



PROCEEDINGS

**5th RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS STUDIES
RCBS - 2024**

**‘Unlocking Business Frontiers:
Exploring Innovations and Knowledge Diffusion’**

30th of September, 2024

**Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya**

RESEARCH CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS STUDIES
(RCBS - 2024)

Theme

*‘Unlocking Business Frontiers: Exploring Innovations and Knowledge
Diffusion’*

30th of September, 2024

Faculty of Business Studies

University of Vavuniya

Pambaimadu

Sri Lanka

Disclaimer

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Web: <https://fbs.vau.ac.lk/rcbs2024/>

E-mail: rcbs2024@vau.ac.lk

TP: +94 242228231

Fax: +94 242228231

Chief Editor:

Dr. N. Ravinthirakumaran

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Message from the Vice Chancellor

It is my great pleasure and honor to provide this message for the 5th Research Conference on Business Studies (RCBS) 2024, organized by the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya. Since its establishment in 1997, the faculty has been a beacon of academic excellence, and this milestone conference, taking place on September 30, 2024, marks a significant achievement.

The theme of this year's conference, **“Unlocking Business Frontiers: Exploring Innovations and Knowledge Diffusion,”** is both timely and pertinent in today's fast-evolving global landscape. It highlights the vital role that innovation and knowledge sharing play in driving competitiveness, sustainability, and growth. By harnessing emerging business opportunities and embracing cutting-edge technologies, we can not only confront contemporary challenges but also pave new pathways for economic development and social impact, particularly in regions like Vavuniya. This conference serves as an essential platform to foster these critical discussions and encourage fruitful collaborations.

RCBS 2024 brings together a diverse array of academics, policymakers, and professionals, creating a dynamic forum for the exchange of ideas. We are also privileged to have distinguished international academics as our Keynote Speakers, whose insights will greatly enrich the conference proceedings and contribute to advancing the discourse on innovation and business development.

The success of this conference is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the Faculty of Business Studies at the University of Vavuniya. I am confident that the esteemed delegates will find ample opportunities to engage with a wide range of topics that will enhance the research landscape and inspire future innovations.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the conference committee and the staff of the Faculty of Business Studies for their dedication and efforts in making this event a remarkable success. I wish you all continued success in your admirable work.

Prof. Arulampalam Atputharajah
Vice Chancellor
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Message from the Dean

I am pleased to deliver this congratulatory message to the 5th Research Conference on Business Studies - RCBS 2024 of the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya. I am pleased to deliver this congratulatory message to the Fifth Research Conference on Business Studies - RCBS 2024 of the Faculty of Business Studies, Vavuniya University. In the past, the faculty held the research conference once every two years and a notable decision was made to hold the conference once a year from the year 2024 to promote the research and networking culture of the faculty.

The theme of the conference, “Unlocking Business Frontiers: Exploring Innovations and Knowledge Diffusion, is best suited for today's business entities to advance their businesses in an adversarial manner to adapt to the dynamic changes in the global business environment. Exploring the dynamics of innovations and the diffusion of knowledge can drive improvements and growth for businesses in all countries. Organizations must deal with absorptive capacity, that is, the ability of organizations to process external knowledge and use it for innovation.

The conference presents research results from academics, professionals and researchers and will be a great opportunity to learn new knowledge from researchers. The conference proceedings consist of forty-five articles divided into six themes, namely; Accounting and Finance, Human Resources Management, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, Marketing Management, Economics and Information Systems and Project Management. I congratulate the conference committee for conducting this fifth research conference and extend my best wishes for its success.

Prof. Y.Nanthagopan
Dean / Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.



Message from the Convener

It is with great pride and immense pleasure that I extend this message for the fifth Research Conference on Business Studies (RCBS) at the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya. This publication stands as a testament to our continuous dedication to fostering academic excellence and advancing research that resonates with the evolving needs of industries and communities.

The theme of this year's conference - **"Unlocking Business Frontiers: Exploring Innovations and Knowledge Diffusion,"** perfectly encapsulates the essence of resilience and adaptability. In today's complex and ever-changing business landscape, this theme inspires industries to not only overcome challenges but also to thrive amidst uncertainties. The research contributions in this volume cover diverse and critical areas, including Accounting and Finance, Human Resource Management, Marketing, Economics & Information Systems, Project Management, Entrepreneurship, and Tourism & Hospitality Management. These tracks offer a wide array of insights and innovative solutions that help push the boundaries of business and entrepreneurship.

The successful publication of this Book of Abstracts is a significant milestone for RCBS 2024, especially in the challenging conditions we face in Sri Lanka today. It reflects the unwavering commitment of our academic community and the relentless pursuit of knowledge. Research serves as a cornerstone for the growth and grooming of societies, and this compilation of abstracts represents a critical platform for knowledge creation, dissemination, and collaboration across these key disciplines.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the individuals and staff members who have tirelessly supported this endeavor. Their dedication and hard work have brought this book to life, and for that, we are all deeply appreciative. I also wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the presenters and authors whose passion for research and commitment to knowledge sharing have been the driving force behind the success of the conference.

May the work presented in this conference inspire further research, ignite innovation, and contribute meaningfully to the development of businesses and society at large.

Mrs. S. Mathivathany - Convener, RCBS 2024

Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Message from the Chief Editor – RCBS2024

It is with great pleasure that I write this message as the Chief Editor of the editorial committee for the proceedings of the 5th Research Conference on Business Studies hosted by the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka under the theme of **“Unlocking Business Frontiers: Exploring Innovations and Knowledge Diffusion”**.

I am happy to inform you that we have received 65 submissions across six tracks and have accepted 47 outstanding abstracts with respect to multiple aspects of business studies for the conference proceedings. I have no doubt that the outcomes of the abstracts presented would promote high-quality research and intellectual curiosity of scholars and researchers. We sincerely hope that RCBS 2024 and the conference proceedings will provide more opportunities for scholars to work in collaboration with a wider global academic community.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all authors for their generous contributions of time and efforts that made the conference and publication of conference proceedings possible. Further, my sincere gratitude is extended towards all the reviewers of RCBS 2024 for their constructive feedback and on time completion of the review process. Moreover, the invaluable services extended by all the members of organizing committee of the conference are highly acknowledged. As the Chief Editor, I hope that the readers will share their insights with the authors of RCBS 2024 to ensure further advancing the level of research.

Dr. Ravinthirakumaran Navaratnam
Chief Editor/RCBS2024
Faculty of Business Studies
University of Vavuniya
Sri Lanka

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Keynote Speaker

Responsible Project Management

Dr Karen Thompson, FSI FAPM FHEA

Many projects fail or are challenged. Missed deadlines, exceeding budget, scope creep or technical problems are all issues faced by project professionals. In addition, demands for projects to innovate and contribute solutions that improve community cohesion and ecosystem regeneration have never been greater. Project managers and directors have many of the skills required to play a leading role in sustainable development. However, the conventional, linear, output-focused approach to project management can limit the ways we address project complexity, uncertainty, risks and opportunities. As a leading thinker in the field of construction said recently:

“It’s time that we saw projects differently: not as a series of siloed outputs, but as interventions into pre-existing systems whose purpose is to enable people and nature to flourish together for generations.” (Mark Enzer, Mott MacDonald, 2024)

In this session we will explore how systems thinking can be applied to projects and project management through Responsible Project Management. Selected principles and techniques will be shared with participants for use on their own projects. These ideas and practices can be implemented on projects to help uncover and handle problems, and to ensure benefits are delivered for society and ecosystems, as well as economic value.

Key words: *Project techniques, Sustainable development, Systems thinking*

Co-founder of Responsible Project Management and an award-winning project management educator.

Unlocking Business Frontiers: Exploring Innovations and Knowledge Diffusion

Arosha S. Adikaram

It is indeed a pleasure and an honor to be a part of the 5th research conference on business studies of Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya and share my thoughts and ideas on a critical and timely topic. Innovation has been a buzz word in the world of business for many decades and still what we know about the topic is little and what we have done is even smaller. As our country struggle to come out of a devastating economic, social and political downturn in an evolving landscape of technological advancements, globalization, and consumer behavior, the importance of innovation and knowledge diffusion remains center stage. Innovation is indeed the lifeblood of economic growth and competitiveness.

However, while innovation sparks change, knowledge diffusion is the engine that drives its widespread adoption. Diffusion is what enables an idea, a product, or a business model to transcend its origin and create value on a global scale. As researchers, practitioners and practitioner researchers, we have a critical responsibility to innovate, engage in knowledge diffusion and also to encourage innovation and knowledge diffusion. While there are many avenues to accelerate innovation and knowledge diffusion such as collaborative networks, digital platforms and education and upskilling, research and research conferences such as the conference today, are imperative in this endeavor.

Sri Lanka, with its growing tech sector and a highly skilled young workforce, has immense potential to be a regional leader in both innovation and knowledge diffusion. However, we must create ecosystems that allow businesses, government, and academia to collaborate effectively, enabling the country to harness global knowledge while developing its own unique innovations. Further, Sri Lanka has all the ingredients to unlock new business frontiers through innovation and knowledge diffusion—its rich cultural heritage, entrepreneurial spirit, and strategic location offer immense potential. As we move forward, let us remember that unlocking business frontiers is not only about creating new products or services but also about creating new possibilities for people, societies, and the planet.

Thank you, and I wish you all an inspiring and productive conference. Let us unlock the future together!

Chair Professor of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2248-6035>



Track 01

Accounting and Finance



Financial Literacy and Investment Outcomes: Insights from Sri Lankan Teachers

De Alwis, A. H. M

Abstract

The study aims to investigate the impact of financial literacy on personal investment decisions among school teachers in Sri Lanka. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data gathered from 400 school teachers through a structured questionnaire. The study used a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation from different regions and demographic groups. The questionnaire measured financial literacy across several dimensions, including knowledge of financial products, money management skills, and overall financial capabilities. Multiple regression analysis determined the relationships between these financial literacy dimensions and investment decision-making. The findings indicate that money management and financial skills significantly influence investment decisions, while knowledge of financial products and options plays a relatively minor role. The data suggest practical financial skills are more critical in shaping investment behaviour than theoretical financial knowledge. The study underscores the importance of developing targeted financial literacy programs that focus on building practical financial competencies, especially for school teachers who manage personal and professional financial responsibilities. From a theoretical standpoint, this research adds to the existing body of literature on financial literacy by examining its specific effects on investment outcomes in a developing country context, which is often underexplored. In practical terms, the study provides policymakers and educational institutions with insights for designing effective financial education programs tailored to educators. These programs can help improve teachers' financial decision-making, contributing to their financial stability and ability to guide students in making informed financial choices. Ultimately, this research emphasises the critical need for enhanced financial literacy to support better investment outcomes and overall financial well-being among school teachers in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Financial Literacy, Financial Skills Teacher Education, Investment Decisions, Money Management,

PABM Campus, DE Mel Road. Moratuwa, Sri Lanka: dealwisahm@gmail.com



Impact of Market Risk on the Financial Performance of Licensed Commercial Banks in Sri Lanka

Tharsiny, N^a and Suganya, J.D.F^b

Abstract

Despite the expansion of the Sri Lankan banking sector, market risk remains a significant challenge. This study investigates the impact of market risk on the financial performance of licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. The study examines independent variables such as the degree of financial leverage, book-to-market ratio, gearing ratio, firm size, and debt-to-asset ratio as measures of market risk, with return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE) serving as the dependent variables to assess financial performance. A sample of fourteen licensed commercial banks, selected through convenience sampling, was analyzed using panel data extracted from published annual reports of banks listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange over ten years from 2012 to 2021. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and panel data regression analysis were employed to analyze the data. The Hausman specification test indicated that the fixed effects model was the most suitable for this study. The findings reveal that both financial leverage and firm size have a significant negative impact on ROA and ROE. Additionally, the gearing ratio negatively affects ROA, while the book-to-market ratio significantly negatively impacts ROE. In contrast, the book-to-market and debt-to-asset ratios do not significantly influence ROA, and the gearing and debt-to-asset ratios do not significantly affect ROE. Consequently, the study concludes that market risk has a significant negative impact on the financial performance of licensed commercial banks in Sri Lanka. The findings of this study have several vital implications for Sri Lankan banks and policymakers. Banks should enhance their risk management strategies to address the negative impacts of financial leverage and firm size on their financial performance and carefully evaluate the effects of gearing and book-to-market ratios on returns when making strategic decisions. Policymakers might consider implementing regulations that mitigate these risk factors, such as guidelines on capital structure and risk exposure. For investors, understanding the relationships between market risk variables and financial returns is crucial for making informed investment decisions.

Keywords: Book-to-market ratio, Financial leverage, Market risk, Return on asset, Return on equity.

^{a,b} *Department of Financial Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka:jeyansuganya@gmail.com*



A Comparison of the Contribution of Artificial Intelligence to the Audit Quality of Perspectives from Big Four Audit Firms and Non-Big Four Audit Firms in Sri Lanka

Tharsika, K^a, Varanitha, S^b and Thaneshan, G^c

Abstract

In the 21st century, the quality of audits needs to meet the threshold standard, causing increasing dissatisfaction among investors and other stakeholders. Concurrently, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a novel technique in global financial reporting and auditing. Furthermore, prior research has not adequately investigated the impact of AI on the quality of audits and whether there is a difference in the perspectives of auditors regarding the significance of AI in the quality of auditing between the Big Four audit firms and non-Big Four audit firms, particularly in Sri Lanka. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which AI contributes to the enhancement of audit quality from the perspective of auditors in Sri Lanka, as well as to identify any potential discrepancies in the perceived contribution of AI utilization to audit quality between the big four audit firms and the non-big four audit firms in Sri Lanka. The data are collected using a Google Forms structured questionnaire from auditors working in both types of audit firms for further analysis. This study utilizes descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test to assess the research objective. The study results show that auditors from Big Four and non-Big Four firms in Sri Lanka believe AI can significantly improve audit quality. It confirms that there is no significant difference in the perspective of auditors from Big Four and non-Big Four organizations in Sri Lanka regarding the contribution of AI to audit quality. This study contributes to the existing literature and policymakers.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Audit quality, Big four audit firms

^a *Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: tharsik@univ.jfn.ac.lk*

^b *Numerix Private Limited, Jaffna, Sri Lanka*

^c *Freelance Researcher*



Factors Affecting Purchase Intention of Daraz Online Shopping in Sri Lanka

Wijerathna, J.M.K.G.T.G^a and Walathara, T.H^b

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the elements that influence the purchase intention of consumers on Daraz, an online shopping platform operated in Sri Lanka. In light of the growing popularity of online shopping due to its ease, it is of the utmost importance to comprehend the behaviour of consumers in this environment. Using empirical research and a quantitative approach, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between a number of different elements and the intention to make a purchase. In this study, primary data were acquired through surveys that were disseminated through various social media channels. The research used a purposive sampling technique. The results of the multiple regression analysis indicate that there is a significant connection between the predictors of purchase intention and factors such as word-of-mouth, price, attitude, trust, loyalty, usability, and purchase intention. The overall R-squared value for this association is 0.867. A number of recommendations have been derived from the data. These recommendations include ways to increase trust in product recommendations, apply innovative pricing techniques, place an emphasis on the usability of websites, develop a powerful brand identity, execute effective loyalty programs, and include word-of-mouth marketing.

Keywords: Attitude, Loyalty, price, Trust, Word of Mouth

^{a,b} Faculty of Management Studies, Open University of Sri Lanka, Nawala, Sri Lanka:
jmwij@ou.ac.lk



The Influence of Audit Committee Independence on Financial Reporting Quality: A Moderating Role of Audit Quality

Vianny, J.D

Abstract

Financial reporting ensures corporate accountability and transparency, which are fundamental for capital markets. It provides essential information for stakeholder decision-making. Audit committee independence prevents misstatements, improving financial statement value. Despite reforms and studies, gaps remain in understanding its effect on financial reporting quality. Prior studies addressed direct relationships but needed more research on audit quality's role in the Sri Lankan context. The key research objective is to determine the moderating effect of how audit quality influences the connection between audit committee independence and financial reporting quality in eight selected audit companies in Sri Lanka. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was used in this study. A questionnaire was administered to 301 auditors, who were selected using stratified random selection from a population of 1,370, with responses of 282. Data were analyzed using correlation analysis to examine relationships and multiple regression to explore moderation among audit committee independence, financial reporting quality, and audit quality. The findings indicate positive relationships among the study variables, and the multiple regression model with moderation suggests that audit quality not only directly influences financial reporting quality but also alters the relationship between audit committee independence and financial reporting quality. It improves the favourable influence of audit committee independence, emphasizing the crucial importance of solid audit quality standards in guaranteeing the dependability of financial reporting. The practical implications of this study indicate that regulatory firms should prioritize enhancing the value of audits and upholding the independence of audit committees to maximize the effectiveness of internal controls.

Keywords: Audit quality, Audit committee independence, Financial reporting quality, Moderating effect



Impact of Intellectual Capital Disclosures on Profitability: Evidence from Public Listed Companies in Sri Lanka

Shahadha, S^a and Nuskiya, M.N.F^a

Abstract

Technological advancements have increased the usage, creation and development of intellectual capital (IC). Corporations disclose IC since it plays a significant role in enhancing corporate financial performance. In this context, in terms of listed companies in Sri Lanka, the study initially assessed the level of Intellectual Capital Disclosures (ICDs) and investigated its impact on profitability. This study followed a quantitative methodological approach with a sample of 52 companies. Data is collected using an Intellectual Capital Disclosure Index encompassing three categories (i.e., Structural capital, Human capital and Relational capital) from 2019 to 2023 (260 observations). The collected data were analyzed using One-sample t-tests and Panel regression analyses for two models (Model 1 representing Overall ICDs and Model 2 representing Structural, Human and Relational capital). The findings revealed a lower level of ICDs on an overall basis since the mean value (32.72 per cent) is below the test value of 50 per cent. Similarly, disclosure levels of structural, human, and relational capital are also lower, ranging from 25% to 40%. Panel regression analysis results suggest that ICDs positively impact profitability on an overall basis (Model 1), whereas there is not statistically enough evidence to support the impact of structural, human, and relational capital on profitability (Model 2). The findings suggest substantial implications for corporates, regulators, and professional bodies regarding the understanding of ICDs and their impact on profitability, which may help enhance disclosure practices.

Keywords: Human Capital Disclosure, Intellectual Capital Disclosure, Relational Capital Disclosure, Structural Capital Disclosure

^a *Department of Business Finance, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: mg18141@mgt.pdn.ac.lk*



The Impact of Ownership Structure on Dividend Policy: Evidence from Listed Manufacturing Companies in Sri Lanka

Harrinee K^a and Larojan, C^b

Abstract

The principal-agent problem is familiar to any organisation in the world. Commonly, agency problems are related to the ownership structure. A sound corporate governance system is the most general internal mechanism that organisations use to reduce agency problems. The ownership structure is one of the main scopes of corporate governance. Based on the agency theory, this study analyses whether ownership structure dimensions are related to dividend policy by examining the impacts of ownership structure on the dividend policy of the listed manufacturing firms listed in the Colombo Stock Exchange (CSE). For this study, the sample consists of a panel of 20 manufacturing firms listed in the CSE for five years, from 2017 to 2021. The researcher uses a random sampling technique to collect data, and a Panel Least Square regression estimation model is used to analyse the data. The study's findings indicate a significantly weak positive relationship between institutional ownership and dividend per share, a significantly weak positive relationship between concentrated ownership and dividend per share, and a significantly moderate positive relationship between foreign ownership and dividend per share. Control variables such as Firm size and Growth opportunities indicate a significant association with dividend per share, but the control variable, Return on equity, has an insignificant association with dividend per share.

Keywords: Dividend policy, Dividend per share, Corporate governance, Ownership structure

^a *The Nuwara Eliya Hotels Company PLC, Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka: harrineekalai@gmail.com*

^b *Department of Finance and Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.*



Track 02

Human Resource Management



A Study on the Factor Affecting to the Job Stress of Employees in Association with the ICT Industry in Sri Lanka

Thadshaginiy S^a Methina S^b and Pairavi S^c

Abstract

Information Technology has become the backbone of almost every industry in today's technological landscape, driving innovation, efficiency, and connectivity. The stress that comes with job is one of the issues that has drawn a lot of attention. The effects of occupational stress on ICT workers are a crucial topic of research that necessitates investigation, comprehension, and mitigation. The purpose of this paper is to study on the factors affecting on job stress of employees in ICT industry in Sri Lanka. Convenience sampling technique was utilized to collect the data from 150 employees of ICT Industry in Sri Lanka. Data collection method was primary data collection by issuing self-structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scale. To produce numeric data as well as to test the hypothesis, the researcher employed analysis via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The finding reveals that understanding the factors contributing to job stress, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and work-life conflict, are crucial for developing effective stress management strategies in the ICT industry. By addressing these issues, organizations can improve employee well-being, enhance job satisfaction, and boost overall productivity. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of determinants of job stress affecting on employees. This study will help organization to understand the importance of managing stress level of employees towards employee performance and satisfaction and it will assist organization to understand which factors are important to keep in mind building the work setting and how a good work tasks, responsibilities can be delivered to their employees

Keywords: Job stress, Role conflict, Role ambiguity, Work-life conflict

abc Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: Pairavishivakumar26@gmail.com



Effects of Perceived Organizational Politics on Employee Commitment: Locus of Control as a Moderator in Sri Lanka's Public Sector

Thasika.T^a ., Manjula.S^b and Mayuran,L^c

Abstract

This study accentuates the sophisticated relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment, specifically determining the moderating role of locus of control in this relationship. The research addresses a notable gap in the literature, as there is a lack of studies investigating these relationships in the Sri Lankan context, particularly among public sector employees. Utilizing the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory to underpin the study, we assessed employees from the public sector in Sri Lanka. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, a total of 211 questionnaires were returned and usable. We utilized a convenience sampling method for data collection and analyzed the data using SPSS to determine the correlation and regression to represent the complexity of this relationship. This quantitative analysis disclosed a significant negative association between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment, emphasizing the undesirable effects of perceived organizational politics on employee commitment. Furthermore, our explorations focus on the significant role of locus of control as a moderator, elucidating how individuals' beliefs in their abilities moderate the effects of perceived organizational politics on employee commitment. This study found that the locus of control positively moderates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and employee commitment. This research is limited to one area. Future research should explore longitudinal designs to assess the causality of these relationships, examine other sectors within Sri Lanka for comparative analysis, and consider additional moderating and mediating variables to expand on these findings. Organizations should implement training programs that enhance employees' locus of control and develop strategies to minimize organizational politics to foster a more committed workforce. This research contributes to both theoretical and practical implications for organizational management and human resource practices.

Keywords: employee commitment, locus of control, perceived organizational politics, public sector employees.

^{abc} Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: ythasika@univ.jfn.ac.lk



Exploring the Interplay Between Organizational Mission Drift, Motivation and Commitment of Emerging Social Workers

Mithursan, A^a , Ransha R. R. P. H^b and Samaranayake D. I. J^c

Abstract

The mission statement of an organization establishes its purpose and distinguishes it from others in the community. In Sri Lanka, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) conventionally focus on social missions rather than profit. However, the recent economic challenges have compelled many NGOs to incorporate profit-driven activities, resulting in a drift from their core mission. This study applies controlled experiments with non-STEM undergraduates from the University of Peradeniya who are committed to social causes to examine this impact. Our findings reveal that organizational mission drift significantly reduces the commitment of emerging social workers. However, financial incentives were found to be effective in resuscitating social workers' commitment and mitigating the effects of the mission drift. The influence of financial incentives differs significantly between those with low and high levels of prosocial motivation. The results reveal that individuals with lower levels of prosocial motivation demonstrated a marked increase in commitment when financial incentives were offered. These insights underscore the importance of understanding the relationship between mission drift, employee motivation, and commitment for NGOs to maintain their social value, especially during economic crises. The study provides practical implications for NGOs to strategically manage mission-drifted employees effectively by offering compensation, which can strengthen their commitment, mitigate the decline in engagement, and help maintain social and financial motivations even when the core mission drifts.

Keywords: emerging social workers, mission drift, NGOs, prosocial motivation, real effort experiment

^{abc} Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: mithursan@mgt.pdn.ac.lk



The Impact of Work Environment on Bank Employee Performance in Valikamam Zone, Jaffna District

Jathursana, S

Abstract

Effective employee performance is crucial for companies aiming to achieve dedicated service and overall success. This study explores the impact of various work environment factors on the performance of bank employees in the Valikamam Zone of the Jaffna District, who play a significant role in the country's economy. The research focuses on key work environment factors including physical work conditions, supervisor support, coworker support, and performance feedback. Utilizing a quantitative analysis approach, data were collected from 80 employees across eight banks in the Valikamam Zone. Primary data were gathered through questionnaires, and secondary data were sourced from reports and online resources. The results reveal a significant correlation between work environment factors and employee performance. Specifically, supervisor support and performance feedback were found to have a positive relationship with employee performance, while physical work conditions were inversely related. However, the overall impact of work environment factors on employee performance was not found to be overwhelmingly strong. The study suggests that banks in the Jaffna District's Valikamam Zone should implement measures to improve work environment factors to enhance employee performance. Future research should expand to include individual factors and examine additional work environment elements that might influence job performance.

Keywords: Bank employees, Co-worker support, Job performance, Physical work conditions, Supervisor support

*Department of Commerce, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: Bjathursana19@gmail.com*



Autocratic vs Democratic Leadership During Crises Times: Impact on Employee Engagement in Sri Lanka's Public Sector

Suraweera, S.M.B.L^a and Kuruppu, K.A.D.T.D^b

Abstract

Public sector organizations significantly contribute to the Sri Lankan economy through employment generation. Despite this, persistent concerns about effective employee engagement in the public sector exist. Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping employee engagement, with leaders needing to foster the right mindset to drive organizational transformation. This study explores the impact of perceived leadership styles, democratic and autocratic, on employee engagement among non-managerial employees in Sri Lanka's public sector during times of crisis. An explanatory research design targeted non-managerial employees in Sri Lankan public sector organizations. A sample of 100 participants was selected using convenience sampling, and primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. The findings indicate that democratic leadership significantly enhances employee engagement, whereas autocratic leadership does not have a significant impact, supporting the need for leadership strategies that empower and involve employees. Further, age significantly influenced employee engagement, with males and older employees showing higher engagement levels. Thus, the study recommended paying attention to employee age in job design and conducting further investigation on the role of gender in employee engagement during the crisis.

Keywords: Autocratic leadership, Democratic leadership, Employee Engagement, Public Sector

^a SLIIT Kandy Uni, Pallakele, Sri Lanka

^b Department of Management Studies, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka: kurupputd@gmail.com, Buddhika.s@kandyuni.lk



Impact of Human Resource Information Systems on Organizational Decision-Making

Chamara, P^a and Mangaleswaran, T^b

Abstract

In today's competitive business landscape, Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) play a crucial role in optimizing decision-making processes across various managerial levels. This study investigates the impact of HRIS on organizational decision-making at Quantum Clothing Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. using a cross-sectional survey method. The research sample included 100 employees from strategic (20), tactical (30), and operational (50) levels, selected through convenience sampling. Regression analysis was applied to explore the relationship between HRIS usage and its effects on decision-making, with a focus on data accuracy and accessibility. The results demonstrate that HRIS significantly enhances decision-making quality, with data accuracy and accessibility being critical factors. Specifically, increased HRIS usage correlates with improved decision-making across all managerial levels, highlighting the system's effectiveness in supporting strategic, tactical, and operational decisions. These findings offer valuable insights for organizations aiming to leverage HRIS for better decision-making outcomes. Practically, the study underscores the importance of implementing comprehensive training programs, enhancing system interfaces, and integrating HRIS with other organizational systems to maximize its benefits. This research contributes to the understanding of HRIS's role in decision-making and provides actionable recommendations for practitioners seeking to improve their HRIS practices.

Keywords: Data accuracy, Data accessibility, Decision-making, Human Resource Information Systems, Managerial levels

^a *Freelance Researcher; Sri Lanka: jcperera97@gmail.com*

^b *Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.*



Does incivility matter? Mediating Role of Workplace Ostracism on the Nexus of Workplace Incivility and Toxic Work Environment: A Nomological Framework

Jasinth, N

Abstract

The happiness and well-being of employees and organizational performance are greatly impacted by workplace incivility and work conditions, which are important subjects in organizational studies. Although academics are becoming increasingly interested in grasping the incivility of employees, much research hasn't been done on the relationship between incivility and toxic work environments, and especially the mediating role of ostracism hasn't been thoroughly examined. This study offers a thorough analysis of the research on the relationship between incivility and toxic workplaces, emphasizing the mediating function of workplace ostracism. A systematic evaluation of the literature using the archival technique was conducted to achieve the review aims. The author carefully examined all of the available material from 2013 to 2024 and included his or her logical conclusions. The review finds that a toxic work environment and workplace incivility are positively correlated, and that ostracism plays a critical mediating role in this relationship. The article is organized to make a connection between theoretical ideas and real-world applications. The main goal is to put forth a nomological network that emphasizes how ostracism functions as a mediator in the connection between incivility and toxic work conditions. The review's conclusions highlight the significance of taking ostracism into account as a key component in comprehending how incivility creates a poisonous work environment. In the end, this research offers a conceptual model to help further our knowledge of these linkages through empirical testing in the future.

Keywords: Toxic work environment, Workplace incivility, Workplace Ostracism

*Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: jasinthabn@univ.jfn.ac.lk*



Track 03

Marketing



Exploring Data Visualization Practices and Challenges in the Sri Lankan Apparel Industry

Dilmika, K.A.S

Abstract

The study examines the practices and challenges involved in visualizing data within the Sri Lankan apparel industry and the major companies it comprises. The research identifies the main problems and factors that influence the choice and acquisition of data visualization tools. A descriptive research design was applied and collected data through a survey, and interviews with the employees at various organizational levels were then carried out. Of the practices that are usually conducted, the study highlighted actual data visualization practices, the types of tools used, and the effectiveness felt and seen from the use of the tools. Significant challenges are usually associated with data quality, the technology used, and a lack of expertise. The tools mentioned are usually applied differently depending on the organizational entity, and the study recommends full organizational training and the adoption of more holistic approaches to data management. Practical implications suggest that increases in data literacy and the infusion of a data-driven culture have quite a bit to contribute to improving decision-making and operational efficiencies. Such recommendations would involve carrying out impact analyses in a longitudinal manner, performing studies to assess the comparative effectiveness of tools, and other qualitative investigations into user experience.

Key words: Adoption, Apparel industry, Challenges, Data visualization, Sri Lanka,



Intimate Self-disclosures of Social Media Influencers and Purchase Intentions Towards Chain Hotels in Sri Lanka Among Millennials

Madhawe, W^a and Lalith, C^b

Abstract

Millennials, who grew up with technology, have developed close relationships with social media influencers (SMIs), who shape audience attitudes through content creation and dissemination. Influencers often disclose personal information to build bonds with followers, influencing their consumer behavior. While previous studies have examined various aspects of this influence, the impact of influencers' intimate self-disclosure on millennials' purchase intentions, particularly in the context of chain hotels in aims underexplored. This study addresses this gap by investigating the mediating role of para-social (PSR) between SMIs' intimate self-disclosures and millennials' purchase intentions. A quantitative approach was used, employing a self-administered questionnaire with a sample size of 399, utilizing quota and convenience sampling. Data analysis through SPSS revealed a positive perception of SMIs' intimate disclosures and PSR among millennial consumers. Results indicated that intimate self-disclosure significantly impacts purchase intentions, with PSR partially mediating this relationship. These findings contribute new insights into how SMIs' intimate self-disclosures affect consumer behavior, providing valuable implications for influencers, social media users, and marketers in the hotel industry in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Chain hotels, Intimate social Disclosures, Para-social relationships, Social media influencers, Sri Lanka

^a Department of Marketing Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

^b Department of Marketing Management, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka:
kpl@sjp.ac.lk



From Tuk-Tuk to Tap: The Adoption of Online Taxi Apps in Sri Lanka's Informal Public Transport Sector

Rusdi, M.R.M^a Jayawickrama, W.D.C^b . and Chathuranga, B.T.K^c

Abstract

Informal public transport (IPT) is in high demand in many countries, but there appears to be a need for more technology adoption by such transport providers, particularly in developing countries. To this end, the current study aimed to uncover the factors influencing the adoption of 'online taxi apps.' The study was conducted in Sri Lanka, where IPT is still less regulated, and technology adoption is relatively poor. The current research primarily focuses on adopting online taxi apps from the taxi drivers' perspective, generating a new area of literature. Primary data for the study were collected from 253 'three-wheeler' taxi drivers in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The findings reveal that 'perceived ease of use,' 'perceived usefulness,' and 'perceived value' significantly impact adopting online taxi apps. However, 'perceived privacy risk' and 'social influence' do not seem to impact the adoption of online taxi apps. Thus, the insights gained through the study help encourage taxi drivers to adopt taxi apps for their taxi service, which would ultimately result in more professional and regulated service delivery.

Keywords: Informal public transportation, Online apps, Perceived risk, Technology adoption model

^{abc} Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka: btk@sjp.ac.lk



Drivers of Reverse Logistics and Capabilities on Operational Performance

Pananwala P.A.S.P^a , Nilakshi, W.K.G^b and Iresh C.D.D^c

Abstract

Sri Lanka's production sector plays a significant role in driving the country's economic growth. However, it is also a significant contributor to environmental degradation. In response, businesses are increasingly adopting environmentally responsible practices. Reverse logistics, sometimes called "product take-back," is a key concept within Green Supply Chain Management and is seen as a potential solution to mitigate these environmental impacts. Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of reverse logistics drivers on operational performance, particularly emphasising the mediating role of reverse logistics capabilities in beverage manufacturing plants in Sri Lanka. The study focused on a population of 29 beverage manufacturing companies in Sri Lanka, from which a sample of 254 executive-level employees was selected using a convenient sampling method. Data collection was conducted using a pre-tested questionnaire, and the analysis was performed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS 20.0 and SPSS version 20.0. The results showed that reverse logistics drivers have an insignificant direct impact on operational performance based on the structural model. However, the relationship becomes significant when reverse logistics capabilities mediate. This indicates that developing strong reverse logistics capabilities is crucial for enhancing the positive effects of reverse logistics drivers on operational performance. It is recommended that top management prioritise raising awareness about the importance of reverse logistics capabilities. By strengthening these capabilities, organisations can better leverage reverse logistics drivers to improve their operational performance.

Keywords: Operational performance, Reverse logistics, Reverse logistics capabilities, Reverse logistics drivers

^a SLIIT Kandy Uni, Pallekale, Kandy, Sri Lanka: Shashini.p@slit.lk

^b Heriot Watt University, Scotland, UK, United Arab Emirates

^c IFS R&D International, Orian Towers 01, Level 18, Colombo 09, Sri Lanka



Stimulus and Customer Response Towards Organic Food: The Case of Urban Consumers in Trincomalee District, Sri Lanka

Ishar A.M. S^a . and Kajendra K^b

Abstract

This study aims to identify the factors affecting consumer purchase intentions for organic products, examine the relationships between these factors and purchase intentions, and assess their impact. The research, conducted in the Trincomalee district, employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive design and a survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 350 participants selected through convenient sampling. The results indicate that organic product manufacturers and marketers should prioritize emphasizing the high quality of their products to attract consumers. Descriptive analysis revealed that attitudinal norms, health concerns, and product quality influence consumer purchase decisions. Correlation analysis demonstrated a positive but weak relationship between these factors and purchase intentions. However, regression analysis found that only product quality significantly influenced purchase intentions, while health concerns and attitudinal norms were insignificant. Hypothesis testing revealed that attitudinal norms ($p = 0.623$) and health factors ($p = 0.667$) were not significant predictors, while product quality ($p = 0.007$) was a significant determinant of purchase intention. As a result, hypotheses related to health and attitudinal norms were rejected, while product quality was confirmed as a significant factor influencing purchase intentions. The study underscores the importance of organic food producers gaining a deeper understanding of the factors shaping consumer attitudes and perceived health benefits to increase purchase intentions. Understanding these motivations is critical as consumer behaviour increasingly favours environmentally friendly and organic products, driven by growing environmental awareness. Consumer behaviour involves psychological processes such as need recognition, information gathering, planning, decision-making, and post-purchase evaluation.

Key Words: Customer response, Organic products, Stimulus,

^a Department of Business and Management Studies, Trincomalee Campus, Eastern University, Sri Lanka: isharalis@esn.ac.lk

^b Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colomb, Sri Lanka.



Harnessing Omni-channel Marketing Strategy for Digital Transformation in Sri Lankan Women-led Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Dilogini, S^a and Kajanthy, V^b

Abstract

This qualitative study addresses a gap in literature by exploring how omni-channel marketing impacts Women-led Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (WMSMEs) in Sri Lanka, facilitating their digital transformation. A largely overlooked area, WMSMEs face distinct challenges and opportunities in using omni-channel marketing to improve competitiveness and efficiency. Despite its importance, there is limited research on how Sri Lankan WMSMEs are managing this shift. This study aims to fill that gap, offering insights and recommendations to support their digital growth and inclusion. It investigates how these strategies help WMSMEs overcome barriers like limited access to modern marketing practices, promoting sustainable growth and economic development. The research design employs case studies of fifteen Sri Lankan WMSMEs leveraging platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and physical channels. Purposive sampling is used to select the enterprises, ensuring that those included have experience with omni-channel marketing strategies. Data are collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically. Results indicate that omni-channel marketing provides WMSMEs with innovative, cost-effective methods to reach diverse audiences and enhance visibility. For example, WMSMEs utilize physical outlets for local engagement, Facebook for international outreach, YouTube for product showcases, and WhatsApp for personalized customer interactions, improving satisfaction and loyalty. The study underscores omni-channel marketing's overlooked role in transforming WMSMEs in Sri Lanka, emphasizing how these strategies help overcome marketing challenges, expand audience reach, and enhance engagement. The findings suggest omni-channel marketing can bridge gender gaps in entrepreneurship, promoting economic empowerment for women entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Digital transformation, Omni-channel marketing strategies, Sri Lanka, Women-led micro small medium enterprises

^a Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk

^b Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.



5S System as a Tool for Sustainable Public Sector Governance: A Case Study of Jaffna District Urban Councils in Sri Lanka

Kuganesan, P^a and Dilogini, S^b

Abstract

The unpredictable political and economic climate in Sri Lanka poses quality issues to the stable continuous and sustainable implementation of the 5S in organizations especially the urban councils. While a number of organizations have been able to implement 5S effectively, the public sector faces microeconomic factors like decreased funding because of COVID-19 and therefore, there is a need for new ways to support and sustain the obtained 5S systems. Nevertheless, few studies have specifics on sustainable 5S implementation practices. Thus, the purpose of this research is to evaluate the current position of 5S sustainability and determine constraining and enabling factors of sustainable 5S implementation within the selected district of Sri Lanka's urban council. This study looks into sustainable aspects of 5S and its implementation. The first research question seeks to know why 5S has not worked well previously, and the second research question aims to know what contributes positively to sustainable 5S in the urban councils of Jaffna. The study uses research paradigm of interpretivism and qualitative research with the use of inductive approach to gather information from the stakeholders involved in the operations of the urban council. Data collection entails purposefully selecting 50 participants from the different levels in the urban councils, that is, from top managerial employees and other members of the community. Self-administered semi-structured interviews are used to determine the following such as perception towards 5S, challenges facing sustainability efforts and possible enhancement. Based on the data analysis, thematic analysis is used to find out about the themes and patterns of 5S sustainability factors. This research enhances the recognition and management of the economic, ecological, and social factors affecting 5S sustainability in enhancing organizational efficiency and operational efficacy within the urban councils.

Keywords: 5S system, Sri Lanka, Sustainability practices, Thematic analysis

^a *Urban Council, Point Pedro, Sri Lanka.*

^b *Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: dilo.kuru@univ.jfn.ac.lk*



Impact of Information and Communication Technology on Customer Satisfaction in the Banking Sector in Jaffna District

Selvanayagam, S

Abstract

Information and communication technology (ICT) has become the heart of the banking sector now-a-days. ICT is helping the banking sector improve its efficiency and effectiveness of services offered to customers, and enhance business processes, managerial decision making, and work group collaborations which strengthen their competitive positions in rapidly changing and emerging economies. In assessing the impact of information communication technology in banks over the last three decades, it is necessary to consider the key areas in which information technology has significantly changed the banking environment in the world and in the Jaffna District. By and large, the banks have been successful in developing innovative product features, reducing operating costs, enhancing customer service delivery and minimizing inherent risks. The objective of this study is to examine the impact of ICT on customer satisfaction in the banking sector in Jaffna District. By using random sampling method with help of two questionnaires, the satisfaction of customers has been analysed on the basis of bank service, waiting time, interest rate, bank procedure and quality. The finding of the results reveals that the customers satisfaction has improved in many banks in Jaffna district because there are many banks have made substantial investments in technology platforms and systems, built multiple distribution channels, including an electronically linked branch network, automated telephone banking, internet banking and banking through mobile phones to offer its customers convenient access to various products. Further, due to the high usage of ICT services in banking sector, the finding support that the private banks at high level satisfaction than the State banks in Jaffna District. It is quite evident from our study that enhancing ICT in the banking sector is an important strategy for a rapidly changing market place.

Key words: Information & Communication Technology, Banking System, Office Automation, e-Commerce, e-payment, E-security.



Track 04

Economics and Information Systems



Impact of Macroeconomic Variables on Stock Returns of Major Industry Sectors in Sri Lanka

Kumari L.M.T.M

Abstract

This research study was conducted to identify the impact of macroeconomic variables ; Average Weighted Lending Rate (AWLR), Inflation (inf), Exchange Rate (Exc_r), Factory Industry Production Index (FIPI) and Credit to the Public Corporations (Cre_pub) on the stock returns of major industry sectors of Sri Lanka. Study has been conducted as a cross sectional study among 5 major industry groups namely Industry sector, Material sector, Real Estate sector, Consumer Discretionary sector and Consumer Staples sector. Monthly data has been collected from 2013 January to 2022 December for 70 companies as 14 companies for each sector. Data has been analyzed through e-views. Panel least square analysis is suggesting that inflation, exchange rate and average weighted lending rates are showing a negative significant impact on the overall stock return. Separate analysis for separate sectors has been conducted and the results are suggesting that, FIPI factor is having a positive significant impact on all 4 sectors except the real estate sector. Further results are indicating that, even though the inflation could have negative impact on material, industry and consumer discretionary industries, it is having a positive significant impact on the consumer staples sector due to the lower price elasticity of consumer staple goods. Real estate sector is having positive significant impact on the stock return from Inflation and AWLR. Credit to the corporations is showing an insignificant impact on stock returns of all sectors, due to the balanced level of benefits and disadvantages of higher level of debts. Based on the results, potential investors could take their investment decisions appropriately to invest their money in the stocks of different sector companies based on the macro- economic conditions and reliable predictions.

Keywords: Average Weighted Lending Rate, Credit to the Public Corporations, Exchange Rate, Factory Industry Production Index, Inflation, Stock Returns.



The Labor Force Pattern and Economic Growth of Sri Lanka in the last Three Decades

Sivaruban, N

Abstract

For several reasons, Sri Lanka has had slower economic growth in the last three decades. Economists always try to understand what factors determine the growth of the economy. According to the Cobb - Douglas function, labour (L) and capital (K) determine economic growth. Sri Lanka has been unable to get a significant level of capital due to political and economic instability. On the other hand, the labour force pattern also negatively impacts the growth of the Sri Lankan economy. For instance, the female labour force participation rate in Sri Lanka has remained low, between 30 to 37 percent in the last three decades. Likewise, the contribution of aged labourers (aged 40+) to the employed labour force increased from 40.7 percent to 61.8 percent in the same period. It is clearly shown that Sri Lanka has a worse labour force pattern and is unsuitable for faster economic growth. This study aims to show the relationship between the labour force pattern and economic growth from 1990 to 2022 in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study utilizes secondary data gathered from World Bank open data source and Sri Lanka labour force survey reports. Pearson's correlation method and (OLS) regression model are mainly used for data analysis. According to these study findings, if others are constant, the aged labour force participation (aged 40+) rate has increased by 1 percent. GDP per capita income (Economic growth) will be increased by 189.62 US\$. Similarly, the female labour force participation rate has a "U"-shaped relationship with economic growth. This means Sri Lanka has the capacity to increase economic growth by increasing female labour force participation, which will substitute for the labour force shrinking due to faster ageing population problems. This study also strongly recommended taking initial steps to reduce the aged labour force (60+) and increase the female labour force in the production sectors.

Keywords: Aged Population, Female labor, Labor force pattern, Sri Lanka Economic growth



An Empirical Evidence on Wearing Behavior of Denim Jeans Among Female Undergraduate Students

Chandrasena D.H.K^a and Jayasekara A.J^a

Abstract

This study offers insightful information to guide the creation of focused strategies to improve female undergraduate students' overall satisfaction and engagement with denim jeans. The study mainly discusses findings about different aspects of denim jeans and basic demographic information. It also looks at how students wear denim jeans with other outfits for various occasions, their target market, the availability of their favourite denim jeans in the market, the reasons behind their ownership of particular quantities of denim jeans and other factors that affect their choice of denim jeans. Using the stratified sampling method, the researcher selected 341 students from the University of Ruhuna's Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences as a sample in order to gather this data. Descriptive statistics, ordinal regression, chi-square testing and correlation analysis were used to analyze the data. The price range of 1500-2500 rupees, the living area, the degree of study, the colour, the style and the availability of dark wash, 100% cotton, stretch and denim jeans were significant. Most students focused on the local market, choosing denim jeans primarily because they were convenient and did not require ironing. The study discovered that female students tend to buy particular quantities of denim jeans because of the range of events they attend. Earlier studies in 2020 and 2021 examined Sri Lankan consumers' jeans preferences using ordinal regression and market observations, but subsequent research shifted to multiple regression analysis, leaving limited exploration with ordinal regression in this field.

Key Words: Denim jeans, Female undergraduate students, Ordinal regression, Wearing behavior

^a Department of Economics, Faculty of Human and Social Science, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka: anne@econ.ruh.ac.lk



Green Growth or Planet's Warming? Exploring the Effects of Agriculture, Urbanization, and Forests

Sandamini,H.N^a, Dissanayake,D.M.I.R^b, Krishantha,W^c and Charuka,K^d

Abstract

This study examines the impact of Livestock Production, Urbanization, and Forest area on Global Warming using secondary data from 30 data gathered from World Bank Indicators and the International Monetary Fund from 1993 to 2022 for the global context, which includes 133 countries. In some countries, it has been identified as a health concern because of the high temperature and the unbearable heat that has caused some heart problems in other health concerns; because of that, identifying the influence of Livestock Production, Urbanization, and Forest areas on Global Warming and understanding their relationship, and assessing the impact of those factors on Global Warming is crucial in addressing this issue. The stepwise panel regression was performed using STATA analytical software to obtain the results. However, the result shows that livestock production significantly impacts global warming. An increase of one unit of livestock production positively impacts global warming. In addition, the results identified that the increase in urbanization positively affected global warming. Positive and significant coefficient indicates the one unit increase in urbanization results in one unit increase in global warming. Furthermore, the negative coefficient of forest area indicates the one unit increase in forest area results in one unit decrease in global warming. This study contributes to the past and future studies related to temperature change in various aspects, understanding the environmental drivers, raising public attention and those factors such as livestock production, Urbanization, and forest areas can influence to increase or decrease global warming and the understanding of global warming mitigation strategies by investigating the impact of these three factors.

Key Words: Forest Area, Global Warming, Livestock Production, Urbanization.

^{abcd} Business School, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, New Kandy Road, Malabe,
Sri Lanka: irushiravindi926@gmail.com



A Study on Factors Influencing Household Spending in the Anuradhapura District

Prasangika, K.D. S^a , Herath, D.M.H^b and Godwin Phillip, P.M^c

Abstract

This study examines the key factors influencing household spending patterns in the Anuradhapura district, with a focus on the distinctions between urban and rural areas. The aim of this study is to ascertain the primary factors that impact household consumption spending patterns. Data were examined using multiple linear regression, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics on a sample of one hundred randomly chosen families. The findings reveal that household income, family size, and land ownership are the most significant determinants of household spending, with income and family size showing a strong positive correlation. Conversely, the age and education level of the household head exhibit a negative correlation with spending and a significant positive correlation between income and land ownership, and a negative relationship between income and factors like gender, education, and location. Urban households exhibit higher average monthly expenditures (Rs. 61,381) compared to rural households (Rs. 52,734), reflecting disparities in spending behavior. The study concludes that income, family size, education, and location are significant determinants of household expenditure, with policy implications for addressing income inequality and improving living standards. These results suggest that targeted policy interventions are necessary to address the economic disparities in household spending, particularly in rural areas. Enhancing household income through improved education and employment opportunities could lead to better financial management and increased economic welfare. The implications of this research are crucial for policymakers aiming to reduce economic inequality and enhance the standard of living in the region.

Keywords: Demographic characteristics, Disposable income, Household spending, Independent sample t-test, Multiple linear regression.

^{a,b,c} Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka: dmharshaniherath@gmail.com



The Impact of Exchange Rate on Economic Growth in Sri Lanka

Pratheepan, N^a and Thayaparan, A^b

Abstract

Exchange rate is identified as an important factor for turning the economic growth of countries which was empirically confirmed by several related studies. Also, strong economic growth can lead to an appreciation of the currency due to increased demand for local goods and investments. Conversely, a weaker economy may result in a depreciating of currency. During the period of 2022 to 2023, the Sri Lanka faced the considerable depreciation of Rupee value in terms of U.S Dollar. In this background, this study tries to investigate the impact of exchange rate on economic growth in Sri Lanka. The understanding on the movement of exchange rates is important for policy makers to develop more reliable and accurate fiscal and monetary policies for a country. Economic growth was considered as dependent variable and the exchange rate was employed as key independent variable with interest rate, and inflation rate were the controlled variables in the study. Researcher uses quarterly data for the period 2014-2023. The collected data were analyzed using time series analysis techniques namely Stationary, Autocorrelation, ARIMA, Granger-causality, multiple regression and correlation analysis. The empirical findings highlighted that exchange rate has a significant negative impact on economic growth in Sri Lanka. The findings will provide suggestions for the policy makers, government authorities, financial institutions, and other respective parties to make effective policies in future with the view to boost to economic and national development.

Keywords: Exchange rate, Economic growth, Gross Domestic Product, Interest rate, Inflation rate.

^a Department of Finance and Accountancy, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka: n.pratheepan@vau.ac.lk

^b Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.



Factors Influencing the Adoption of Mobile Payments Among Generation Z in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

Weerasingha, W.M.N.S.P^a, and Bandara, K.M.P.G.A.J^b

Abstract

Rapid advances in information and communication technology and the widespread use of e-commerce have significantly increased the use of mobile phones worldwide, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated this trend. The number of mobile phone connections in Sri Lanka has now surpassed the population. However, the lack of mobile payment popularity is a problem, highlighting the critical need to understand the factors influencing mobile payment adoption. This study aims to investigate the mobile payment adoption (AMP) determinants of Generation Z in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. A deductive strategy was used within a quantitative research framework. Data were collected through an online structured questionnaire using a convenience sampling method, and 386 responses were received. The independent variables were performance expectancy, facilitating conditions, social influence, perceived technology safety, and hedonic motivation, which were selected based on relevance to technology adoption theories and existing literature. Correlation and regression analyses indicate a strong relationship between mobile payment adoption and the aforementioned independent variables. ANOVA confirmed the significance of the overall model, with coefficients indicating positive and significant effects consistent with the study's hypotheses. Notably, hedonic motivation emerged as a particularly influential factor in adopting mobile payments among Generation Z, with a strong preference for mobile payments due to utilitarian and hedonic factors. These insights contribute to existing knowledge on mobile payments and provide valuable implications for businesses and policymakers aiming to improve mobile payment systems and increase their adoption.

Keywords: Generation Z, Hedonic Motivation, Mobile Payments Adoption, Perceived Technology Security, Social Influence.

^{ab}Department of Information Systems, Faculty of Management Studies, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Mihintale, Sri Lanka: sasankapabasara3@gmail.com



The Role of Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use in Sri Lankan Undergraduates' E-Learning Adoption

Ansardeen, S^a , Umanakenan, R^b Kajenthiran, K^c Achchuthan, S^d
Natkunarajah^e Umakanth, N^f and Kajanathan, R^g

Abstract

This study aims to explore the factors influencing the intention of Sri Lankan state university undergraduates to use e-learning. By employing the widely accepted Technology Acceptance Model and incorporating knowledge acquisition and sharing to assess e-learning adoption, we have gathered 410 valid responses from university students across Sri Lanka. The proposed research model was tested via PLS-SEM, a variance-based statistical approach. The results indicated that knowledge sharing, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use significantly impact students' behavioural intention to adopt e-learning systems and their actual usage. Additionally, the findings showed that knowledge acquisition and sharing positively influence perceived usefulness and ease of use. These insights have practical implications as they can aid policymakers and educators in designing and implementing e-learning systems that are more likely to be adopted by students.

Keywords: E-learning adoption, Knowledge Acquisition, Knowledge sharing, TAM Model, Actual System Use.

^{abdef} Department of Commerce, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka. umana@univ.jfn.ac.lk

^g Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka.



Factors Influencing the Intention to use Cloud Computing: Empirical Evidence from Apparel Companies in the Western Province, Sri Lanka

Wijayarathna, B.D.I.K^a Inthusha, K^b , Kajanathan, R^c and Sabina, D^d

Abstract

This study explores the factors influencing the intention to adopt cloud computing technologies among apparel garment companies in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Despite the advantages of cloud computing, its adoption remains low in Sri Lanka compared to developed nations. The research identifies critical elements affecting the use of cloud-based tools in this sector, which is vital for the national economy. Utilizing a survey method, data were collected from 365 employees across major apparel firms, including Brandix Apparel Holdings Ltd and MAS Intimates Pvt Ltd. Key variables examined include Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions, analyzed through correlation and multiple regression methods. Findings reveal that while Performance Expectancy positively correlates with the intention to use cloud computing, it lacks significant predictive power. In contrast, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions demonstrate strong positive relationships with adoption intention. This research contributes valuable insights for stakeholders in the apparel industry, aiding in the development of effective strategies for cloud technology integration. By addressing barriers to adoption, the study underscores the transformative potential of cloud computing for enhancing operational efficiency in the apparel sector.

Keywords: Cloud Computing, Software as a Service, Infrastructure as a service, Platform as a service, Western Province Apparel garment context, garment workers

^a *Perfect Business Solutions Pvt Ltd, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka*

^{bcd} *Department of Commerce, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce,
University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka: inthusha@univ.jfn.ac.lk*



Track 05

Project Management



The Guidelines for Effective Volunteer Projects Using Project Management Principles

Rudrigo, S^a , Bandara, K^b , Priyankara, V^c , Perera, M^d Bopitiyegedara, N^e ,
Randeniya, N^f and Abesundara B^g

Abstract

This research aims to develop comprehensive guidelines for effective volunteer projects by integrating project management principles. The study begins with an extensive literature review to set up a theoretical framework, finding and synthesizing key concepts and best practices from existing research on project management and volunteer coordination. Following this, secondary data analysis is conducted using case studies, reports, and databases to find shared challenges and successful strategies in volunteer project management. Selected case studies of successful volunteer projects are analyzed to document best practices and lessons learned. These insights are then integrated to develop practical guidelines, addressing crucial areas such as community engagement, volunteer satisfaction, and technological integration. The guidelines undergo validation through feedback from project management and volunteer coordination experts, ensuring their applicability and robustness. The current program series is developed and managed by volunteers from Bandula Abesundara Charity Trust (BACT), which has extensive experience in the volunteer sector in Sri Lanka. The planned research project series is an ongoing large-scale initiative where theoretical knowledge is applied in practice. The final guidelines are compiled into a comprehensive report and given to relevant stakeholders. This structured approach aims to enhance the efficiency and impact of volunteer projects, providing valuable tools and strategies for project managers and volunteer organizations.

Keywords: Best practices, Community engagement, Project management principles, Volunteer management, Volunteer projects,

^a Department of Computer Engineering, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka.

^b Department of Electrical & Electronic Engineering, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka.

^c Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.

^d Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.

^e Department of Town & Country Planning, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

^f Global Disaster Resilience Centre, University of Huddersfield, England, UK,
Nilantha.Randeniya@hud.ac.uk ,

^g Bandula Abesundara Charity Trust, Canada.



The Impact of Employee Turnover on Project Stages of Non-Governmental Organisations' Projects in Vavuniya District

Ajitha, S^a and Thirugnanasampanthar, S^b

Abstract

This research examines employee turnover's consequences in the various stages of non-governmental organization (NGO) projects, including initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and controlling, and closing. Recently, the rate of employee turnover has increased due to several common factors such as individual ability and responsibility, marital status, job opportunities, organizational salary scale, cost of living, economic crises, and organizational culture and systems. This study employs a qualitative approach to explore how employee turnover affects each project stage. Data was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and individual discussions conducted in person and online, resulting in 27 responses. The study finds that employee turnover impacts various stages of a project. The research found the impact level in the execution, planning, monitoring and controlling, closing, and initiation stages. The study's limitations include focusing on NGOs in the Vavuniya district only. The researcher recommends that NGOs and future researchers consider employee expectations when implementing projects, and the NGOs should prioritize project phases based on employee turnover. Furthermore, they should implement preventive and corrective actions to mitigate the impact of turnover. This study concludes the research into the effects of employee turnover on the various stages of NGO projects. It lays the groundwork for future investigations and can be used as a practical guide to mitigate the effects of employee turnover.

Keywords: Employee turnover, Monitoring and controlling, Non-governmental organizations, Planning, Project stages

^{a,b} Department of Project Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka: silvastarajtha@gmail.com



The Influence of Artificial Intelligence on Project Management Knowledge Areas in the IT Industry

Dhanushika, S^a and Nanthagopan, Y^b

Abstract

This study explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in IT project management within Sri Lanka's Western Province, focusing on its impact on the ten Project Management Knowledge Areas (PMKAs) outlined by the Project Management Institute (PMI). Through comprehensive interviews with ten expert project managers and IT professionals, this research examines AI's influence on various PMKAs and its broader implications for the industry. The findings reveal that AI significantly enhances PMKAs associated with data analysis, automation, and repetitive tasks, such as communication, stakeholder engagement, scheduling, and resource management. AI optimizes workflows, improves decision-making, and enhances communication through tools like Trello, Google Bard, and ChatGPT. However, PMKAs that rely heavily on human judgment, such as scope management and procurement, show minimal AI influence due to their need for human interaction and decision-making. Despite the advantages of AI, several challenges persist, including data privacy concerns, resistance to change, and ethical dilemmas. The study provides critical recommendations for project managers to navigate these challenges effectively by identifying areas where AI can add value, prioritizing comprehensive user training, adopting human-centric approaches to implementation, ensuring compliance with ethical and legal standards, and focusing on future skill development for both technical and leadership roles. In conclusion, while AI significantly enhances the efficiency and capabilities of project management, the human element remains indispensable. AI will not replace project managers but will reshape their roles, enabling them to co-create project success with AI tools and allowing for more strategic, creative, and high-level decision-making.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, AI integration, IT industry, Project management

^a Adra Sri Lanka, Wattedegera, Maharagama, Sri Lanka:
dhanushikasris23@gmail.com

^b Department of Project Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka.



Applicability of Project Management Performance Domains for Agile Developed IT Projects

Tharan, T^a and Nanthagopan, Y^b

Abstract

The agile IT industry is continually seeking new methods to integrate and enhance project outcomes. In response, PMI has introduced new domains designed to be applicable across various projects, offering flexible approaches to improve project management practices and align with evolving industry needs. The paper discusses the results of a study exploring the applicability of eight project management performance domains from PMBOK, including Stakeholders, Team, Development Approach and Life Cycle, Planning, Project Work, Delivery, Measurement, and Uncertainty, to agile-developed IT projects. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 10 experienced agile practitioners from Sri Lanka's IT industry, who are well-versed in the PMBOK 7th Edition and agile methodologies. The collected data were subjected to qualitative and thematic analysis. The results of the study demonstrated that practical challenges, such as contradictions and criticisms, arise due to the perceived rigidity of the PMBOK framework, which may conflict with the more adaptive and flexible nature of agile approaches. Opportunities were identified in the customization and adaptive application of the PMBOK domains, where these domains can be utilized as flexible guidelines rather than rigid frameworks, allowing for enhanced assessment and alignment practices. The study contributes to the Technology-Organization-Environment perspective implications providing insights into the practical integration of PMPD in agile IT projects. It emphasizes the need for adaptability, applicability, and practical focus from a technological perspective; organizational readiness, communication processes, and management and decision-making from an organizational perspective; and alignment with competitive and external pressures and existing practices from an environmental perspective. Practitioners should tailor the PMPD domains to the specific context of each project based on their expertise, allowing for more effective application of these concepts.

Keywords: Agile principles, Agile value, Performance domains, PMBOK seventh edition, TOE framework.

^a Freelance Researcher, Sri Lanka: thuraisinkamtharan@gmail.com

^b Department of Project Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Impact of Kanban Practices on Project Management Performance of Construction Industry

Dimuthma, U. K. A^a and Thirugnanasampanthar, S^b

Abstract

This research investigates the role of Kanban methodologies in optimizing project outcomes in the construction industry, specifically within the Colombo district of Sri Lanka. The construction sector in this region faces challenges such as workflow inefficiencies and inconsistent project performance, necessitating innovative approaches like Kanban to enhance project management practices. The study aims to determine the extent to which six core Kanban practices Visualizing the Workflow (VW), Limiting Work in Progress (WIP), Measuring and Managing Flow (MM), Making Process Policies Explicit (PE), Implementing Feedback Loops (FL), and Improving Collaboratively through Experimental Evolution (CE) can positively influence performance indicators such as schedule, quality, cost, safety, and stakeholder satisfaction in construction projects. A quantitative research approach was employed, utilizing an online survey distributed to project management professionals working in Colombo's construction sector. The data gathered from the survey was analyzed using SPSS software to identify significant correlations between the implementation of Kanban practices and improvements in project performance. The results demonstrated that the adoption of Kanban practices leads to noticeable improvements in project efficiency, schedule adherence, and overall quality, while also enhancing safety standards and stakeholder satisfaction. These findings suggest that construction companies in Colombo should integrate Kanban into their project management frameworks to address specific challenges and drive continuous improvement. The study provides a solid foundation for further research into the broader applicability of Kanban across different sectors and its potential integration with emerging technologies to further enhance project management effectiveness.

Keywords: Construction project performance, Continuous improvement, Kanban, Work in progress, Workflow visualization,

^a Knovic (pvt) ltd, Pannipitiya, Sri Lanka:
dimuthmaumashani98@gmail.com

^b Department of Project Management, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Assessing the Impact of Stray Animals on Road Safety and public well-being in Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Jeyaratnam, L^a , Sasitharan, M^b , Thanushan, R^c

Abstract

Ensuring the safety of humans and animals in public spaces is crucial, particularly concerning the movement of stray animals on roads. This research evaluates the impact of stray animal movements in Jaffna, focusing on road safety. Utilising Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) technologies, spatial data on animal movements were collected and analysed using ArcMap 10.4. Additionally, secondary data on animal-related incidents, including bites, attacks, and accidents, were obtained from the Jaffna Teaching Hospital and Jaffna Police Station for a comprehensive statistical overview. The study mapped 300 locations of stray animal movements, finding that dogs constituted 84 percent of the observed animals, mainly active in the morning and evening. Cow movements accounted for 13 percent, while cats represented 3 percent. Between 2020 and 2023, over 15,000 individuals experienced animal bites, and more than 1,554 reported animal attacks, with many accidents involving stray dogs, especially near motorbike riders. Additionally, some dogs strayed from their homes, contributing to road hazards. Cow movements were often linked to food waste, as people regularly feed them during the day, notably near jewellery shops, where their presence is seen as a good omen. The study also highlighted public health concerns related to animal waste on roads, posing sanitation issues. Factors contributing to these challenges include inadequate animal welfare laws, lack of vaccinations, irresponsible pet ownership, and improper feeding practices. The study recommends implementing stricter animal control regulations, enhancing public education on responsible pet ownership, and promoting humane cow-rearing programmes to address these issues. Emphasising a compassionate attitude towards animals and integrating safety strategies can improve the Human-Pet Friendly Approach and enhance overall safety and public health in Jaffna.

Keywords: Hazards, Human-Animal Protection, Human-Pet Friendly Approach, Stray Animals

^{a,c} Department of Geography, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka

^b Department of Project Management, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Track 6

Entrepreneurship, Tourism and Hospitality Management



The Impact of Social Ties on Business Performance of Women Entrepreneurs of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the Gampaha District, Sri Lanka

Rajapaksa, K. A. D. S.T.K^a and Manthrege, W. K^b

Abstract

The study investigates the impact of social ties on the business performance of women entrepreneurs in the Gampaha district in Sri Lanka. Though social ties have been identified as one of the key factors required for the business performance of Small and Medium Enterprises, empirical studies investigating the impact of social ties on the business performance of women entrepreneurs have produced inconsistent results and conclusions. Further, fewer studies evaluate the social ties to business performance in the local context. Hence, there is a need for further research in the area. The study aims to identify the impact of social factors on the business performance of women entrepreneurs in the Gampaha district in Sri Lanka. The study population comprised all women entrepreneurs in the Gampaha district of Sri Lanka. Data was collected from 292 women entrepreneurs for the study using a structured questionnaire. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Hypotheses testing was done using correlation and regression analysis. The result shows a significant, positive impact of social norms, social networks, and social patterns on the business performance of women entrepreneurs. The findings of this study will help academia, entrepreneurs in the country, policymakers, and government regulators identify the importance of social ties in affecting the business performance of women entrepreneurs. It will also help identify the areas that need improvement to enhance future performance.

Keywords: Business performance, Entrepreneurship, Social ties, Women entrepreneur

^a Master Student, MIT, Australia

^b Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka: kalyani@sjp.ac.lk



Preparing School Students for Agricultural Entrepreneurship: Unravelling the Impact of Entrepreneurial School Garden Project Engagement on Students' Attitudes

Vinujah, G^a and Vijayabaskar, V^b

Abstract

This study explores the impact of engaging students in the Entrepreneurial School Garden Project (ESGP) on their attitudes, focusing on preparing them for future agricultural business. ESGP integrates practical gardening activities into the curriculum and co-curriculum to enhance students' competencies in food nutrition, agriculture, and entrepreneurship. The program seeks to foster resilience against food shortages and economic challenges while promoting positive attitudes toward agricultural business ventures. Data were collected via surveys from 145 students of 5 schools in the Jaffna district who participated in the project to assess changes in students' personal well-being, social well-being, and environmental well-being attitudes. The findings of this study indicated significant improvements in entrepreneurial attitudes; enhancements were observed in personal, social, and environmental well-being. Increased engagement in gardening activities is positively correlated with improvement of attitudes, with notable gender differences; females demonstrated more significant gains compared to male students. Qualitative insights from interviews, observations, and document analyses revealed that engagement in gardening enhanced responsibility, improved social skills and teamwork, and enhanced environmental awareness and stewardship. The frequency and duration of engaging in gardening activities had a strong influence on perceived changes in students' entrepreneurial attitudes.

Key words: Agricultural entrepreneurship, School Garden, Student attitudes

^{ab} *Department of Education, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka:*
yvbaskar@univ.jfn.ac.lk



Factors Affecting Entrepreneurial Success of Women Headed Family Entrepreneurs: A Study in Poonakary Area of Kilinochchi District

Nirensa, K^a and Kajanthy, V^b

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out the factors affecting the entrepreneurial success of Women Headed Families (WHF) in Poonagari area of Kilinochchi district located in the northern part of Sri Lanka affected by thirty years of civil war. As a result, most of the women in this area were left to lead the family due to loss of husband or either divorce or abandonment by husband. Another reason could be the elder male member of the family goes missing or the male member has any other disabilities etc. They struggle for livelihood. Hence, they started engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Primary data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire from a random sample of 105 women entrepreneurs who were the head of their families using stratified random sampling method. Hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis. In this study, the influencing factors were measured by the dimensions of family background, personal factors and institutional support. Entrepreneurial success is the dependent variable measured by sales growth, profit growth and business survival. The impact of influencing factors on entrepreneurial success was found using multiple regression analysis. Family background and institutional support were found to influence entrepreneurial success, while personality factors did not influence entrepreneurial success. Accordingly, these findings will be of great value to policy makers in improving the factors that promote women's entrepreneurship in developing countries. Furthermore, this study will provide an insight to existing and prospective entrepreneurs from female-headed families by gaining awareness of the factors that determine their entrepreneurial success.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial success, Kilinochchi district, Poonakary area, Women entrepreneurs, Women headed families.

^a *Freelance Researcher, Sri Lanka*

^b *Department of Marketing Management, University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka:*
kajanthys@vau.ac.lk



Social Media Use in Tourism of Kolhapur City in Maharashtra, India

Saurabh, D.V^a and Sarma, T.V.G^b

Abstract

A social network is defined by the primary type of media shared among users. WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter are some of the widely used new social media tools that have amazing video and image-sharing capabilities. When people are on vacation, they capture their moments on camera and film. With the invention of digital formats, consumers post their videos and photos for the world to see. Videos and pictures are taken at general interest sites, such as famous restaurants, city landmarks, and other venues. In Kolhapur city of Maharashtra (India), there is a heavy flow of tourists throughout the year. This is because the city has ancient religious temple, named Mahalakshmi Temple. The use of social media by the tourists for their visits to city for religious as well as other sightseeing destinations in the city has not been explored earlier. Therefore, as a part of the present research study, we attempt to explore this research gap. For this purpose, 151 tourists in the study area were contacted to collect their responses through a questionnaire. The analysis shows that respondents have massive acceptance of social media as the most useful medium for tourism-related information. In the age of digital infotainment, the spread of information is preferred to be through online which reaches by a click than the traditional media. So there should be investment in creating high- quality videos showcasing destination, travel tips, and local experiences for promoting all popular tourist destinations.

Keywords: Digital platforms, Social media, Tourism

^a Research Student, Indira Gandhi National Open University, (IGNOU), New Delhi, India

^b D. K Shinde School of Social Work, CSIBER, Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India.

tvgs@siberindia.edu.in



Impact of Heritage Interpretation on Visitor Satisfaction: A Study Based on Guided Tours at Cultural Heritage Sites in Anuradhapura

Chandrasiri, C.S.K^a Jayasinghe, J.A.P.M^b Dayanagana, K.L.T.U.S^c

Abstract

Heritage interpretation is the engaging and educational explanation of cultural and natural heritage to tourists. Guided tours provide tourists with a satisfying experience of cultural heritage site. Yet, relatively few studies have addressed the impact of heritage interpretation on visitor satisfaction: A study based on guided tours at cultural heritage site of Anuradhapura. Anuradhapura is a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a majestic testament to Sri Lanka's ancient civilization and cultural heritage. The main objective of this study is to identify the impact of heritage interpretation on visitor satisfaction in Anuradhapura cultural heritage sites. The survey design was quantitative and based on an empirical study. Data collection, data analysis and research questions were answered using deductive research approach. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the foreign tourists who visit Anuradhapura heritage site in December and January months. A sample of 300 respondents was selected through simple random sampling technique. The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and simple regression analysis were applied to examine the impact of heritage interpretation on visitor satisfaction based on the guided tours at cultural heritage site in Anuradhapura. According to the research findings Knowledge, local culture, nostalgia have positive influences on the satisfaction derived from guided experiences at Anuradhapura cultural heritage sites. The research highlights the need for better guide training, authenticity, and regular feedback to improve guided tours at cultural heritage sites.

Key Words: Anuradhapura Heritage site, Guided tour, Heritage interpretation, Visitor satisfaction

^{abc} *Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Faculty of Management Studies,
Rajarata University of Sri Lanka: sumuduugc@gmail.com*



Exploring Wellness Tourism in Sri Lanka: An Ethnographic Perspective

Weerasinghe, K.P.W.D.R^a and Selvarajan, P^b

Abstract

Wellness tourism focuses explicitly on travel in maintaining or improving one's well-being, and exhibited superior performance compared to general tourism, seeing a growth rate of around twice as fast on a global scale. This may be primarily attributed to an increasing inclination towards embracing a wellness-oriented lifestyle, a growing interest in immersive travel experiences, and expanding the global middle class. Sri Lanka's cultural wellness programs, Ayurveda and Hela Wedakama, integrate Indigenous features of Sri Lanka with wellness practices, making them appealing to well-being-oriented travellers. The wellness tourism industry in Sri Lanka faces gaps in product development and marketing and a lack of variety in wellness offerings. While Ayurveda and traditional healing practices are prevalent, research on how to integrate them into modern tourism packages is limited. This study aims to analyze the tourists' behaviour and combine traditional practices of wellness tourism with modern trends. This research is constituted as a cross-sectional ethnographic study. The data were gathered through purposive sampling by interviewing ten tourists from three different countries who participated in wellness tourist activities in Sri Lanka. The data gathering was incorporated with digital ethnography to ensure data triangularity. The analysis indicates that wellness tourism encompasses those seeking to engage with nature and society sustainably and responsibly. Wellness tourists frequently incorporate lifestyle modifications, including embracing more nutritious meals, engaging in regular meditation, or integrating holistic techniques into their everyday routines. They intend to engage with local communities, particularly in the context of traditional wellness practices, while being mindful of cultural sensitivity. Wellness travellers strive to improve their physical, mental, and emotional well-being by actively pursuing relaxation, stress reduction, detoxification, and treatment for specific health conditions. This result provides significant insights for academics, regulators, and industry stakeholders.

Keywords: Tourists, Tourism industry, Travel experiences, Wellness tourism

^a Department of Marketing Management, Faculty of Business Studies,
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka

^b Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Business Studies,
University of Vavuniya, Sri Lanka



Factors Influencing on Consumer Satisfaction of Street Food in Sri Lanka

Madhavi, J.P.J^a, Ginige, S.R^b and Wickramasuriya, L.H.T. de S^c

Abstract

Street food is a significant part of the culinary culture in Sri Lanka, offering affordable and convenient food options and playing a vital role in the social and cultural life of Sri Lankans. Though consumer satisfaction is crucial for repeated patronage and positive word-of-mouth promotion. The factors driving consumer satisfaction in this sector are not clearly understood. Identifying these factors is essential to improve service quality and enhance the industry's growth, but there is a lack of empirical research on this topic. The Sri Lankan government has made some efforts to improve hygiene in the street food industry but focusing more on significant factors affecting customer satisfaction, is essential for achieving a sustainable competitive advantage globally. Therefore, the study aims to determine the factors influencing consumer satisfaction on street food in Sri Lanka. Adopting a quantitative approach with an objective ontology, positivist paradigm, and deductive research method, the research gathered primary data from 164 consumers across various regions. Study findings reveal that consumer satisfaction on street food in Sri Lanka is affected by cleanliness, convenience, sensory appeal, and the quality of service provided by vendors. Consequently, stakeholders in the street food industry should prioritize these factors to foster a loyal customer base and enhance the sector. The Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Approach was performed, and the result indicates that healthiness factors and food safety knowledge factors do not impact customer satisfaction. Customers prioritize immediate satisfaction over healthiness and food safety, suggesting a trend that could lead to a poor healthy society in the near future. Since street foods are a panacea to various social issues in Sri Lanka, emphasizing on healthiness and safety can help mitigate the long-term health hazards associated with current consumption trends, ultimately fostering a healthier society while bolstering the industry's global competitiveness.

Keywords: Consumer satisfaction, Street food, Street food preference

^{abc} Department of Decision Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Gangodawila, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka: jjpdmadhavi@sjp.ac.lk



Effectiveness of Using Digital Devices and Systems for the Digital Entrepreneurial Outcome

Weerasooriya, W.A.C.K^a Lasanthika, W.J.A.J.M^b Kumari, A.G.M.A^c

Abstract

Digital entrepreneurship has become a key driver of business innovation and growth with the rapid development of information and communication technologies. Adapting digital systems has been of unprecedented prime interest to modern ventures. However, it has rarely been evaluated how far such platforms meet the expectations of entrepreneurs in delivering value-added services for organizational success. This study investigates the impact of digital devices and systems on digital entrepreneurial outcomes in Sri Lanka. Further, it examines how various digital tools - such as smartphones, cloud computing, and social media platforms - affect the performance and success of digital entrepreneurs. Primary data was collected from randomly selected 382 digital entrepreneurs and distributed through a self-structured questionnaire using a quantitative approach. Regression analysis was performed to test the effectiveness of digital technologies and entrepreneurial outcomes, including business growth, productivity, and market reach. The results demonstrated a strong positive impact between the usage of digital technologies and entrepreneurial success, providing valuable insights for entrepreneurs in optimizing the use of digital tools for business growth. The results deliver valuable insights into the effectiveness of digital devices and systems in enhancing entrepreneurial performance and inform future strategies for leveraging digital tools in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Keywords: Business growth, Digital Entrepreneurship, Digital Systems, Entrepreneurial Outcome

^{abc} Department of Business Management, Faculty of Business Studies & Finance
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka: achalak@wyb.ac.lk