMERS

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Abstract

Growing environmental concerns and shifting consumer values have made green packaging a significant factor that influence the sustainable consumption behavior. Modern day business organizations increasingly adopt sustainable packaging to entice and retain this growing segment of environmentally conscious customers. Given the said background, this conceptual paper aims at examining the relationship between green packaging practices and sustainable consumption behavior among urban consumers in Sri Lanka. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the study analyses how consumer knowledge, environmental concern, and green skepticism mediate the relationship between the green packaging and the sustainable consumption behavior. While prior research has focused on developed markets, the current study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature by proposing a model tailored for the urban context in Sri Lanka, where rapid urbanization and shifting consumer attitudes present unique challenges. This paper synthesizes global and local literature to develop a conceptual framework that integrates these mediators, clarifying the psychological and informational mechanisms driving sustainable consumption. Practical implications for policymakers and marketers are discussed, along with recommendations for future empirical validation through surveys and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

Keywords: *Consumer Knowledge, Environmental Concern, Green Packaging, Green Skepticism, Structural Equation Modeling, Sustainable Consumption, Urban*

CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF GREEN PACKAGING IN FAST-MOVING CONSUMER GOODS: A STUDY IN KALUTARA CITY, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

There is a considerable environmental risk resulting from the packaging used in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, this creates significant amounts of waste, especially due to excessive usage of plastic. Therefore, the growing environmental concerns has made it essential to introduce green packaging towards reducing environmental waste, protecting the environment, and in achieving sustainable development. Most common barriers in introducing green packaging are lack of environmental awareness, inconvenience, cost, and insufficient government enforcement. Therefore, this study aims at developing a model to understand the motivational drivers behind the adoption of green packaging based on the “Theory of Consumption Value”. The study explores the level of Functional value, Social value, Emotional value, on Consumer acceptance of green packaging in Fast moving consumer goods. Data for this quantitative study gathered through self-administered questionnaires, from 384 consumers visiting shopping malls in Kalutara district, Sri Lanka to purchase FMCG, identified using Convenience sampling method and it is analyzed using SPSS version 25. Findings reveal that the emotional value significantly influence the consumer acceptance of green packaging, while functional value and social value too positively influence consumer acceptance of green packaging. These results contribute in gaining deeper understanding of the factors that motivate consumers to switch from conventional to green packaging. This in turn will contribute towards long-term sustainability, thus enhancing quality of life in emerging markets. Businesses can drive consumer acceptance and promote sustainable consumption by addressing emotional, functional, and social values. To broaden the understanding on this area the future research into consumer acceptance of environmentally friendly packaging in developed and developing countries should adopt longitudinal and comparative methods.

Keywords: *Emotional Value, Functional Value, Green Packaging Acceptance, Social Value, Sustainability, Theory of Consumption Value*

THE ROLE OF YOUTH - LED LEGAL INITIATIVES IN ADVANCING SUSTAINABLE MARKETING FOR ECO-TOURISM: EVIDENCE FROM COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Adopting sustainable marketing strategies to promote eco-tourism is vital to bring about a balance between benefits of tourism industry with need to safeguard both the environment and local cultures; minimization of negative impacts of tourism ensures the sustainability of the industry in the long run. Youth play a vital role, especially through their knowledge, behavior, and views on eco-tourism. Considering this background, the study aims at investigating how legal empowerment, environmental law, i.e. youth led legal initiatives; contribute in promoting sustainable marketing in community-based eco-tourism in Sri Lanka. The study explores how such youth groups consisting law students, young lawyers and activists, play a part in advancing eco-tourism by offering rights-based, policy-promoting, ethical guidance. Projects carried out in Hatton, a project about to begin in Galle and one planned for Kandy are used to illustrate how legally engaged youth are leading the movement towards sustainability in tourism. These youth-driven projects use Sri Lankan environmental laws to enhance awareness and empower rural communities. The research adopts qualitative case study methods and the data for the study gathered through semi-structured interviews, focused group conversations and screening of relevant documents. The findings reveal that legal youth communities play four major roles; educating the communities on law and the protection of environmental rights, supporting the marketing industry by using stories, ethical ways of branding and modern digital strategies, using new online platforms to promote eco-tourism and raise awareness of community-based tourism and assisting to develop a sustainability charter taken into consideration the view points of the respective community members. The paper provides valuable insights towards achieving sustainable rights-based tourism development in Sri Lanka for the future; especially through digital empowerment, creative community growth and focus on law. It is important to place due consideration to youth-led legal efforts when formulating national eco-tourism strategies.

Keywords: *Eco-Tourism, Environmental Law, Ethical Branding, Legal empowerment, Sustainable Marketing, Youth Legal Communities*

SCARCITY AND IMPULSE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG ONLINE CONSUMERS IN BATTICALOA DISTRICT: MEDIATING EFFECT OF HUNGER MARKETING AND THE MODERATING EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

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Abstract

The rapid growth of e-commerce has intensified competition among online businesses, especially in emerging regions. Considering this scenario, this study examines how hunger marketing mediates the relationship between scarcity and impulse buying, and whether demographic factors moderate the link between hunger marketing and impulse buying among online consumers in Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka. Scarcity is a known psychological trigger that increases urgency in consumers, while hunger marketing amplifies this effect by generating sense of urgency and limiting availability, possibly achieved through limited-time offers and promotional constraints. The Study adopts a quantitative research approach and to achieve its objectives the data gathered through a structured questionnaire from 384 online shoppers, primarily welfare workers such as doctors, nurses, and teachers. The data is analyzed using SPSS Version 25.0, involving the descriptive, correlation, regression and PROCESS macro in testing mediation and moderation effects. Findings reveal that scarcity positively influences both hunger marketing and impulse buying behavior. Hunger marketing partially mediates the effect of scarcity on impulse buying behavior, accounting for 52.16% of the total effect. Among demographic factors, only education level significantly moderates the relationship between hunger marketing and impulse buying, indicating that consumers with different educational backgrounds react differently to urgency-based marketing strategies. The study makes a vital contribution to the area of digital marketing by showing how scarcity and hunger marketing can ethically enhance impulse buying. Therefore, it is necessary for businesses to align their marketing strategies with education levels of prospective consumers to improve effectiveness of the strategies to be employed and to enhance and maintain trust.

Keywords: *Demographics, Hunger Marketing, Impulse Buying Behavior, Scarcity*

MODERATING EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER ONLINE REVIEWS AND CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENSION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GENERATION Z CONSUMERS OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Generation Z strongly depends on digital platforms when making purchasing decisions, maintaining a deep connection with digital experiences. Therefore, understanding the impact of online reviews on the purchase intention of Generation Z is crucial in the modern context. The study integrates the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to analyze how perceived usefulness, ease of use, and engagement on social media shape consumer behavior. From a population of Sri Lankan social media users, a sample of 384 respondents identified through convenience sampling. Data were collected via an online survey and analyzed using SPSS. Regression results confirm that the model fits well, and hypothesis testing shows that social media marketing significantly strengthens the link between online reviews and purchase intentions. Correlation analysis further reveals a strong positive association between the studied variables. Findings show that participants are active social media shoppers, with purchasing decisions strongly influenced by platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. This provides insights for marketers in industries like e-commerce, fashion, and electronics, emphasizing the targeted social media strategies to build trust and engagement. It also contributes to academic discourse by validating social media marketing as a key moderator in digital consumer behaviour. Limitations include convenience sampling, respondent bias, and focus on intention rather than actual purchases. Future studies could explore cross-cultural comparisons or other moderators such as influencer endorsements. This study focuses on Sri Lanka due to its rapidly growing social media penetration and unique Generation Z consumption patterns that differ from Western markets. Additionally, research findings from other countries like USA, China, India are referenced to provide a global perspective.

Keywords: *Digital Consumer Behavior, Generation Z, Online Reviews, Purchase Intention, Social Media Marketing*

Human Resource Management and Best Practices

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO A PHARMACEUTICAL ORGANIZATION IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping employee motivation, especially within highly regulated and high-pressure industries such as pharmaceuticals. In the Sri Lankan pharmaceutical sector, where adaptability and compliance are equally important, understanding the impact of different leadership styles on employee motivation is critical. This study explores how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles affect motivation, morale, and performance among employees. A qualitative research design was employed to gain in-depth insights into employee perceptions of leadership. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews & transcript the data with ten managerial-level professionals from various departments, including sales, human resources, regulatory affairs, and business development from 200 population size. NVivo software was used to assist in the thematic analysis, enabling systematic coding and categorization of responses to identify key patterns and themes. The analysis revealed that transformational leadership had the most significant positive impact on employee motivation. Traits such as inspiration, individualized support, and empowerment fostered a strong sense of commitment and morale. Transactional leadership also contributed positively, particularly in performance-driven settings, where clear structures and reward-based systems were valued. Laissez-faire leadership, although less frequently encountered, was appreciated by more experienced employees who preferred autonomy. The study concluded that a one-size-fits-all leadership approach is not effective in the pharmaceutical industry. These findings offer actionable insights for leadership development and organizational strategies aimed at improving employee motivation and retention in the Sri Lankan pharmaceutical sector.

Keywords: *Employee Motivation, Laissez-Faire Leadership, Leadership Styles, Pharmaceutical Industry, Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership*

THE IMPACT OF REMOTE WORKING ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE POST-COVID-19: A STUDY ON A FULLY REMOTE WORK-BASED IT COMPANY IN SRI LANKA (WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION, AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND ENGAGEMENT)

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Abstract

The shift toward remote working practices, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and technological advancements, has redefined traditional workplace arrangements, particularly in the IT sector. Employees work from locations other than the physical office while interacting virtually through internet connectivity, known as remote working. This trend toward remote work has generated unexplored areas for investigation. This study investigated the impact of remote working on employee performance within a fully remote work-based IT company in Sri Lanka, focusing on the mediating roles of communication and collaboration, and employee well-being and engagement. This study used a deductive quantitative approach based on positivism, collecting data through a structured questionnaire from a stratified random sample of 132 remote employees at a cross-sectional time horizon as a survey research study. The questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot study on 30 respondents to ensure initial reliability and validity. The mediation analysis was executed using the PROCESS MACRO. This study found that remote work has a direct positive impact on employee performance. Remote work reported a significant positive effect on communication and collaboration, and employee well-being and engagement. Furthermore, the two mediating variables reported significant positive partial mediations on the relationship between remote work and employee performance. Accordingly, the findings of this research reveal valuable insights into making effective decisions for developing remote working practices worldwide. The conclusion suggests implications for remote working organizations, highlighting the importance of utilizing modern strategies to ensure that employees are continuously productive, engaged, and well-supported, thereby achieving organizational objectives while contributing to sustainable goals in remote environments.

Keywords: *Communication and Collaboration, Employee Performance, Employee Well-Being and Engagement, Human Resource Management Practices, Remote Work*

ALIGNING UNIVERSITY EDUCATION WITH LABOUR MARKET NEEDS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON SRI LANKAN TECHNOLOGY GRADUATES' EMPLOYABILITY

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Abstract

When countries move along with advanced technological and industrial potential, a critical question arises; are graduates really equipped to meet labour market expectations? While there is an ever-growing number of degree holders, too many technology graduates suffer from underemployment, skill mismatches, and inability to meet workplace expectations. The study aimed to understand the root causes of this mismatch, by looking closely at the factors that contribute to the disconnection between university education and employer expectations. This research emphasized the understanding of reasons for this gap by analyzing 38 academic articles, randomly selected between 2010 and 2024, using a specific Boolean search across major academic databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. The core findings indicated persistent themes related to gaps in both soft and technical skills, limited real-world industry exposure, and outdated curricular content that is no longer aligned with market needs. The findings indicated a need for urgent academia-industry collaboration, reforms to outcome-based curricula, and employability-focused interventions. This study helped to better understand the changes universities need to make and highlight practical ways to connect education more closely with the skills employers are looking for. The findings also informed, where applicable, higher education policy so that policymakers, curriculum designers that they might be more valuable if suggested to university leaders ultimately wanting to advance the readiness of graduates for the workplace. Although this is a comprehensive overview of existing literature, the study was limited by the reliance on English language sources and the lack of context-specific data. Future research should explore the employer perspective, longitudinal study of graduate career pathways, and examine the impacts of recent reforms on employability progression. This work provides an essential basis for re-inventing higher education with special reference to technology graduates in Sri Lanka, to support its graduates and its economy.

Key Words: *Curriculum Design, Graduate Employability, Industry Collaboration, Skill Mismatch, Technology Education*

THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE STRESS ON ABSENTEEISM INTENTION AMONG OPERATIONAL LEVEL EMPLOYEES IN A SELECTED APPAREL COMPANY IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of workplace stress on absenteeism intention among operational-level employees in a selected apparel company in Sri Lanka, guided by the Job Demand-Control (JDC) theoretical model. The research specifically examined how supervisor support, work overload, autonomy, and role conflict influence employees' intention to be absent from work. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from a sample of 306 machine operators selected through simple random sampling from a population of 1,500 employees. Both printed and online structured questionnaires were used to ensure broad accessibility. The data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis with SPSS to determine the significance and strength of relationships between variables. The results revealed that all four workplace stressors significantly and positively influence absenteeism intention. These findings highlight the critical role of stress-related factors in shaping attendance behaviour and underscore the need for targeted stress management strategies, including enhanced supervisor support, realistic workload distribution, clarified job roles, and contextually appropriate autonomy. The study offered practical implications for HR professionals and policymakers seeking to improve employee well-being and productivity in Sri Lanka's apparel sector.

Keywords: *Absenteeism Intention, Autonomy, Role Conflict, Supervisor Support, Work Overload, Workplace Stress*

IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF FRESH IT GRADUATES OF SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

In today's rapidly evolving global business environment, maintaining a healthy work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a vital concern for employees. The IT workforce in Sri Lanka has expanded significantly, supported by a high proportion of IT bachelor's degree graduates. International consulting firms and organizations such as the World Bank highlight key factors contributing to the IT sector's success, including competitive salaries, advanced IT infrastructure, and a positive organizational culture. Despite the significance of this issue, limited research has explored the impact of organizational culture on WLB within the IT industry. This study aims to examine how organizational culture influences the work-life balance of fresh IT graduates from selected Sri Lankan universities. A simple random sampling method was employed to select a sample of 160 fresh graduates from six universities, drawn from a total population of 2,000. Data were collected through a close-ended questionnaire developed using the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI), and responses were measured using a Five-Point Likert Scale. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26, with inferential statistical techniques including reliability analysis, correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that clan-type cultures, which emphasize family values and collaboration, and adhocracy cultures, which promote creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship, have positively influenced work-life balance. In contrast, market-oriented and hierarchical cultures, associated with competitiveness and rigid structures, are less appealing to fresh graduates. The results suggest that cultivating clan and adhocracy culture types can significantly enhance WLB, particularly in the IT sector. Overall, the study underscores the importance of aligning work-life balance practices with organizational culture to enhance employee satisfaction, loyalty, and corporate social responsibility. The insights gained from this research provide valuable guidance for managers and IT graduates on fostering a supportive organizational culture that facilitates the achievement of strategic goals of the organization.

Keywords: *IT Sector, Organizational Culture, University Fresh Graduates, Work Life Balance*

THE DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE ON KNOWLEDGE HIDING: THE MODERATING ROLE OF PROSOCIAL MOTIVATION IN SRI LANKA'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's Information Technology (IT) sector has emerged as a vital contributor to the country's economic development, with a rapidly growing workforce and increasing global integration. The sector emphasizes teamwork, innovation, and knowledge sharing as key drivers of competitiveness. However, the collaborative nature of IT work also makes it susceptible to interpersonal dynamics that can either facilitate or hinder the flow of knowledge. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory (SET), this study examined the impact of both Social Leader-Member Exchange (SLMX) and Economic Leader-Member Exchange (ELMX) on knowledge hiding. It proposed that when individuals are driven by prosocial motivation, the negative link between SLMX and knowledge hiding is reinforced, whereas, ELMX fosters knowledge withholding through transactional, self-interested exchanges. Using a deductive quantitative approach and convenience sampling, this study gathered data from 280 IT employees (93.3% response rate) out of 300 distributed questionnaires, representing diverse roles across seven Colombo-based organizations. Using correlations, regression and conditional effects modeling, findings indicated that ELMX does not significantly predict knowledge hiding ($\beta = .08$, $p > .05$). In contrast, SLMX negatively predicts it ($\beta = -.33$, $p < .001$). Importantly, prosocial motivation significantly moderates the SLMX-knowledge hiding link, with stronger effects at higher motivation levels ($\beta = -.46$, $p < .001$). The findings highlighted the critical role of high-quality SLMX and employees' prosocial motivation in mitigating knowledge hiding. From a theoretical stance, this study extends the consideration of how distinct dimensions of Leader Member Exchange (LMX), social and economic, differentially shape knowledge-related behaviours in the workplace. However, the reliance on a cross sectional approach restricts inferences about causality. To enhance the robustness of future findings, future studies should consider longitudinal or experimental methodologies.

Keywords: *Economic Leader-Member Exchange, Knowledge Hiding, Prosocial Motivation, Social Leader-Member Exchange, Sri Lanka IT Sector*

RELATIONAL AND TASK-BASED PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE KATUNAYAKE EXPORT PROCESSING ZONE, SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Employee engagement has become an essential factor in sustaining productivity and reducing turnover, even in labour-intensive export industries. This study examined how supervisor support, work-life balance, and skill utilisation affect employee engagement among operational-level employees in Sri Lanka's Katunayake Export Processing Zone (EPZ). Guided by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and human capital theory, survey data were collected from 187 participants. Descriptive and regression analyses revealed that all three factors significantly predicted engagement, with supervisor support being the strongest contributor. Work-life balance and skill utilisation also had positive effects, indicating that employees value both relational support and the meaningful application of their skills. Practical implications included the need for low-cost HR interventions that prioritise supportive leadership, flexible shift practices, and task alignment with employee capabilities. These approaches can significantly improve engagement even in resource-constrained environments. The findings extended the JD-R model to a developing industrial context and challenge assumptions that low-wage employees are solely motivated by economic needs.

Keywords: *Employee Engagement, Operational Employees, Skill Utilisation, Sri Lanka, Supervisor Support, Work-life Balance*

RELATIONAL AND STRUCTURAL PREDICTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION AMONG OPERATIONAL EMPLOYEES IN TWO LEADING SRI LANKAN TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of job demands and organisational resources on job satisfaction among operational-level employees in two leading telecommunication companies in Sri Lanka. Despite their frontline importance, this segment of the workforce remains underexplored in academic literature, particularly within developing-country contexts. Guided by the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Social Exchange Theory, the research examined how job time pressure, task load stress, workplace flexibility, and supportive organisational practices predict satisfaction. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with a convenience sample of 180 employees. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that job time pressure and task load stress significantly reduce satisfaction, while workplace flexibility and supportive organisational practices positively contribute to it. Supportive practices emerged as the strongest predictor. These results extended the JD-R framework into the South Asian service sector and offer actionable insights for human resource strategies aimed at improving satisfaction in high-pressure work environments.

Keywords: *Job Satisfaction, JD-R Model, Telecommunication Sector, Sri Lanka, Organisational Resources*

THE IMPACT OF GREEN RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PRACTICES ON EMPLOYER BRAND IMAGE: A STUDY OF ABC COMPANY IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

In today's environmentally conscious business environment, organizations are increasingly adopting green human resource management practices to demonstrate sustainability and enhance their employer brand. This study investigated the impact of green recruitment and selection practices on employer brand image focusing on three dimensions as integration of environmental values into job descriptions, selection based on candidates' environmental attitudes and behaviours and the promotion of eco-friendly employer branding during recruitment. Grounded in signaling theory and social identity theory, the study examined how such practices attract and retain sustainability-oriented talent. Data were collected from 120 employees and HR professionals in the Sri Lankan service sector using a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 23.0 through descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analyses. The findings indicated a strong positive relationship between green recruitment and selection practices and employer brand image with green selection practices explaining a significant proportion of the variance. This study contributed theoretically by strengthening the link between green HRM and employer branding literature and practically by providing actionable insights for organizations aiming to enhance their reputation through sustainable hiring practices. Future researchers can test these findings in different industries and cultural settings within their workplaces to see if they apply more broadly to gain real benefits from their applications.

Keywords: *Employer Brand Image, Green HRM, Green Recruitment and Selection, Signaling Theory, Sustainability, Social Identity Theory, Talent Attraction*

GREEN HRM PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE GREEN BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

Higher education institutions are increasingly facing pressure to integrate sustainability into their core operations. Yet, many fail to align environmental goals with their internal human resource management practices. This concept paper examined how Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) practices, particularly green recruitment and selection, green training and development, and green performance management, can promote sustainable competitive advantage (SA) through the influence of Employee Green Behaviour (EGB). Grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV), Social Cognitive Theory, and Goal-Setting Theory, the study proposed a conceptual framework linking GHRM practices to institutional sustainability outcomes. While existing literature highlights the strategic value of GHRM practice, which translates into sustainable competitive advantage through green behaviour, particularly in higher education contexts, it remains underexplored. The paper contributed to theory by positioning EGB as a central mediating construct and offered practical insights for academic leaders aiming to embed sustainability into Green HRM practices. Future empirical validation through a mixed-methods approach is recommended to test the model and address contextual implementation barriers in the Sri Lankan education sector.

Keywords: *Employee Green Behaviour, Green Performance Management, Green Recruitment and Selection, Green Training and Development, Sustainable Competitive Advantage*

ERGONOMIC PRACTICES AND HEALTH ISSUES IN SRI LANKAN GARMENT INDUSTRY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COURTAULDS CLOTHING WATAWALA (PVT) LTD

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Abstract

This research focused on ergonomics in the Sri Lankan garment industry, using Courtaulds Clothing Watawala (Pvt) Ltd. as a case study. The industry plays a vital role in Sri Lanka's economy; yet, workers often face health problems such as back, neck, and wrist pain due to repetitive tasks, unsuitable workstations, and low awareness of ergonomics. Preliminary investigations revealed the real problem prevailing in the industry, i.e., the majority of employees are affected by musculoskeletal disorders and they are not aware of ergonomics. At present, there is limited research that examines these issues in the local context, creating a clear gap in knowledge. To address this, the study used a qualitative case study design with 14 participants from different job levels at Courtaulds Clothing Watawala (Pvt) Ltd. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and observations; whereas, thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The findings showed that most workers suffer from musculoskeletal disorders, and factory priorities are focused more on meeting targets than protecting employee health. The study suggests redesigning workstations, providing training, and adopting supportive management policies. Future studies should also include quantitative data and wider interventions to improve sustainable labour practices.

Keywords: *Ergonomics, Garment Industry, Musculoskeletal Disorders, Sri Lanka, Workplace Health*

THE APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Human Resource Management (HRM). It synthesizes academic research, industry reports, and case studies to map the transformative impact of AI on core HR functions, including talent acquisition, employee development, performance management, and strategic workforce planning. The review delineates the significant benefits of AI adoption, such as enhanced operational efficiency, data-driven decision-making, and personalized employee experiences. Concurrently, it offers a critical examination of the profound challenges and ethical imperatives that accompany this technological shift. Key challenges addressed include algorithmic bias, data privacy, and security under frameworks like GDPR, and the "black box" problem of transparency and accountability. The paper analyzes real-world implementations through case studies of global corporations like Unilever, IBM, Hilton, and L'Oréal. It concludes exploring the future trajectory of AI in HR, with a focus on Generative AI, the redefinition of organizational structures, and emerging ethical dilemmas like digital employee personas. The review identifies critical gaps in the current literature, such as a lack of longitudinal and human-centric studies, and proposes a detailed agenda for future research to guide a more ethical, effective, and equitable integration of AI in the workplace.

Key words: *Artificial Intelligence, Ethical AI, Future of Work, Human Resource Management, Talent Acquisition*

THE IMPACT OF SELF-EFFICACY AND SELF-REGULATION ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT UNDERGRADUATES OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

In the drive to cultivate a skilled and efficient workforce prepared for a country's rapid economic expansion, university education plays a vital role. The learning outcomes of a university student serve as an important indicator of the education system's success, and which is a strong predictor of both individual and national futures. All universities in a country, especially Sri Lanka, face a more diverse student body, often transitioning from parental supervision to greater independence. The university learning environment focuses on the students' autonomy, initiative, and self-regulation for their development. Therefore, students' performance is a critical concern in universities, and all academic staff, administrators, policymakers, and development practitioners at the national level should focus their attention on the development of students' performance. Identifying these success factors is a valuable insight to address the challenges faced by the undergraduates. Consequently, this study investigated the self-efficacy, self-regulation on academic performance within the education sector, based on the Open University of Sri Lanka. The quantitative research design was applied for the research, and systematic-random sampling was used to select a sample of 200 students in the University. Data were collected through self-administered online questionnaires. The study utilized Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis to assess the relationship between self-efficacy, self-regulation, and academic performance. This study showed the importance of both factors in enhancing students' academic performance. According to the findings, self-efficacy and self-regulation serve as significant predictors of students' academic success. Students can effectively and efficiently manage their coursework and overcome academic challenges by developing strong self-efficacy and self-regulation skills. Therefore, by integrating these skills, universities can directly include them into coursework through prompts that encourage students to plan their work and reflect on their progress can help them develop the autonomy and discipline needed to succeed in their academic careers and beyond.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Self-Efficacy, Self-Regulation*

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

THE IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CREATIVITY AND OPPORTUNITY RECOGNITION ON THE CAREER SUCCESS OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY OF SRI LANKA

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Abstract

In the context of creative industries, entrepreneurial creativity and opportunity recognition are essential competencies that drive venture creation, innovation, and career development. These capabilities enable creative entrepreneurs to initiate new enterprises or significantly enhance existing ones. Despite their importance, limited research has explored how these factors influence entrepreneurial career success, particularly in developing countries. This deductive study addressed this gap by examining the impact of entrepreneurial creativity and opportunity recognition on the career success of creative entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka's Colombo District. Using a simple random sampling technique, data were collected from 257 creative entrepreneurs through a standardized questionnaire and analyzed using the multiple regression analysis method. The findings revealed that both entrepreneurial creativity and opportunity recognition have a significant positive impact on career success, with opportunity recognition being the stronger predictor. These results highlighted the importance of fostering creative thinking and market opportunity identification within the creative sector. The study contributes to the theoretical understanding of creative entrepreneurship and offers practical implications for policymakers, emphasizing the need to establish innovation hubs, mentorship programmes, and targeted funding schemes to support sustainable growth in the creative industries.

Keywords: *Career Success, Creative Entrepreneurs, Entrepreneurial Creativity, Opportunity Recognition*

THE IMPACT OF SELF-PERCEIVED CREATIVITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON E-ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTION AMONG ENTREPRENEURSHIP UNDERGRADUATES IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

E-entrepreneurial intention has received increasing attention in recent years, driven by rapid technological advancements. However, research exploring this phenomenon within developing country contexts remains limited. This study investigated the impact of self-perceived creativity and social media use on e-entrepreneurial intention among final-year undergraduates specializing in entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. Utilising a quantitative research design, data were collected from a sample of 159 students through a structured survey. The sampling frame consisted of the official list of all final-year undergraduates specializing in entrepreneurship, obtained from the university's administrative records. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representation across identified strata within the student population. Multiple linear regression and moderated multiple regression analyses were employed to examine both the direct and interactive effects of the variables. The results indicated that both self-perceived creativity and social media use have significant and positive influences on e-entrepreneurial intention. Moreover, social media use was found to moderate the relationship between self-perceived creativity and e-entrepreneurial intention, suggesting that higher engagement with social media strengthens the effect of self-perceived creativity on students' intention to pursue e-venturing. These findings contribute to the growing literature on e-entrepreneurship by underscoring the pivotal roles of creativity and digital engagement in shaping entrepreneurial intentions among youth. The study offers practical implications for educators and policymakers aiming to cultivate entrepreneurial mindsets and promote digital venture creation among young people in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *E-Entrepreneurial Intention, E-Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Undergraduates, Self-Perceived Creativity, Social Media Use, Sri Lanka*

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ENTREPRENEURIAL AND SELF-EMPLOYMENT INTENTIONS: A CASE STUDY AT THE FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship (EP) involves creating and managing business ventures characterized by creativity and risk-taking, while self-employment (SE) refers to individuals working independently. Understanding EP and SE intentions is key for future generations aspiring to diverge from traditional career paths. This study examined how university education influences EP and SE development among undergraduate and graduate students at the Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka, by evaluating three key determinants: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A structured questionnaire was distributed online, collecting responses from 3rd and 4th-year undergraduates and the first two graduating cohorts, through a purposive sampling method. The results showed no significant difference ($P > 0.05$) between groups in interest toward EP/SE ($p = 0.309$) and perceptions of university support ($p = 0.098$). Regarding attitudes, 90.30% of undergraduates and 94.40% of graduates expressed a strong interest in EP/SE over traditional careers. Risk assessment and creativity were identified as the most critical entrepreneurial competencies. Nevertheless, only 40.80% of graduates and 29.67% of undergraduates perceived the university environment as supportive for initiating EP/SE careers. The logistic regression analysis demonstrated that, among the determinants, skills and knowledge showed a statistically significant contribution to predicting self-employment intentions ($p < 0.05$). This study showed the influence of university education on EP/SE intentions specifically among technology students in Sri Lanka, an underexplored population in this context. By evaluating key determinants, this study provided localized insights into the factors shaping entrepreneurial intentions. The study also highlighted gaps in perceived university support for entrepreneurship despite strong student interest, underscoring the need for targeted curricular reforms and enhanced institutional support to better equip aspiring entrepreneurs and self-employed professionals to strengthen the national economy.

Keywords: *Attitudes, Entrepreneurship, Knowledge, Perception, Self-Employment, Skills*

IMPACT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION ON SME PERFORMANCE OF CLOTHING SMEs IN WESTERN PROVINCE SRI LANKA: MEDIATING EFFECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

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Abstract

Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) encompassing innovation proactiveness and risk-taking has emerged as a pivotal factor in driving the performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in competitive markets. Also, social media serves as a low-cost platform for customer engagement, market intelligence, and brand visibility. Many studies have primarily focused on the direct relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and SME performance, often overlooking how social media usage acts as an indirect enhancer in developing countries, and literature mentions there is a limited focus on industries like clothing. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the impact of EO on SME performance with a particular focus on mediating the role of social media usage in clothing SMEs in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. This followed a positivist paradigm with deductive reasoning. The study adopted quantitative method and the data were collected through a survey. The data were collected from 169 clothing SME owners and managers using a self-administered questionnaire and convenience sampling. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, simple linear regression, and Hayes' Macro analysis were used to evaluate the mediating effect of social media usage. The results of the study demonstrated a significant positive relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and SME performance, mediated by social media usage. The findings of the study discovered that social media usage partially mediates the relationship between Entrepreneurial Orientation and SME performance. Therefore, the researcher concluded the significance of Entrepreneurial Orientation with social media usage to increase SME performance. Moreover, results are discussed in terms of Entrepreneurial Orientation literature, practical implications and recommendations for future research areas are provided.

Keywords: *Clothing SMEs, Entrepreneurial Orientation, SME Performance, Social Media Usage*

EMPOWERING YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION: A STUDY OF EMERGING TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN SRI LANKAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

Youth entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in fostering inclusive economic growth. Yet, in Sri Lanka, young entrepreneurs face significant hurdles such as limited funding, lack of business training, and bureaucratic red tape. While digital innovation has transformed business creation and management worldwide, its role in empowering youth-led enterprises in Sri Lanka has not been thoroughly explored. This study addressed that gap by examining how digital technologies including social media, mobile banking, and e-commerce platforms enable young entrepreneurs to reduce entry barriers, expand market access, and enhance operational efficiency. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative data were gathered from structured surveys of 50 young entrepreneurs in Colombo, Kandy, and Jaffna, alongside qualitative insights from 10 startup founders and 3 policymakers. The findings indicated that digital innovation is a catalyst for entrepreneurial empowerment, but its benefits are unevenly distributed due to poor internet infrastructure in rural areas, insufficient digital literacy, and limited targeted government support. The study concluded that unlocking the full potential of digital innovation requires expanding digital education, streamlining regulations, and establishing inclusive innovation hubs. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital entrepreneurship in emerging economies and offers policy recommendations to cultivate a resilient, youth-driven startup ecosystem.

Keywords: *Digital Divide, Digital Innovation, Empowering, Sri Lanka, Startup Ecosystem, Youth Entrepreneurship*

EXPLORING DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTENTIONS OF GENERATION Z IN SRI LANKA: INSIGHTS FROM TAM AND DIGITAL LITERACY

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Abstract

This study examined the factors influencing Generation Z's intention to pursue digital entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. The review emphasized how digital literacy and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which focuses on how individuals regard technology's ease of use and utility, affect the desire to engage in digital entrepreneurship. Previous research served as the foundation for the conceptual framework. 388 members of Generation Z from the Western Province of Sri Lanka participated in the study, which used a straightforward random sample technique. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses and evaluate the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The results indicated that the independent variables explain 42.4% of the variation in the intention to engage in digital enterprise. According to the analysis results, there exists a positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables, and the R value is 0.651. These results suggested that digital literacy and TAM play a significant role in determining Gen Z's ambitions for digital entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka. The study emphasized the need for an entrepreneurial spirit among Generation Z members and the need to enhance digital literacy, technology utilization, and technology ease of use. Policymakers, educators, and corporate representatives working to create policies and frameworks aimed at encouraging the expansion of digital entrepreneurship benefitting from the insights produced.

Keywords: *Digital Entrepreneurship, Digital Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship Intention, Generation Z, Technology Acceptance Model*

ADOPTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE BY SRI LANKAN SMEs: THE CHALLENGES AND CAPACITY

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Abstract

Despite the advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the globe, its integration into Sri Lankan Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) remains minimal. Especially in non-IT sectors, this gap can be seen significantly. Inspired by that critical knowledge gap, this study explored how non-IT SMEs in Sri Lanka perceive AI, their current level of knowledge on AI, the barriers they face and underlying reasons, and their expectations for external support. Using a qualitative interpretivist approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 SME owners in the food and beverage, spices and concentrates, and apparel sectors in the Colombo District in collecting data. Thematic analysis, guided by the UTAUT2 framework, revealed that there are varied perceptions on AI adoption paving a limited usage, mostly, in marketing and administration. Lack of technical knowledge, cost concerns, and infrastructural deficiencies work as significant obstacles while social and psychological factors such as fear of new technology and reluctance to change further inhibit adoption. However, Sri Lankan SMEs have the potential to adopt AI more effectively and competitively through localized and low-risk support mechanisms, and for this, they expect AI training, financial incentives, and vendor support for practical aspects. Practical implications of the study highlight the importance of AI literacy in local languages, sector-specific workshops, supportive policies, financial incentives, and success-story sharing to foster SME adoption. Future research should explore adoption patterns across sectors, regions, and demographics, as well as the role of institutions. Comparative, quantitative, and longitudinal approaches can further identify context-specific strategies for inclusive AI integration.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Digital Transformation, Non-IT Sectors, SMEs, Technology Adoption*

THE IMPACT OF GREEN SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE WITH THE MODERATING ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURS' STRATEGIC ORIENTATION: EXPERIENCE FROM THE SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE MANUFACTURING ORGANIZATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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Abstract

Sustainable business practices are becoming important in today's business landscape, ultimately influencing the long-term performance of organizations. This study investigated the impact of green purchasing and green manufacturing on organizational performance, with a focus on the moderating role of entrepreneurs' strategic orientation, in the context of small and medium-scale manufacturing enterprises (SMEs) in Sri Lanka. Although green supply chain management practices have been widely studied in large corporations, empirical research on their application in SMEs, especially in developing economies, remains scarce. This research addressed that gap by drawing on the Resource-Based View (RBV) to explain how environmental capabilities contribute to competitive advantage, based on contingency theory to account for the influence of situational factors such as owners' strategic orientation. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was adopted, collecting data from 117 manufacturing SMEs using a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling using SmartPLS 4. The findings revealed that both green purchasing and green manufacturing have a significant and positive influence on organizational performance. Moreover, strategic orientation plays a significant moderating role, amplifying the positive effects of these green practices. This suggests that the benefits of environmentally sustainable supply chain activities are maximized when they are aligned with a firm's strategic priorities and resource allocation decisions. The study contributes to theory by extending the RBV framework through the inclusion of strategic orientation as a moderating factor. From a practical perspective, it provides entrepreneurs with actionable insights on embedding sustainability into strategic decision-making.

Keywords: *Green Manufacturing, Green Purchasing, Organizational Performance, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, Strategic Orientation*

Three Minute Thesis (3MT)

EXPLORING WORKPLACE BULLYING DYNAMICS WITHIN MALDIVIAN TOURISM RESORTS: AN INVESTIGATION INTO VARIATIONS AND INFLUENCING FACTORS

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Abstract

Despite emerging evidence of the significant impact of workplace bullying on employee well-being and organisational performance, this phenomenon remains largely unaddressed within the Maldivian tourist resorts. This study examines the prevalence, the nature and intensity of bullying, and how power and control shape bullying behaviours in resorts, using Labour Process Theory (LPT) as the core analytical lens. Using mixed-methods, multiple embedded case study methodology, eight resorts in Kaafu Atoll were studied. Bullying prevalence was determined using Negative Acts Questionnaire–Revised (NAQ-R; Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.80 to 0.92), a self-labelling measure, and the Rosander and Blomberg classification framework. Drawing on in-depth interviews, how bullying is justified, enacted, normalised, and resisted were studied. Findings showed that bullying, reframed as “discipline” to meet service quality, affects over 80% of the participants, from managers to frontline staff, and more than 90% participants when the resort is 5-star. Bullying seems to thrive in isolated resort settings where the inadequate oversight and structures making employees over-reliant on employers create excessive power disparities between employees and employers. Bullying flourishes when resorts operate on dual hierarchies, and in jobs in which errors can have heavy implications. Formal power structures enabled coercion and social dynamics facilitated bullying by drawing on both formal and informal power relations. These dynamics establish how bullying, control mechanisms, and power relations feed on each other. The results extend LPT by demonstrating how extra-role powers extend the powers awarded by structural hierarchies to perpetuate bullying.

Keywords: *Labour Process Theory, Maldives Tourist Resort, Power & Control, Workplace Bullying*

FROM PLATE TO LIFE: THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING THE RIGHT TO HEALTHY FOOD JUSTICIABLE

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Abstract

Obtaining nutritious, adequate food is a fundamental prerequisite for a healthy life. Paradoxically, the same food that we consume for survival can also pose a threat to human health due to concerns about its quality and safety. Globally, this has become a serious problem, with similarly alarming implications for Sri Lanka. Recognizing the complex and multifaceted nature of this issue, this PhD study aimed to examine it through a legal lens and explore the possibility of applying a human rights-based approach. Specifically, this study frames the problem of unhealthy as a matter of fundamental rights. Using a qualitative methodology and comparative legal approach, the research employed desk research and key informant interviews to gather data, which was then analyzed through doctrinal and thematic analysis methods. After carefully analyzing the evolution of the 'right to food' definition, one of the findings is that its current definition requires not only the fulfillment of adequate quantity but also the assurance of food quality. Accordingly, States are under an obligation to ensure that the food available in their respective countries is safe and healthy to consume. This thesis identifies three possible avenues for challenging a State's failure to meet this obligation. One major innovative approach proposed is the sound possibility of invoking the right to life jurisdiction instead of relying solely on the right to food provision, particularly in cases where the State has failed to regulate unhealthy food within its jurisdiction. The concluding remark is that this innovative approach can serve as a strong pillar to question the State's omission, negligence, and failures to protect human life from harm caused by unhealthy food, thereby reinforcing justiciability for the right to healthy food.

Keywords: *Healthy Food, Legal Framework, Right to Food, Right to Life, State Obligation*

UNDERSTANDING GEN Z CAREER BEHAVIOUR: MEANING, CHOICES, AND DECISIONS

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Abstract

Retaining younger generations is a challenge for employers and organizations are especially unclear on how to meet Gen Z's career aspirations. Research shows Gen Z employees have low levels of commitment and a trend of switching jobs/careers. Replacement fees, low morale, re-training, cultural effects and the impact to product/service delivery quality are some of the major losses due to this trend. Set in this context, the research deployed a qualitative inquiry, to understand Gen Z career behaviour; particularly on how they perceive their careers, why they change jobs/careers frequently and how they make choices on job/career changes. The data collection using purposive sampling methods, interviewed 30 employees with job/career changing experience, born between 1995-2010. Results showed some distinct changes to how this generation approach their careers. Entering the job market during Covid and economic downturn, these young employees were eager to take the first jobs that came their way; making future career changes inevitable. As more employers value those with starting experience - albeit from different industries; having diverse experience and a few job/career changes on CV becomes a triumph rather than a stigma. Job/career changes have a reputation for accelerated growth and new jobs are created as we speak, which adds to the issue. Growing up with social media, Gen Z's traditional career choices were fuelled with doubts seeing those who prioritise their immediate happiness rather than slave on a 9-5 job that is seemingly meaningless online. As being happy and staying unique becomes priorities for them; following pre-determined, sequential and time-consuming career ladders are no longer appealing. Instead, research findings present the idea that Gen Z view careers as more of a spiral stairway which revolve around the individuality and life progress of each person. They demand that career stem from the individual, and should be a means-to-an-end, rather than the core of their existence. The centrality of careers to one's life is thus no more relevant for this generation. This is perhaps the reason why sacrificing today's happiness when it comes to long term career results is becoming less attractive.

Keywords: *Career Aspirations, Gen Z, Happiness, Individuality, Job Switching*

A NOVEL THEORETICAL APPROACH TO THE INTERSECTION OF GENDER, COMMUNICATION, AND INSTITUTIONS: THE FEMINIST INSTITUTIONAL COMMUNICATION APPROACH

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Abstract

Globally, women are increasingly involved in various sectors; their representation in the political sphere remains significantly inadequate. Therefore, achieving gender equality in elected offices has become a priority for national governments and international organisations. In this process, political parties are significant in introducing internal dynamics and policies for women's political inclusion. Although parties have this capacity, existing literature demonstrates that political parties are gendered and that institutional barriers hinder women's inclusion. Women activists are actively promoting women's political representation through various initiatives. Many political parties have women's wings, which facilitate interaction and communication within the party to shape institutions and mobilise voters. It is significant to analyse women activists' work through communication dimensions. This paper argues that the lack of a cohesive theoretical framework to analyse the intersection of gender and communication in the institutional context is a primary research gap. This study introduces a new framework: the Feminist Institutional Communication Approach (FICA). FICA applies three pillars: feminist institutionalism, the actorhood model and strategic communication. Feminist institutionalism analyses formal and informal rules and practices within institutions, allowing for a holistic analysis of institutional change driven by feminist activism. The Actorhood Model shifts focus from passive subjects to active actors and a strategic communication lens to scrutinise how women actors communicate purposefully to achieve their goals. This theoretical paper proposes FICA as a new analytical tool, demonstrating its usefulness through a synthesis of existing literature and a conceptual application to the political party context. Future empirical research utilising FICA would likely employ a qualitative methodology, such as comparative case studies of political parties in different national contexts or in-depth interviews with women activists to trace the specific communicative strategies they employ to effect change and discourse analysis of party documents and public statements. FICA offers a more robust and empirically grounded basis for understanding the complexities of institutional change. It serves as a critical and diagnostic tool to not only describe the institutional barriers faced by women but also to evaluate the specific communication strategies and methods that make feminist activism effective. The proposed framework provides clear guidance for future research into women's political representation and offers a novel approach that places gender and communication at the forefront of institutional analysis.

Keywords: *Communication, Feminist Institutionalism, Gender, Political Parties, Political Representation*

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