

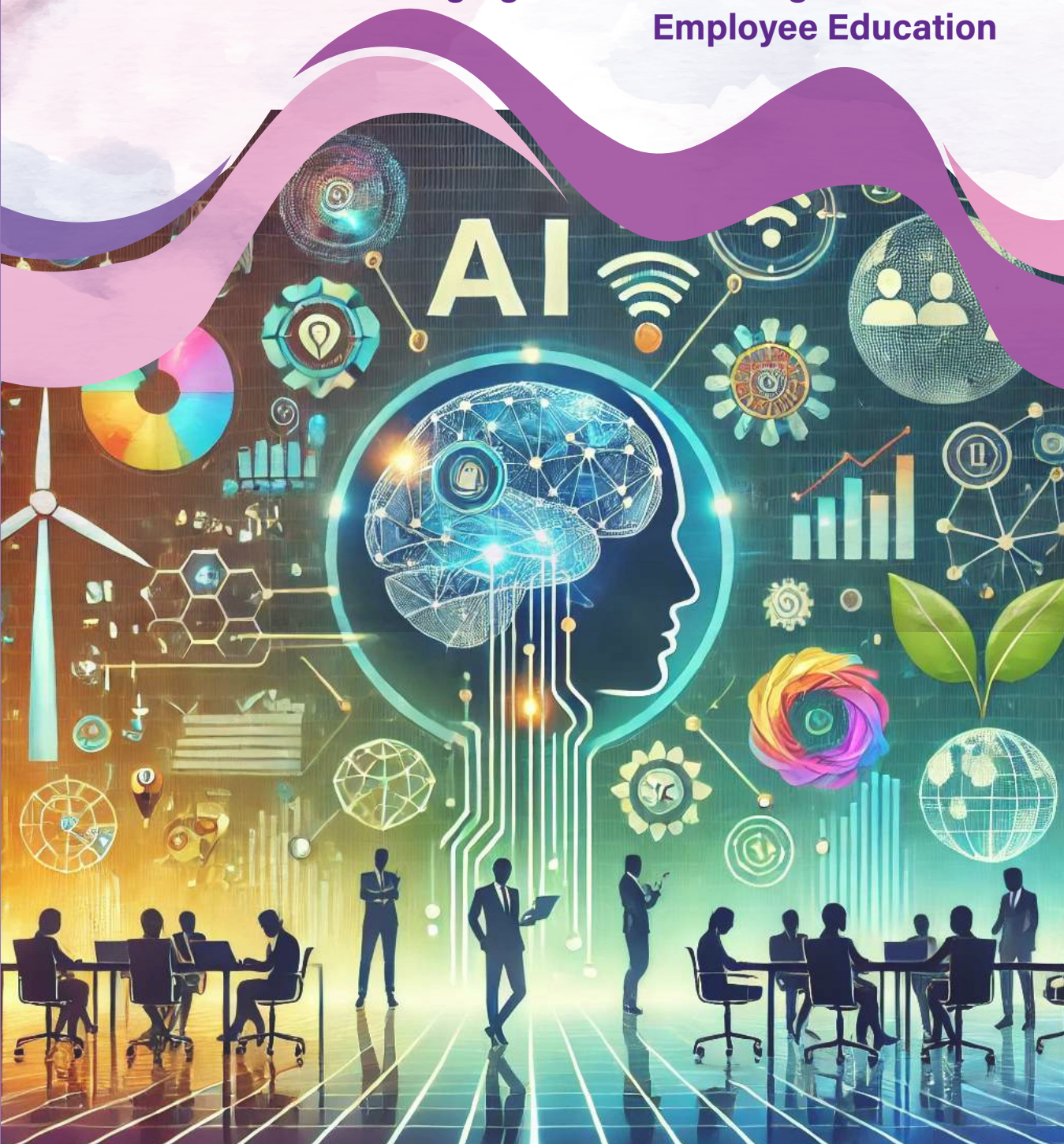


UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

Institute of Human Resource Advancement
University of Colombo

**The 5th
International
Research
Conference
of IHRA 2024**

Emerging Trends in Management and Employee Education



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**Institute of Human Resource Advancement
University of Colombo**

The 5th International Conference 2024

“Emerging Trends in Management and Employee Education”

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

IRC5-IHRAUOC

18th December 2024

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Message from the Vice Chancellor University of Colombo

I congratulate the Director, academics, non-academic staff and students of the Institute of Human Resource Advancement of the University of Colombo for organizing the 5th International Research Conference in the year 2024.

The selected topic “*Emerging Trends in Management and Employee Education*” is indeed highly relevant to the contemporary global and local context. The post-COVID-19 era has accelerated advancements in technology, significantly transforming management practices and employee education worldwide. Sri Lanka, like many other nations, is progressively adopting these technology-driven trends. Modern technologies are redefining decision-making processes, operational efficiencies, and strategic planning. This integration supports more agile and informed management practices.

In the modern world, with the rapid technological enhancement, continuous learning is an essential matter. Accordingly, e-learning platforms and virtual training programs are now widely used to enhance employee skills and adaptability. Currently, Sri Lanka is exploring these trends in management and tends to adopt digital tools for management and education with challenges such as limited resources and infrastructure gaps.

However, IHRA, as the pioneer of Employee education in the University system, has made a successful attempt to integrate management and employee education to provide an opportunity to explore how management and employee education can evolve in tandem with technological advancements, particularly in regions like Sri Lanka, where transformation is steadily taking root.

I wish all the very best for all the researchers and participants for a productive conference!

Senior Professor (Chair) H. D. Karunarathne
Vice Chancellor
University of Colombo
Sri Lanka



**Message from the Director and the
Conference Chair
Institute of Human Resource Advancement,
*University of Colombo***

The rapid technological advancements worldwide have significantly impacted various management aspects and expanded employee education opportunities. These innovations have transformed the way organizations manage their operations, engage with employees, and approach workforce development. As a result, technology integration has not only optimized management practices but also introduced new learning platforms, tools, and techniques for employee training and development.

Management is a compulsory aspect in every sector and the emerging trends in the 21st century have created adverse changes in the education system and styles, employment, demand for workforce, conducting business, governing and many more economic, social, cultural, health, and environmental aspects of human resource development and especially in employee education.

The Institute of Human Resource Advancement (IHRA) of the University of Colombo has attempted to create and disseminate scientific knowledge on this theme through this 5th International Conference of IHRA. It was a privilege and honour for me to serve as the Director of the Institute and the Conference Chair for IC5-IHRAUOC held on 18th December 2024. IC5-IHRAUOC is designed to address the Emerging Trends in Management and Employee Education in six relevant fields of study to IHRA-UOC activities as Business and Public Management, Service Management, Social Sciences, Disaster Management including Science and Technology, Library and Information Science and Language and Literature. Most importantly renowned Professors Vishalachchi Balakrishnan and Professor Siri Hettige contribute as Keynote Speaker for this International Conference. I wish to congratulate all authors and presenters of the conference and highly appreciate the interactive contribution made by the organizing committee.

I wish to thank the organizing committee, abstract reviewers, academic staff members and supportive staff members of the IHRA-UOC for their generous contribution to successfully conduct this international conference. My special thank goes to Senior Professor H.D. Karunarathne, Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo for his kind assistance to us and the keynote Speaker. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the coordinator and organizing team of the Conference. Thank you very much.

Professor W. S. Chandrasekara
Director / Institute of Human Resource Advancement, University of Colombo,
Sri Lanka



**Message from the Conference Coordinator
Institute of Human Resource Advancement,
*University of Colombo***

It is my great privilege to serve as the conference coordinator for this prestigious event, centred on the theme of Emerging Trends in Management and Employee Education. What makes this research conference particularly significant is its unique ability to bring together researchers from a variety of disciplines. This gathering serves as a platform for dynamic discussions and debates, where researchers can share insights, exchange ideas, and deepen their understanding across disciplines. I believe the conference will play a pivotal role in the Sri Lankan research landscape, fostering collaboration and innovation by uniting experts under one roof.

This conference has been made possible through the hard work and dedication of many individuals, and while I may not be able to thank each one personally in this message, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to a few key contributors. First, I express my deepest gratitude to **Senior Professor H.D. Karunaratne**, Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo, for his invaluable support. I would also like to sincerely thank **Professor W.S. Chandrasekara**, Director of the Institute of Human Resource Advancement, University of Colombo, for his guidance and leadership. In addition, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the **track chairs, reviewers, session chairs** and the **organizing committee** for their unwavering commitment and contributions that have made this research conference a success. Lastly, I extend my sincere thanks to all the **authors** for sharing their valuable knowledge and research with the wider community.

Thank You

Ms. KP Sugandika Sandamali
Conference Coordinator
Institute of Human Resource Advancement,
University of Colombo,
Sri Lanka



INTRODUCTION TO KEYNOTE SPEAKER - 01

Prof. Dr Vishalache Balakrishnan
Department of Educational Foundations and Humanities
Faculty of Education, University of Malaya

Prof. Dr Visha holds a Bachelor of Education (TESL) and Master of Education from Universiti Malaya, and she obtained her PhD in Education from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. While working as a post-doctoral scholar at the University of Waikato, she worked on how educators worldwide are prepared in the 21st century to work towards inclusive education. She focused on comparative research, multicultural, and critical educational psychology while serving as a research associate in the University of Waikato. Dr Visha specialises in various areas such as service learning, moral and religious education, civics and citizenship, service-learning international, early childhood development through multicultural lenses and inclusive education. She has her heart for native communities and included her culture in textbooks of moral and civics education for Malaysian schools.

Prof. Dr Visha has been the Director of the Center of International and Comparative Education (CRICE) at UM from 2017 until now. She also held the position of SULAM (Service Learning) Coordinator for Universiti Malaya since 2019 and works closely with the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia in this area. Prof. Dr Visha has extensive experience as a Principal Investigator in several research projects, and she receives grants from both the government and private sectors. Most of the research concerns service learning, inclusive education, moral education and capacity development.

Prof. Dr Visha acts as a consultant for the Ministry of Education in several projects regarding civics and citizenship education and moral education. Other than that, she participated in the writing and quality control of the Moral Education curriculum and textbooks. Prof. Dr. Visha is experienced in holding workshops or talks. She was the organizing chair for a Humanitarian Values Workshop held in collaboration with Universiti Malaya and several NGOs. Recently, Dr Visha coordinated and completed a service-learning international programme for 66 students from the 10 ASEAN nations.

Prof. Dr Visha volunteered to become an ESOL home tutor with English Language Partners New Zealand, an organization dedicated to assisting former refugees and migrants in New Zealand to join society by teaching them English. Also, she was elected as the executive board member of the Association for Moral Education, a non-profit organization which consists of scholars and practitioners in moral education around the world, in 2015. She is the first Malaysian to be elected to the board. Currently, Dr. Visha is initiating service-learning international which brings together scholars and students around the globe to focus on uplifting society and making the Earth Charter a reality.



INTRODUCTION TO KEYNOTE SPEAKER - 02

Prof. Siri Hettige

Professor Emeritus of Sociology

Department of Sociology

Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Prof. Siri Hettige is a distinguished academic and scholar in the field of sociology, serving as an Emeritus Professor at the University of Colombo in Sri Lanka. He also holds the position of Adjunct Professor at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia. In addition to his academic roles, Professor Hettige has been appointed as the Chairman of the National Police Commission in Sri Lanka, underscoring his significant influence on national policy.

His extensive involvement in social sciences is evident through his leadership as the Honorary President of the Association of Sri Lankan Sociologists and as Chairman of the Working Committee on Social Sciences at the National Science Foundation, Sri Lanka. Professor Hettige has published a wide range of research on topics such as youth, education, social and political conflict, governance, social policy, and development. He has also contributed to the academic community through visiting professorships and research roles at renowned institutions like the University of Zurich (Switzerland), the University of Kuopio (Finland), the University of Melbourne, and the University of Adelaide (Australia).

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The 5th International Conference 2024
"Emerging Trends in Management and Employee Education"

ABSTRACTS OF RESEARCH PAPERS

Track 01

Business and Public
Management

Track 02

Social Sciences

Track 03

Disaster Management,
Science and Technology

Track 04

Language and Literature

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THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION IN A SELECTED BANK IN VAVUNIYA DISTRICT

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The main aim of this study is to analyse the impact of organisational factors on employee retention in a selected bank in the Vavuniya District. In this research, employee retention is a dependent variable, and training, and compensation are independent variables. This research examines the crucial problem of employee retention in a selected bank in the Vavuniya District, with an emphasis on the impact of organizational factors. The noticed challenges the bank has had retaining employees in a selected bank is a critical component for the highly competitive bank. Therefore, the research problem is "Does there is an impact of training and compensation on employee retention in a selected bank in the Vavuniya district?"

The research's main objective is to determine the organizational factors that impact employee retention. The objectives of this research are to determine whether the selected organizational factors have an impact on employee retention in a selected bank in Vavuniya district, to examine whether training has an impact on employee retention in the selected bank in Vavuniya district, to examine whether compensation has an impact on employee retention in a selected bank in Vavuniya district, and to examine whether monetary rewards have an impact on employee retention in a selected bank in Vavuniya district. Research questions are developed based on the objectives of this study.

To get primary data for this study, a universal sample size of the data collection was 100 and 73 respondents were given questionnaires to complete using a sampling method. Data was collected through Google Sheets for a quantitative research approach. Data analysis methods include regression analysis, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics. Findings of this study show a positive impact of training on employee retention, and that compensation has a positive impact on employee retention in a selected bank for a long period.

Keywords: *Employee retention, Training, Compensation, and Monetary rewards*

EXPLORING THE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF MICROCREDIT GROUPS IN SRI LANKA

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Microcredit programs have emerged as a powerful tool for poverty alleviation and economic empowerment, particularly in developing countries. These programs aim to foster self-employment and financial inclusion by providing small loans to individuals and groups. Microcredit Group Sustainability refers to the long-term viability of a microcredit group in fulfilling its goals of financial empowerment and poverty alleviation for its members. It is a multifaceted concept encompassing financial health, social cohesion, and institutional robustness. Financial sustainability directly affects a microcredit group's long-term viability. This study explores the factors contributing to or hindering the financial sustainability of microcredit groups in Sri Lanka. The study conducted in-depth interviews with 12 cases in microcredit groups within the North Central Province using a qualitative case study method. The study explores the root causes of the failure of microfinance groups to generate sustainable outcomes in Sri Lanka using a purposive sampling technique. Findings reveal that microcredit groups have positively impacted household income; however, challenges such as inconsistent income streams, fluctuating agricultural productivity, financial literacy, loan repayment rates, cost coverage, and external economic shocks pose significant risks to their long-term sustainability. The study suggests enhancing financial literacy, income diversification, standardized reporting, effective loan portfolio management systems, and supportive regulatory frameworks on beneficiary welfare to address these challenges.

Keywords: *Microcredit Group, Financial Sustainability, Rural Development, Sri Lanka*

WORK-LIFE CONFLICT AND TURNOVER INTENTION: A STUDY OF NON-EXECUTIVE MILLENNIAL FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY, SRI LANKA

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The hospitality industry is a service industry which is highly based on human labour. In the Sri Lankan context, even though there is growth in the sector, employee turnover has been identified as a major issue while female employee turnover is having a higher rate than male employee turnover which is an antecedent to work-life conflict. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, although studies on work-life conflict and turnover intention have been conducted in various settings including hospitality, there is a notable gap in research specifically addressing millennial employees within the Sri Lankan hotel industry. Therefore, the main research objective of this study was to empirically examine the relationship between work-life conflict and turnover intention among non-executive millennial female employees in the hotel industry which is still an untapped research area in Sri Lanka. The population of this study comprised non-executive millennial female employees working at SLTDA-registered five-star hotels in Sri Lanka. Convenience sampling was employed in this study to select the sample of 100 non-executive millennial female employees working at SLTDA-registered five-star hotels in the Colombo District. The reason behind selecting the Colombo district as the sample area is that the Colombo district recorded the highest number of SLTDA-registered five-star hotels in Sri Lanka. Primary data collection was done through a questionnaire survey from non-executive millennial female employees which consisted of questions on Work Interference with Family life (WIF), Family Interference with Work life (FIW), and Turnover Intention (TI). Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha reliability test and collected data were analysed using descriptive statistical analysis, Pearson correlation coefficient, and regression analysis. The findings revealed that there was a significant strong positive association between WIFC, FIWC, and TI. Further, this research will be helpful to managers of hospitality entities for effective

human resource strategic planning and will contribute to authorized bodies in the industry for policy-making and strategy development. This study recommends that maintaining a good organizational climate and offering the possibility of flexible work hours to balance work life and family life are important factors when it comes to retaining female employees. Moreover, this research will pave the path to future research areas.

Keywords: *Hotel Industry, Millennial Female Employees, Turnover Intention, Work-Life Conflict*

EXPLORING THE FACTORS THAT IMPACT ON EMPLOYER- EMPLOYEE RELATIONSHIP FROM EMPLOYEE-CENTRIC PERSPECTIVE: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

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A positive employer-employee relationship is vital for retention, job satisfaction, and organizational success in the 21st century. Effective communication, trust, mutual respect, employee empowerment, job satisfaction, and communication are the selected variables that influence this relationship. The research problem focused on identifying the factors that influence the employer-employee relationship and understanding their impact on this dynamic. A strong employer-employee relationship can lead to increased productivity, better customer service, and improved organizational performance. Clear communication improves understanding and reduces conflicts between employers and employees. High levels of trust foster mutual respect and enhance collaboration. Empowered employees are more engaged and feel valued by their employers. Higher job satisfaction strengthens commitment and reduces turnover. The objectives of this study were to identify the factors that effect on employer-employee relationship at 'ABC' Company and to analyze how these factors affect the employer-employee relationship. The employer-employee relationship is essential for organizational success, influencing employee retention, satisfaction, and performance. This study explores selected variables impacting this relationship, including communication, trust, mutual respect, empowerment, and job satisfaction, using data from ABC Company. A structured questionnaire, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.923, revealed a satisfactory level of workplace relationships, with mean scores around 4.0 across all variables. Correlation analysis showed significant positive relationships between the employer-employee dynamic and factors like job satisfaction ($r = 0.725$), communication ($r = 0.531$), empowerment ($r = 0.690$), and trust and respect ($r = 0.842$). Regression analysis indicated a strong positive impact, with a correlation coefficient of 0.785 and a determination coefficient of 0.616. Findings emphasize that cultivating these factors enhances workplace dynamics and organizational performance.

Keywords: *Communication, Empowerment, Job Satisfaction, Employer-employee relationship, Trust*

AN INVESTIGATIVE STUDY ON HOW THE BUDDHA'S VISION OF PHYSICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CAN BE UTILIZED IN TODAY'S CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT

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Management can be divided mainly two parts. Physical resource management and human resource management are those two parts of them. Some authorities use physical resource management in various ways in many corporate environments. Some methods are not suitable for development. What are the physical resource management methods we can practice from Buddhism to achieve physical resource management in the corporate environment? This is the main problem of this research. Finding physical resources management methods in Buddhism and finding ways to apply those methods to corporate environments are the objectives of this research. Mixed research methodology has been used for this research. Robes management, recycling and upcycling, foods and alms, community support, and nature appreciation are the best theories that can be practised as physical resource management in corporate environments. Chullavagga of Vinaya Pitaka mentioned itself about robes management. this theory can be applied to using papers. That theory has been explained step by step in this research. Vinaya Pitaka mentioned recycling and upcycling of robes and other items. Those things are important to this research. Foods and alms, community support and nature appreciation have mainly been explained as Buddhist physical resource management methods in this research and explained research itself how we apply those methods to corporate environments. Those Buddhist physical resource management theories can be applied to corporate environments and those theories contribute to the development of many areas in the society nowadays, which is one of the conclusions of this research.

Keywords: *Chullavaggapaliya, Management, Resources, Robes, Vinaya pitakaya*

IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN DSI GROUP

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Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) has emerged to be a variable that can enhance the performance of an organization in the prevailing conditions of instability and complexity. In this research, the antecedent of Organizational Citizenship Behavior is organization commitment. Organizational commitment is typically categorized into three distinct types: These are affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. The objective of this research was to identify the effectiveness of organizational commitment with OCB in the DSI Group in Sri Lanka. The population of this research were all the executive employees of DSI Group and the sample size was 150. This sample was deemed to be a random sample of the whole workforce meaning that the results that were obtained could be generalized to the rest of the employees in the organization. Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The data collected through the questionnaires were analyzed using IBM SPSS software. Inferential statistical methods including correlation and regression analyses, were used to examine the relationships between organizational commitment and OCB. Regarding the major findings, the correlation matrix indicates that Affective Commitment, Normative Commitment and Continuance Commitment have a positive correlation with OCB, all at 0.01 level of significance. The regression results show that Affective Commitment has a positive and significant correlation with OCB where $B = 0.238$, $t = 6.206$, $p = 0.000$ which means that a higher level of emotional attachment will increase OCB. Normative Commitment is more influential ($B = 0.397$, $p = 0.000$) which means that the sense of moral obligation is a key driver of OCB. Finally, Continuance Commitment also has a significant impact on OCB ($B = .333$, $P = 0.000$). Thus, all the hypotheses were accepted and the highest impact was determined in Normative Commitment.

Keywords: *Affective commitment, Continuance commitment, Normative commitment, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Organizational commitment,*

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MARKETING MIX ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF COSMECEUTICAL PRODUCTS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT

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The cosmeceutical industry in Sri Lanka has experienced significant growth due to increased consumer awareness of skin health and aesthetic enhancement. Cosmeceuticals, defined by Albert Kligman in 1984 as products that blend cosmetic and pharmaceutical properties, cater to diverse skincare needs. The primary objective of this study is to analyse how the components of the marketing mix elements product, price, place, and promotion affect consumer purchase intentions of cosmeceutical products in the Colombo District. A structured questionnaire was distributed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from cosmeceutical consumers, employing a referral-based snowball sampling technique via Google Forms. While the targeted sample size based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is 384, practical constraints during data collection limited responses to 263 valid responses, which is deemed sufficient for meaningful statistical analysis in line with the Law of Statistical Regularity. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS, including regression analysis to assess the influence of each marketing mix element on purchase intention. The results demonstrate that product and promotion are the primary determinants of consumer purchase intentions. Specifically, product attributes, including quality and reliability, along with promotional activities such as word-of-mouth and endorsements from dermatologists, were found to have the most significant influence on consumer purchase intention. While price does affect purchase intention, it is of lesser significance compared to product and promotional factors, with affordability being the most influential component within the price dimension. Place elements, such as product availability and market presence, were moderately correlated with purchase intention, suggesting that convenience and distribution channels play a secondary role in shaping consumer purchase intention. The regression model revealed a moderate yet statistically significant relationship between the marketing mix and purchase intention, explaining 43.2% of the variance. These results emphasize the importance of focusing on product quality and employing targeted promotional strategies to build consumer trust within the cosmeceutical market. The study suggests that cosmeceutical companies should prioritize improving product attributes, particularly focusing on quality and reliability, and adopt strategic promotional tactics to foster consumer

loyalty. Furthermore, maintaining competitive pricing strategies and strengthening distribution channels are crucial for enhancing consumer purchase intention. This research contributes to the limited body of knowledge on the role of the marketing mix influencing consumer purchase intention within the cosmeceutical sector in Sri Lanka, providing valuable insights for marketers seeking to optimize their strategies in this rapidly expanding market.

Keywords: *Cosmeceutical products, Marketing mix, Product, Promotion, Purchase Intention.*

IMPACT OF PACKAGING ELEMENTS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISION

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Packaging significantly influences consumer purchase decisions, especially for packaged foods in today's competitive fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market. Packaging acts as the fifth "P" in the marketing mix attracting attention and reinforcing brand identity, which ultimately influence purchase decisions. This study focuses on how packaging elements impact consumer decisions in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This paper therefore seeks to investigate the relationship between specific packaging elements and consumer purchase decisions and to assess which elements hold the most influence in the Sri Lankan packaged food sector. This study used a quantitative approach with a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 respondents in Colombo. Convenience sampling targeted consumers familiar with packaged foods. Data were analyzed using SPSS, focusing on the relationship between packaging elements (size, shape, material, colour, etc.) and consumer decisions through correlation and regression analysis. The study identified size, shape, and material as the most influential factors in consumer purchase decisions. Visual elements, mainly size and shape, were significant as they contributed to value perception and enhanced product visibility. The type of material used in packaging also posed a major influence, which considered the consumers' preference for high-quality, durable packaging material. Elements like colour, graphics, and brand had less impact, suggesting that Sri Lankan consumers prioritize functional over aesthetic elements. These findings suggest that for FMCG marketers, the right size, shape and material of the packaging can be a competitive tool for attracting consumers and retaining them, supporting competitive differentiation. Future research can expand to rural areas and consider consumer environmental awareness for packaging innovation.

Keywords: *Consumer Behavior, FMCG, Packaging Elements, Purchase Decision, Sri Lanka*

FACTORS AFFECTING PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE IN ABC CONTAINER TERMINAL: DEVELOPING AN EMPIRICAL MODEL BY RECOGNIZING THE RELEVANT PARAMETERS

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This study investigates the factors influencing physical performance at ABC Container Terminal, aiming to develop an empirical model that identifies and quantifies key parameters impacting operational efficiency. Physical performance is essential in container terminals as it directly affects the speed, reliability, and cost-effectiveness of cargo handling, particularly in transshipment-heavy ports. This research adopts a quantitative approach, utilizing secondary data from terminal records and key performance indicators over two years, including detailed vessel arrival and operational data for two terminals at ABC Port. The analysis focuses on key dependent variables, including X1: Equivalent Vessel Numbers, X2: TRT/Working Hour Ratio, X3: Berth Capacity, and X4: Yard Capacity. These variables capture essential aspects of terminal performance, such as vessel throughput, efficiency ratios, and capacity utilization. Statistical analysis was performed using EViews software for time series data analysis to evaluate long-term and short-term effects. This study examines the relative influence of each factor, providing insights into optimizing physical performance in terminal operations. The research develops two empirical models: one for long-term analysis and another for short-term analysis. In the long-term model, X1 (Equivalent Vessel Numbers) and X4 (Yard Capacity) are identified as significant predictors, indicating the importance of both vessel flow and yard space over extended periods. The short-term model, on the other hand, finds X3 (Berth Capacity) to be the primary factor, underscoring its influence on immediate operational performance. These models offer a framework for terminal operators, allowing them to identify and prioritize interventions based on specific time-sensitive needs. This framework empowers precise decision-making to improve performance outcomes, helping the terminal stay competitive in the port logistics chain. Key benefits include elevated service delivery, streamlined operations, and sustainable growth.

Keywords: *Berth Capacity, Equivalent Vessel Numbers, Throughput, TRT/Working Hour Ratio, Yard Capacity*

OVERCOMING COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN MULTICULTURAL PROJECT TEAMS: A CASE STUDY IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

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The phenomenon of globalization has given rise to multicultural teams worldwide. With the expansion of diverse work settings in many workplaces, effective communication has become increasingly important for the operation of such teams. This research study focuses on the importance of effective communication for the success of multicultural project teams in the construction industry. It investigates the communication barriers faced by an infrastructure construction company operating in a multicultural setting in Sri Lanka. A case study approach was employed as the research strategy in this study, through which a conceptual framework was developed by reading and analyzing relevant literature that identified six key factors influencing communication barriers: Language Differences, Non-verbal Communication, Cultural Differences, Ethnocentrism, Culture Shock, and Cultural Illiteracy. Data for the research was gathered through semi-structured interviews, using a purposive sampling technique to select the most suitable interviewees. Six employees from various management levels, including individuals of both foreign and Sri Lankan heritage, were interviewed. They belonged to the engineering division, senior management, and construction site operations. The data gathered from the workers and management was analyzed using thematic analysis to generate insights. The research findings revealed that four factors had a significant influence on effective communication, namely Language Differences, Non-verbal Communication, Cultural Differences, and Culture Shock. The remaining two factors, Cultural Illiteracy, and Ethnocentrism, were found to have little or no significant influence on effective communication. This study recommends strategies to enhance effective communication by proposing solutions such as language training, conducting cultural awareness sessions, and using translators and interpreters to address issues caused by communication barriers. Implementing these practices can maximize the organization's ability to harness the full potential of its diverse workforce, ultimately leading to improved productivity within the organization.

Keywords: *Construction Industry, Communication Barriers, Effective Communication, Multicultural Project Teams*

A COMPRESSIVE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON THE INFLUENCE OF CLIENTS ON THE ACCURACY OF FAIR VALUE ASSESSMENT FOR FINANCIAL REPORTING.

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This literature review delves into the impact of client influence on the accuracy of Fair Value (FV) assessments for financial reporting, aiming to determine if client influence has a significant effect on FV accuracy. This also aims to address existing research gaps, particularly literature and empirical gaps. A qualitative research approach was adopted, where a comprehensive review of pertinent literature was performed particularly referring to secondary sources such as journal articles and academic papers. The review reveals that client influence is a widespread issue in property valuation, frequently leading to subjective FV assessments. Clients may sway valuers by tampering with financial data and providing exaggerated information, resulting in FV assessments that cater to client preferences. Findings also emphasize how the influence of clients causes a significant impact on the accuracy of FV assessments for financial reporting and how clients frequently tamper with valuations to achieve the outcome they require. Especially this study reveals that clients with extensive knowledge of the real estate market may influence valuers by various means frequently by examining preliminary assessments before finalization. Such client influence is not only common but has historically contributed to financial crises, underscoring its tangible impact on FV accuracy beyond mere anecdotal evidence. To counteract client influence, the review recommends implementing regular asset revaluations, enforcing rigorous quality control throughout the valuation process, ensuring transparency and valuers' competency, and establishing structured appeals procedures for FV assessments. These strategies offer a new perspective on strengthening the accuracy and dependability of FV assessments. By highlighting these measures, the review underscores the critical role of managing client influence to uphold the integrity and accuracy of FV assessment for financial reporting. These findings also offer a foundation for future research, emphasizing the importance of the accuracy of FV assessment and informing further studies on similar topics.

Keywords: *Fair Value; Financial Reporting, Influence of clients, Valuation Accuracy*

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THE IMPACT OF WORKPLACE HARASSMENT ON THE WELL-BEING AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT: A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

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Workplace harassment is a widespread issue that can significantly affect the well-being and job performance of employees. This research explores the impacts of mental, physical, and emotional harassment on university students in part-time employment. The main aim of this research is to identify the impact of workplace harassment on the well-being and job performance of university students in part-time employment. A snowballing sample of 150 third-year students from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura was used for the study. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies were used to collect data for this research. Qualitative data were gathered through observation, interviews, magazines and newspapers and analyzed using Excel software to perform statistical analysis. Quantitative data were gathered through surveys, questionnaires and sampling and examined through thematic analysis to identify and interpret recurring patterns and themes. The findings of the research show that among 150 third-year students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, all reported experiencing workplace harassment. Emotional harassment was the most common (63.3%), followed by mental harassment (38.7%), with harassment occurring occasionally for 41.3% of students. Despite this, only 17.3% reported the incidents, with over 60% of reports leading to no action. Due to harassment, 38% rated their mental health as poor, 43.3% frequently felt stressed, and 89.3% indicated that their academic performance was negatively affected. Most students relied on informal support, but 72% found these coping mechanisms ineffective, and all were willing to seek professional help. This research underscores the pervasive issue of workplace harassment among university students and highlights the significant impact on their mental well-being and academic performance. Future research should focus on developing effective intervention strategies and support systems to address and mitigate the adverse effects of harassment in part-time employment settings.

Keywords: *Job performance, Mental well-being, Part-time employment, University students, Workplace harassment*

EFFECT OF THE MIGRATION OF SRI LANKAN FEMALES TO MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES WHICH HAS BECOME A POPULATION ISSUE IN THE CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKAN SOCIETY

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The main objective of this research has been “to study the current population issue of the migration of the Sri Lankan female to the Middle-Eastern region to wean out the poverty stickiness which arose in our Sri Lankan society with the introduction of the open-economic system commencing with the new government in 1977”. The main research problem has been to find out “how the migration of Sri Lankan female as housemaids of the Middle - East has come up as a new population issue in the contemporary Sri Lankan society?” In arriving at the sub research questions, “it’s important to note as to how the background of sending a female to the Middle - East”, “to tackle the poverty problem cropped up what’s the importance of migrating Sri Lankan female to the Middle-East” and “to find out how it has become a subject of conversation of the migration of Sri Lankan female to the Middle - East and how it has translated to be a social issue in the Sri Lankan society”. The study is based on comparative and multiple criteria analysis while having used qualitative research methodology and using the in-depth interview and questionnaire methods for the data collection. I selected the non-random sampling method for this study.

The background for agreemental labour migration is formed with Sri Lankan entering the 1970 petroleum exporting country zone of the Middle - East, as a member of the international labour market request partner, with the advent of the Middle-Eastern development modes, its required labour for the capitalist class, as a result of its development the required domestic labour force from the African, Asian and Pacific zones for a specific period and time was envisaged while these migrant labour modes aren’t severing contacts with motherlands and are expected to return to their motherland on completion of their respective contract. They comprise the poverty-stricken and less-poor people of the rural and urban areas of their countries. The new dimension of the Sri Lankan economy seems to be the expansion of income from the earnings from Sri Lankan female accruements of the Middle - East and this income would exceed the income obtained from export of garments. The migration of housemaids to the Middle - East has become a subject of population issue discussion, due to the severe hardships they had to experience in the Middle - East and the problems they had to face on return to their motherland.

Keywords: *Migration, Open - economic system, Population, Social issue*

JUDICIAL REVIEW AS A PROTECTOR OF DEMOCRACY IN A BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SRI LANKA

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Judicial review serves as a vital mechanism in protecting democracy, especially within bureaucratic systems of government where administrative authorities exercise significant power. In Sri Lanka, the judiciary has played a crucial role in upholding democratic principles by ensuring that government actions adhere to constitutional norms. This study critically examines the role of judicial review as a protector of democracy in Sri Lanka's bureaucratic system of government, focusing on how the courts utilize constitutional provisions to maintain checks and balances on administrative power. Employing a qualitative methodology grounded in the doctrinal approach, this research explores key constitutional provisions, such as the separation of powers, fundamental rights, and the independence of the judiciary, to analyze how judicial review has been used to challenge bureaucratic overreach and executive discretion. The study focuses on landmark judicial decisions where judicial review has been invoked to ensure that administrative actions comply with constitutional mandates, thus safeguarding democratic governance. The findings highlight that judicial review in Sri Lanka not only acts as a crucial check on bureaucratic power but also reinforces accountability and transparency in governance. By examining how the judiciary interprets its constitutional duty to review the legality of government actions, the study underscores the importance of judicial review in preventing abuses of power and protecting the rights of citizens in a bureaucratic framework. At the same time, the research critically engages with the limitations of judicial review, emphasizing the need for a careful balance between judicial intervention and respect for the functions of the executive and legislative branches. This study contributes to the understanding of judicial review as a democratic safeguard in Sri Lanka's bureaucratic system, offering a critical perspective on how the judiciary functions as a protector of constitutional governance. It also reflects on the broader implications of judicial review in maintaining the balance of power and upholding democratic accountability within a system dominated by bureaucratic decision-making.

Keywords: *Judicial review, Democracy, Bureaucratic system*

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGEMENT IN PROMOTING EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING IN SRI LANKA: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

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In Sri Lanka, management ethics also comprise important responsibilities which can attract not only the health but also the wholesome well-being of the employees. A research problem mainly focuses on “Do ethical frameworks should guide managerial decisions regarding employee well-being in Sri Lankan workplaces?”. The objective of this study is to examine management practices in Sri Lanka that ethically support employee well-being within the workplace. This includes an analysis of the application of ethical theories in management practices, an investigation of the influence of Sri Lankan values on these responsibilities and an examination of the relationship between ethical management and employee well-being, satisfaction and performance. In addition, the study seeks to uncover ethical avenues that can be utilized to improve employee welfare. In Sri Lanka, the methodology followed a qualitative research design, undertaking a literature review based on philosophical ethical theory and management approach. The Western and Eastern ethical discourses may provide ways to contextualize and understand the Sri Lankan social settings and a critical analysis of the Western and Eastern ethical practices was done concerning the Sri Lankan society. The results suggest that hybrid ethical models suit the context of Sri Lanka, Cultural Sensitivity is Crucial, Emphasis on Mental Health and Work-Life Balance, Need for Ethical Training and Positive Impact on Organizational Outcomes. In the context of Sri Lanka where there is no formal ethical training for leaders, it shows the importance of the need to include ethical practices to be followed by organizations. Ethical management is not just a moral responsibility, it is a leverage that is beneficial to employees, and productivity and pays for itself while enhancing sustainability further.

Keywords: *Employee well-being, Ethical management, Sri Lankan culture, Workplace ethics, Western-Eastern Philosophy.*

SRI LANKA'S FREE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND ITS INFLUENCES AND CHALLENGES - RECENT TRENDS

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Sri Lanka's free education system, established after the 1940's, has long been recognized as a pioneering model in South Asia, aimed at providing equitable access to education for all citizens. Over the decades, this system has significantly contributed to high literacy rates and improved social indicators, positioning Sri Lanka as a regional leader in education. However, recent trends have revealed a complex landscape of influences and challenges that threaten the sustainability and effectiveness of this system. This study aims to critically examine the various influences on Sri Lanka's free education system, explore recent trends affecting educational outcomes, and identify the challenges that educators, policymakers, and students face. Employing a mixed-methods approach, this research integrates quantitative data analysis of educational statistics with qualitative insights gathered from interviews with educators, policymakers, and students. Surveys were conducted across both urban and rural regions to assess perceptions of educational quality, accessibility, and the impact of recent technological advancements. The findings indicate a dual landscape: while Sri Lanka continues to maintain high literacy rates, significant disparities persist between urban and rural areas, particularly in terms of access to educational resources and technology. The influx of digital learning tools has created new opportunities for innovation within the classroom. However, these advancements have also exposed systemic weaknesses, such as inadequate infrastructure, varying levels of digital literacy, and insufficient training for teachers in utilizing these technologies effectively. Additionally, the study highlights a growing demand for English proficiency and vocational training, underscoring the disconnect between the current curriculum and the evolving needs of the labour market. The findings underscore the urgent need for a holistic approach to reforming Sri Lanka's free education system. Policymakers must prioritize equitable access to resources, improve teacher training programs, and modernize curricula to ensure relevance in an increasingly globalized and technologically advanced environment. Engaging communities and private stakeholders is essential for fostering a collaborative approach to educational improvement. Such involvement can facilitate resource mobilization and provide diverse perspectives on educational needs. Also, a certain amount of those who receive free education through the tax money of the Sri Lankan public migrate to

other countries, so their service to the people of Sri Lanka is hindered. This situation is seen as a much-anticipated challenge in the medical field. In conclusion, this study emphasizes that while Sri Lanka's free education system has made significant strides since its inception, addressing the multifaceted challenges it currently faces is crucial for its sustainability. By focusing on enhancing quality, accessibility, and relevance, stakeholders can work together to ensure that the system continues to fulfil its promise of providing equitable education for all. Future research should explore effective strategies for integrating technology, enhancing teacher training, and fostering community engagement, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and responsive educational framework. Ensuring the ongoing contribution of Sri Lanka's free education system to national development will require a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation in response to both local and global educational trends.

Keywords: *Challenges, Free Education, Sri Lanka, Students, Technology*

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE TAIWAN-CHINA CONFLICT

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The Taiwan-China conflict is a significant geopolitical issue that has evolved over decades, deeply rooted in historical, political, and social contexts. Taiwan, officially known as the Republic of China (ROC), has maintained its government since the conclusion of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, while the People's Republic of China (PRC) regards Taiwan as a breakaway province. U.S. foreign policy plays a critical role in shaping the dynamics of this conflict, particularly since the formal recognition of the PRC in 1979, which required the U.S. to adopt a strategic approach to support Taiwan while managing relations with China. The primary objective of U.S. foreign policy regarding Taiwan is to ensure the island's security while maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific region. This paper explores the historical developments, current military and diplomatic engagements, and the broader implications of U.S. actions on the Taiwan-China conflict. Key findings indicate that U.S. military support has significantly enhanced Taiwan's deterrent capabilities against potential aggression from China. The Taiwan Relations Act, enacted in 1979, established a framework for U.S.-Taiwan relations, committing the U.S. to assist Taiwan in maintaining a robust self-defence capability. Over the years, the U.S. has engaged in substantial arms sales and military cooperation with Taiwan, reflecting a strategic shift toward a more assertive stance in the face of rising Chinese assertiveness. Recent increases in military aid signal stronger support for Taiwan amid escalating tensions, particularly as the PRC continues to amplify its military presence in the region. However, these actions also provoke strong reactions from China, which views them as challenges to its sovereignty. The delicate balance of U.S. support for Taiwan while managing relations with the PRC poses significant risks, as any perceived escalation in U.S. engagement could trigger a military response from China. The analysis reveals the complex geopolitical landscape that shapes the Taiwan-China conflict. As the U.S. strengthens its alliances in the Indo-Pacific—engaging with countries like Japan, Australia, and India—policymakers must navigate a challenging environment where support for Taiwan must be carefully calibrated to avoid provoking Beijing. In conclusion, U.S. foreign policy is a pivotal factor in the Taiwan-China conflict, influencing Taiwan's security and shaping the strategic calculations of the PRC. While U.S. support is essential for deterring aggression, it must be balanced with diplomatic efforts to engage China and prevent miscalculations that could lead to armed conflict. As geopolitical dynamics continue to evolve, U.S. policymakers face

the ongoing challenge of fostering stability in the region while supporting Taiwan's aspirations. A nuanced and strategic approach is crucial to navigating this complex and high-stakes conflict, ensuring that U.S. foreign policy effectively promotes peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific.

Keywords: *America, China, Conflict, Policy, Taiwan*

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: JURISPRUDENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF SRI LANKA'S ECOSYSTEMS

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Sri Lanka, an island nation characterized by its stunning diversity of ecosystems and rich biodiversity, faces significant environmental challenges that threaten its sustainable development. The country is experiencing severe pressures from rapid urbanization, industrialization, deforestation, and climate change, which endanger both its natural resources and the livelihoods of millions of its citizens. Since the enactment of the National Environmental Act in 1980, Sri Lanka has established a legal framework aimed at environmental protection, mandating Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for development projects to ensure that ecological considerations are integrated into decision-making processes. However, despite these legislative measures, enforcement of environmental laws remains inconsistent and often ineffective, primarily due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of resources, and instances of corruption. This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of Sri Lanka's environmental laws and evaluate the role of the judiciary in promoting sustainable practices. Additionally, it assesses the importance of public participation and community initiatives in environmental governance, recognizing that local voices are crucial in addressing environmental challenges. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the study utilizes a combination of doctrinal legal analysis and case law examination. Primary sources include statutory laws and landmark judicial decisions, while secondary sources encompass academic articles, government reports, and publications from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The research also incorporates insights gained from interviews with legal experts, environmental activists, and community leaders, providing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes in environmental governance in Sri Lanka. Key findings from the study reveal that while the National Environmental Act serves as a vital legal foundation for environmental protection, its enforcement is often undermined by systemic issues, leading to ongoing ecological degradation. The judiciary has played a significant role in advancing environmental rights through landmark rulings that emphasize the necessity of sustainability in legal interpretations. Despite these strengths,

the study identifies significant gaps in public participation, noting that grassroots movements and local stakeholders are frequently excluded from decision-making processes that impact their environments. The involvement of these communities is essential for fostering sustainable practices, as they are often the first to experience the effects of environmental degradation and are best positioned to advocate for their interests. In conclusion, the research emphasizes the urgent need for a more integrated and robust approach to environmental law in Sri Lanka. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms, enhancing public involvement, and fostering collaboration among government entities, civil society, and the private sector are essential steps to effectively address the current environmental challenges. By aligning legal frameworks with sustainable development goals, Sri Lanka can better protect its unique ecosystems and ensure a resilient future for its communities. Ultimately, this study advocates for comprehensive legal reforms that empower local populations, safeguard natural resources, and promote resilience against environmental degradation, thus positioning Sri Lanka as a leader in environmental jurisprudence in the region

Keywords: *Diversity, Judiciary, Challenges, Legal, Communities*

EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING IN SRI LANKA: EXPLORING KEY CHALLENGES AND UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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This study explored the role of educational counselling in Sri Lanka's socio-economic development, focusing on guiding students in planning, course selection, and career paths. Key objectives included evaluating current counselling practices, identifying challenges such as limited resources and cultural stigma, and exploring strategies for improvement. A convergent parallel mixed-method design was employed, utilizing both deductive and inductive reasoning. Case study and survey research strategies were adopted, with data collected through interviews and questionnaire surveys involving 10 counsellors, 20 students, and 20 parents. Thematic analysis and descriptive statistical methods were used to analyze the findings. The study revealed significant gaps in educational counselling services, including a shortage of trained counsellors, insufficient funding, and limited awareness of available services among students and parents. Cultural stigma associated with seeking psychological support further discourages the use of counselling facilities. Despite these challenges, the findings highlight the positive impact of effective counselling on student learning, emotional resilience, and coping skills. This study emphasizes the urgent need for a culturally adapted and well-integrated counselling framework to support holistic student development. Such a framework should address academic, emotional, and mental health needs within Sri Lanka's competitive educational environment. It recommends involving key stakeholders, parents, teachers, school leaders, and the community in creating an enabling environment for students. Enhanced services should aim to address learning challenges and rising mental health concerns. The study also advocates for standardizing curricula in educational counselling to increase awareness and support among students and parents. Ultimately, effective educational counselling can create a more equitable learning environment, helping students navigate challenges and reach their full potential. Collaborative efforts are essential to make counselling services accessible, relevant, and responsive to the local context, fostering a supportive atmosphere for students to thrive.

Keywords: *Educational Counselling, Sri Lanka, Student Development, Mental Health, Career Guidance, Academic Performance*

THE EVOLUTION OF CAREER COUNSELING: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SRI LANKA

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In an increasingly complex global workforce, career counselling has evolved into a multi-faceted discipline, providing guidance that reflects shifts in labour market demands and individual career paths. This study explores the historical and contextual development of career counselling worldwide and examines its prominence in Sri Lanka, identifying both current practices and areas for development. The primary objective is to compare global advancements in career counselling with Sri Lankan practices, offering strategic recommendations for bridging gaps in accessibility, technology integration, and inclusivity within the Sri Lankan context. This qualitative research relies on a comparative analysis of secondary data, including global studies on career counselling, government reports, and Sri Lankan labour statistics. Additionally, primary data was collected through interviews with a sample size of 15 Sri Lankan Career counsellors and education professionals, extending the findings with practical insights into challenges and opportunities within the field. The analytical technique for data analysis was thematic, revealing that globally, career counselling has advanced toward a model emphasizing inclusivity, digital technology, and tailored guidance, meeting diverse workforce demands. In contrast, Sri Lanka's career counselling infrastructure remains underdeveloped, often constrained by limited resources, insufficient counsellor training, and restricted access to services in rural areas. The analysis indicates that integrating best practices from global models such as technology-based counselling platforms, skill enhancement for counsellors, and increased public awareness could substantially benefit Sri Lankan career counselling. Recommendations advocate for policy-driven support to improve counsellor education, expand digital resources, and create partnerships between educational institutions and industries. These actions are essential to cultivating a dynamic career counselling ecosystem that can adapt to the evolving needs of Sri Lanka's labour force.

Keywords: *Career Counseling, Global Trends, Sri Lanka, Workforce Development, Counselor Training*

THE FUNCTION OF CHINESE GEOPOLITICAL AMBITIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION: A QUAD 2.0 CASE STUDY

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The Indo-Pacific's growth as a geopolitical hub intensifies state and non-state competition, driven by strategic interests, economic opportunities, and complex security dynamics in the region. The rise of China in the region and globally, along with the relative decline of the USA in comparison to China's ascent, has prompted the emergence of Quad 2.0. Established in 2017, Quad 2.0 is an alliance involving India, Australia, and Japan, initiated by the United States. This study identifies a research gap regarding China's geopolitical ambitions and their impact on US leadership and other global powers, using Quad 2.0 as a case study. The objective of this research is to understand the Indo-Pacific region, analyze China's geopolitical actions, and use Quad 2.0 to assess China's ambitions in the region. To achieve this, the researcher employed qualitative data analysis, utilizing speeches by US Secretaries of State and other national leaders as primary data and supplementing this with secondary data from research articles and books. A deductive approach was used, incorporating case studies and content analysis of relevant concepts and relationships. Recent geopolitical dynamics have elevated the Indo-Pacific region as both a regional and strategic concept, distinguishing it from other areas. The region does not align with China but undertakes strategic security initiatives, confirming that it is a key factor driving the emergence of Quad 2.0 under US leadership. Key research findings emphasize China's rise as a new world leader in the region and the corresponding decline in US world leadership. The development of the Indo-Pacific strategy by the US at the expense of its ideological capabilities and the establishment of Quad 2.0 at the expense of material capabilities highlight China's ambitions to establish new world leadership in the region.

Keywords: *Geopolitics, Indo-Pacific, Quad 2.0, China Rise, World Leader*

GENDER ROLES ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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This research investigates the impact of traditional gender roles on employment opportunities and economic participation in developing countries, where cultural norms often dictate distinct roles for men and women. These norms, while varying by region, tend to restrict women's access to formal employment and higher-wage occupations, thereby limiting economic growth and perpetuating inequality. The primary objective of this study is to analyze how gender roles shape employment structures and economic opportunities, focusing on specific developing countries across different continents. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative data from labour force and economic surveys with qualitative insights gathered through interviews with key stakeholders, including government officials, employers, and affected employees. The findings reveal pronounced gender disparities in job distribution, wage levels, and career progression opportunities. Women, influenced by societal expectations, are frequently overrepresented in informal, lower-paying roles, while men dominate formal sectors with greater stability and income potential. Moreover, cultural expectations, such as caregiving responsibilities, often hinder women's full participation in the workforce. This study also uncovers structural barriers, including inadequate legal frameworks to ensure workplace equality and insufficient support systems like childcare, which disproportionately impact women's employment choices and opportunities. In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for comprehensive policy reforms to reduce gender-based employment inequalities. Suggested interventions include legislative measures for workplace inclusivity, community-based initiatives to challenge restrictive gender norms, and expanded support services to facilitate equal employment access. By addressing these issues, this research contributes to broader dialogues on gender equality and advocates for policies that support inclusive economic development.

Keywords: *Developing countries, Economic Participation, Employment, Gender Roles, Inequality*

THE EFFECTS OF URBANIZATION ON MENTAL HEALTH: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Urbanization, as a global phenomenon, brings significant social and economic benefits but also poses challenges to psychological well-being. This study examines the sociological dimensions of urbanization and their effects on mental health, with a specific focus on developing countries. It aims to analyze the relationship between urbanization and mental health, explore the influence of socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental factors on mental health outcomes, and provide insights to guide psychological health interventions and urban policy development. By addressing urban-specific stressors such as overcrowding, pollution, and social isolation, the research identifies common mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression, that are often intensified in high-density urban environments. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining primary data collected through questionnaires with secondary data from existing research and documents. Epidemiological analyses and case studies from diverse urban settings are used to explore correlations between environmental stressors and mental health outcomes. Data analytical techniques include both qualitative thematic analysis and quantitative statistical methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Findings reveal that urbanization exacerbates stress, weakens social cohesion, and reduces community support, disproportionately affecting low-income populations. The research emphasizes the importance of integrating mental health considerations into urban planning and policy frameworks. It concludes that distributing urban development across broader areas, rather than concentrating it in specific locations, can mitigate negative impacts while preserving the benefits of urbanization. These insights aim to contribute to public health and urban development strategies that prioritize mental well-being alongside economic growth.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Sociological Impact, Stressors, Urbanization, Urban Policy*

THE IMPACT OF NATURE INTEGRATION ON STUDENT WELL-BEING AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF URBAN AND RURAL EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

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Integrating natural elements into educational environments has gained increasing attention due to its potential benefits for student well-being and academic performance. As the global population becomes more urbanized, students in densely populated urban areas often have limited access to green spaces compared to their rural counterparts. Gampaha, a rapidly developing district with both urbanized areas and natural rural landscapes, represents an ideal location to explore how varying levels of nature exposure in educational settings impact students. This study examines the effects of nature integration on student well-being and academic performance, comparing urban and rural educational settings within the Gampaha District, Sri Lanka. Forty students (20 urban, 20 rural) aged 12-14 participated in this cross-sectional study, which focused on variables such as stress levels, resilience, academic performance, and attendance. Schools were selected based on specific criteria to ensure an accurate representation of urban and rural environments. Statistical analyses revealed significant differences between the groups; t-test results indicated lower stress levels among rural students ($t = 14.491$, $p < 0.0001$), while correlation analysis highlighted strong associations between nature integration and positive outcomes, including a negative correlation with stress ($r = -0.92$) and positive correlations with resilience ($r = 0.93$), academic performance ($r = 0.91$), and attendance ($r = 0.82$). Visual insights further underscored these patterns, showing a clear trend of improved outcomes among rural students with higher exposure to nature. The findings suggest that nature integration significantly supports student well-being and academic success, advocating for urban educational settings to incorporate green spaces to enhance student outcomes. This study contributes valuable evidence on the positive effects of natural environments in schools, informing policies for creating healthier, more supportive learning environments. Future research should explore the long-term impact of nature-based interventions and effective strategies for integrating nature into urban school settings.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Nature Integration, Student well-being, Urban vs. rural*

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING ON MARITAL SATISFACTION

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Premarital counselling is a form of therapy designed to help couples address potential challenges in their relationship before marriage, enhancing their ability to resolve conflicts and improve communication. This process plays a critical role in preparing couples for the complexities of married life, fostering healthier and more resilient relationships. This review study aims to explore the importance and effectiveness of premarital counselling on intimacy and marital satisfaction among couples, both in Sri Lanka and globally. The study primarily relies on a literature review and empirical studies to examine how premarital counselling can improve relationship skills and address potential conflicts before marriage. Despite the valuable insights provided by the research, a key limitation of this study is the exclusive reliance on secondary data. In the context of Sri Lanka, premarital counselling often integrates cultural practices and traditional values to prepare couples for marriage within specific cultural frameworks. It emphasizes the significance of addressing cultural and social norms, family influences, and the impact these factors have on relationship dynamics. While cultural perceptions of marriage vary across countries, religions, and traditions, the core challenges faced by couples, such as communication, conflict resolution, intimacy, finances, and family dynamics, are universal. A review of literature from diverse regions, including Europe, Africa, and Asia, confirms that premarital counselling significantly contributes to marital success. Couples who undergo premarital counselling demonstrate higher marital satisfaction and are less likely to divorce compared to those who do not engage in counselling before marriage.

Keywords: *Premarital Counseling, Marital Satisfaction, Relationship Skills, Conflict Resolution, Cultural Practices*

A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE INTEGRATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN CHINA

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This thesis presents a bibliometric analysis of the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teacher education, utilizing CiteSpace software to explore academic publications in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) which is the most influential academic database in China. With the rapid development of AI technologies and their potential impact on education, this study aims to systematically map the evolution of AI in teacher education research within the Chinese academic context. By analyzing a comprehensive dataset of published articles, the study identifies key trends, research hotspots, and emerging themes in the field. The bibliometric indicators, such as publication frequency, citation patterns, co-authorship networks, and keyword co-occurrence, are examined to reveal the scholarly landscape and to track the growth of AI-related educational research. The findings highlight the major contributors to the field, the development trajectory of AI in teacher training, and the collaboration networks that shape this growing domain. Additionally, this research offers insights into the challenges and opportunities that AI presents to teacher education in China, suggesting directions for future research and policy development. Overall, the study underscores the importance of AI integration in shaping the future of teacher education and provides a framework for understanding its impact through bibliometric analysis.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Teacher Education, Bibliometric Analysis*

ACCEPTANCE OF CHATGPT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS: EVIDENCE FROM PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN MALAYSIA

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The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is reshaping traditional learning, with tools like ChatGPT offering personalized and enhanced experiences. However, postgraduate students' acceptance of such tools remains underexplored. This study examines the acceptance of ChatGPT among Malaysian public university postgraduates, employing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Factors such as familiarity, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and attitudes towards AI-driven tools were analyzed using 308 survey responses via Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Results indicate perceived usefulness ($B=0.62$, $p<0.05$). These insights urge policymakers to address these factors when integrating AI into curricula. Future research should consider cultural and educational contexts for broader implications.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Technology Acceptance Model, postgraduate acceptance, Malaysia, ChatGPT*

3

TRACK

DISASTER MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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EXPLORING RESILIENCE STRATEGIES OF FARMERS CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE: EVIDENCE FROM THE DRY ZONE OF SRI LANKA

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Climate change presents a significant obstacle to agricultural systems in the world. Developing countries are severely affected by climate change partly because many of these are heavily dependent on agriculture as their primary source of income, which is highly vulnerable to climate change, particularly farmers in dry zones who depend directly on natural resources to support their livelihoods. Therefore, the study explores the sustainable agricultural methods practised by farmers in the Mahaweli H Zone to enhance their resilience against climate variability and drought. As dry zones are particularly vulnerable to climate change, understanding local coping strategies is critical. In this study, a qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews conducted with 13 households in the Mahaweli H zone. Participants for the in-depth face to face interviews were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The data were analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis to identify the sustainable strategies of farmers confronting climate change. Major findings revealed that the farmers predominantly rely on practices such as rainwater harvesting, crop rotation, organic farming and collective knowledge sharing to mitigate the effects of drought. However, they face significant barriers, including inadequate government support, limited access to modern technologies, and human-wildlife conflicts. This study concludes that while farmers demonstrate remarkable adaptability, there is a pressing need of institutional support and targeted interventions to sustain these efforts and enhance agricultural resilience in the face of growing climate threats. Considering these findings, policy interventions should be focused on strengthening agricultural extension services, providing access to affordable credit, and fostering knowledge-

sharing networks which are vital for empowering farmers and ensuring the long-term sustainability of farming systems in dry zones of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Adaptation strategies, Climate change, Dry zone, Sustainable agriculture*

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF AI/CHATGPT IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES IN SRI LANKA

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Artificial Intelligence, advancing rapidly in every aspect of and is shaping up to play an important role in higher education. Considering the changes that have taken place in education and society for a long time, the increasing prominence of the use of AI/ChatGPT in higher education has brought about a profound change, significantly affecting teaching and learning methods in higher education institutions and the entire process. Therefore, this study aims to identify the factors that influence this adoption among university students in Sri Lanka. A survey was conducted with a sample of 334 students to determine the factors that predict whether students use AI tools like ChatGPT. According to the results of the binary logistic regression model, key factors were identified as ease of use, perceived usefulness, availability of technological infrastructure, Low cost of practicing, peer influence, faculty support and training, and institutional support. Among these, ease of use and perceived usefulness were the most significant drivers of adoption. However, the study also highlights several challenges that hinder widespread use. These include ethical concerns, particularly regarding plagiarism, privacy, and data security, lack of transparency in AI algorithms, resistance from faculty and students, limited technical support, and inconsistent institutional policies contribute to the slower adoption rate. Despite these challenges, the majority of students perceive AI tools as beneficial for improving their academic performance and efficiency. The findings recommended that with enhanced awareness for professional development, better infrastructure, cost-effective solutions and supportive policies, AI tools could become more integrated into academic purposes among the students in higher education institutions in Sri Lanka.

Keyword: *AI/ChatGPT, Adoption, Challenges, Academic purposes, University students*

THE ROLE OF VASTHUSHAstra IN SUSTAINABLE ARCHITECTURE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE KANDALAMA HOTEL

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The growing emphasis on sustainability and disaster resilience within architectural design makes the application of traditional knowledge, such as that found in Vasthushastra, very important. This paper looks at how the principles of Vasthushastra, which structure a harmonious relation between buildings and natural elements, would apply to a modern structure to make it more sustainable and resilient to disasters. This will be demonstrated by focusing on a case study of the Kandalama Hotel in Sri Lanka, designed by Geoffrey Bawa. This research explores how Vasthushastra enhances the principles of sustainability through the optimization of building orientation, using natural ventilation and employing eco-friendly materials. It also investigates the potential of such principles in improving disaster resilience, especially in tropical settings prone to landslides and flooding. The field observations included a mixed-method approach, interviews, and sustainability assessments of the hotel. Results show that most of the Vasthushastra principles are applied by the hotel, having minimum impact on the environment by maximizing natural light and airflow, hence reducing consumed energy. It aligns with the topography of the natural ground, therefore reducing disaster risks, and the low-impact foundation improves earthquake resistance. The Kandalama Hotel serves as an outstanding example of how traditional knowledge in architecture can be applied to modern design in the pursuit of sustainable and disaster-resistant buildings. This case study exemplifies that Vasthushastra even in modern architecture has its relevance and therefore its principles can well be applied to future projects for the cause of sustainable urban development in disaster-prone areas.

Keywords: *Buildings, Geoffrey Bawa, Kandalama Hotel, Sustainability, Vasthushastra*

SPATIAL APPROACH TO MODEL OPTIMAL LOCATIONS FOR SOLAR POWER PLANTS IN SRI LANKA

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Energy demand has gradually increased due to the global economic crisis resulting from the epidemic situation faced in recent years. The need for alternative renewable energy sources has emerged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and environmental pollution caused by the use of fossil fuels for energy production. Among these renewable energy sources, solar energy stands out as a major potential, economically viable, and freely capturable energy source in Sri Lanka. As a tropical country located near the equator, Sri Lanka is well-positioned to harness solar energy. While a solar resource atlas exists in Sri Lanka, there is no map specifically designed to identify suitable locations for establishing solar power plants. However, it is crucial to determine optimal locations for installing solar power plants, as solar potential depends on various spatial factors. This study introduces spatial approaches to determine potential areas for solar power plant installations, including the road network, power grid, land use, slope, and Global Horizontal Irradiance (GHI). However, these factors do not contribute equally to the selection of potential sites for installing solar power plants. Therefore, this study aims to assess the contribution of each causal factor to the selection of potential sites and to identify and map the optimal locations for installing solar power plants in Sri Lanka. Geographic data corresponding to these factors were collected and converted into a raster format with the same spatial resolution for each criterion. In GIS-based environments, the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Spatial Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) models were utilized to identify the contribution levels (weights) of each determining factor. Finally, comprehensive overlay operations were conducted to identify potential locations for installing solar power plants. The entire study area was classified into four zones: high potential, potential, less potential, and no potential.

Keywords: *AHP, GIS, MCDA, Solar Power Potential, Sri Lanka*

EVALUATING WEIGHTING METHODS FOR FLOOD SUSCEPTIBILITY MAPPING USING MORPHOMETRIC ANALYSIS IN ATTANAGALLA RIVER BASIN

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Morphometric analysis of watersheds combined with multi-criteria decision-making techniques is widely used for identifying and prioritizing sub-watersheds for flood risk assessment. This research focuses on the *Attanagalla* River Basin, intending to determine the most effective method for weighting morphometric parameters to enhance flood susceptibility mapping. Five objective weighting methods were examined: Mean Weight, Preference Selection Index, Standard Deviation, Criteria Importance Through Intercriteria Correlation and Entropy methods. The study involves extracting morphometric parameters from the Digital Elevation Model of the *Attanagalla* River Basin and generating flood susceptibility maps for each Weighting method. These maps were validated against historical flood events from 2012 and 2021 to assess their accuracy. A comparative analysis was conducted using ANOVA to evaluate the differences in prediction accuracy across the five methods. The results revealed significant differences between the methods. Boxplot analysis further confirmed the highly reliable of the Entropy method, which demonstrated the lowest median error and the most consistent performance across all sub-basins, with minimal variability and fewer outliers. Sub-basins 6, 7, and 8 were identified as high-priority areas for flood hazard, particularly Sub-basin 7, which was consistently classified as high-risk in both 2012 and 2021. In conclusion, the Entropy method is recommended as the most effective approach for weighting morphometric parameters in flood susceptibility mapping, providing precise and dependable results for flood management and mitigation efforts. These findings emphasize the importance of selecting appropriate weighting methods in multi-criteria decision-making to improve the accuracy and reliability of flood susceptibility assessments.

Keywords: *Flood Risk Assessment, Flood Susceptibility Mapping, Morphometric Analysis, Multi-Criteria Decision-making, Objective Weighting Methods,*

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

4

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THE IMPACT OF DEFAMATORY LANGUAGE ON EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE: A LINGUISTICS ANALYSIS

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This study investigated the consequences of defamatory language on employee satisfaction from a linguistics standpoint. The research problem addressed the effects of derogatory speech on employee experience in organizational settings. The population comprised employees from different industries and sectors confronting various forms of disparaging language in their workplace. A sample of employees from different organizational hierarchies and job roles was selected using a stratified sampling technique. Surveys, semi-structured interviews, and linguistic analysis of workplace communication channels were used to gather the necessary data. The qualitative and quantitative data were subjected to linguistic and statistical analyses to uncover patterns and correlations between defamatory language use and its impact on employee job satisfaction and performance. Findings suggest a significant negative correlation between exposure to defamatory language and employee satisfaction. The study also revealed linguistic mechanisms through which defamatory language exerts influence, including semantic derogation, pragmatic implicature, and sociolinguistic power dynamics. Recommendations include implementing strict organizational policies to combat the spread of defamatory language in corporate contexts, fostering a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity, and providing training programs to enhance linguistic awareness and sensitivity among employees and management. Future research studies may explore the effectiveness of interventions to mitigate the impact of defamatory language, explore cross-cultural differences in linguistic perceptions and responses to derogatory speech, and investigate the role of technology in perpetuating and addressing linguistic toxicity in the workplace.

Keywords: *Corporate, Defamatory, Employee, Experience, Language, Workplace*

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY IN SHAPING ACADEMIC AND CAREER OUTCOMES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF BLM STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

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English language proficiency has become increasingly important in the context of higher education, especially within Sri Lankan state universities, where English is not only the medium of instruction for many courses but also a critical tool for engaging in academic discourse and global scholarship. In a country where English is often considered a second language, students' ability to navigate their studies in English is vital for both academic success and broader professional opportunities. This study aims to explore the significance of English language skills among undergraduates, focusing on students enrolled in the Bachelor of Labour Management (BLM) degree program at the Institute of Human Resource Advancement (IHRA), University of Colombo. A purposive sample of BLM students was selected to offer a nuanced understanding of how English language proficiency or the lack thereof affects their academic performance, engagement with course materials, and overall confidence in navigating university life. The research delves into the specific linguistic challenges these students encounter, such as limited access to quality English language resources, inadequate exposure to English in non-academic settings, and the difficulties of adapting to an English-medium academic environment. The findings of the study reveal a paradox: while students overwhelmingly recognize the centrality of English in their academic and professional development, they often lack sufficient support systems to fully develop these skills. Many participants expressed a desire for more structured language programs, tailored to meet their specific needs, and highlighted the disparity in access to English language resources among different socio-economic groups. These insights point to the need for universities to implement targeted initiatives, such as language enhancement courses, workshops, and peer-assisted learning programs, that can bridge the language gap and equip students with the necessary skills to thrive both in academia and the workforce. This research contributes to the ongoing discourse on language education in Sri Lanka by emphasizing the critical role that English plays in higher education and professional success. It underscores the urgent need for systemic interventions to improve language proficiency

among undergraduates, particularly those from diverse linguistic backgrounds, and advocates for policy reforms aimed at integrating comprehensive English language training into university curricula. In doing so, this study offers valuable recommendations for educators, policymakers, and institutions striving to enhance the academic and employability outcomes of Sri Lankan university graduates.

Keywords: *English Language, Proficiency, Workforce, Undergraduates*

INFLUENCE OF SINHALA ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH OF NATIVE SINHALA SPEAKERS; STUDY BASED ON SINHALA- ENGLISH BILINGUALS OF VARYING LEVELS OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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This study investigates the influence of Sinhala on the English pronunciation of Sinhala-English bilinguals, focusing on specific pronunciation variations. While previous research has identified distinctive features of Sri Lankan English compared to Standard British English, there has been limited exploration of the factors contributing to these differences. The study examines pronunciation variations, including the interchangeable pronunciation of /w/ and /v/, articulation of silent letters /b/ and /g/, insertion of an open /ə/ in consonant clusters, initial syllable /ə/ pronounced as /ʌ/ or /æ/, and substitution of /ʒ/ with /ʃ/. The study involved 30 native Sinhala speakers with varying English proficiency levels, and the participants completed a questionnaire about their language background and pronunciation challenges. A subset of 10 participants took part in semi-structured interviews and a recording task in which they read sentences containing the target sounds. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed statistically, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Comparative analysis compared the participants' pronunciation to those of native English speakers, highlighting phonological deviations linked to Sinhala phonology. Findings reveal that the extent of phonetic influence on English pronunciation varies according to proficiency levels. Those with lower proficiency exhibited stronger alignment with Sinhala phonology, reflected in their English pronunciation patterns. These variations were closely tied to specific phonological characteristics of Sinhala, highlighting how the structures of a native language shape the pronunciation of a second language. Overall, the study concludes that Sinhala phonology significantly influences the English pronunciation of bilinguals, providing important insights into the phonological distinctiveness of Sinhala-English bilinguals.

Keywords: *Sri Lankan English, Standard British English, Sinhala English bilinguals, Influence of Sinhala*

THE PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE SCHOOLS OF DEHIOWITA EDUCATIONAL ZONE TOWARDS THE 4CS OF 21ST-CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS

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The modern world is experiencing rapid developments in the context of education and the demand for 21st century skills has increased in the world of work today. The reliance on traditional teaching methods in education delays the production of skilled individuals in society. Therefore, it is important to explore the teachers' awareness regarding 21st-century learning skills. This study aimed to explore the common perception of English language teachers towards the 4 C skills of 21st-century learning skills and further explore how these 4 C skills are used in the classrooms. The study took a qualitative, exploratory approach for which the participants were English language teachers of the Dehiowita educational zone. The sampling method was cluster sampling. A total number of 14 participants participated in the semi-structured interviews conducted. Data collected were analysed using the thematic analysis method, where initially the codes were generated, and later the major themes and patterns were identified. The study revealed that English teachers are not aware of the 4 C skills concept, but they are unconsciously using the skills of creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration variously but separately in the teaching process. Teachers mainly perceived the 4 C skills concept as a student-centred approach and it can be effectively applied in the language classroom to develop language skills. Also, it was found out that there are difficulties in applying the 4 C skills in rural schools due to the technological issues and facilities and the number of students in a classroom. 4 C skills were used in activities such as group activities, peer work, dialogues, role plays, songs, and puzzles.

Keywords: *21st century, 4 C skills, English, Perception, Teacher*

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